

The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America's National Security Needs in the 21st Century

Dissatisfaction with the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Report's alleged near-term, "business as usual" focus as well as other perceived shortcomings led Congress, supported by Defense Secretary Robert Gates, to mandate preparation of an alternative QDR Report by a panel of 20 independent civilian and military experts led by Stephen Hadley and William Perry. Written to provide a broader, longer term perspective, the resulting 132-page study issued in late July 2010 is more alarmist than the QDR Report. Warning of an impending "train wreck" ahead for the Department of Defense (DOD), it puts forth numerous recommendations aimed at correcting the problems facing DOD and the U.S. Government in pursuing national security strategy and defense planning. Some of its recommendations accelerate changes already endorsed by the QDR Report, but others pursue new directions. The result is a useful complement to the QDR Report, but not a wholesale replacement of it. The two studies are best appraised in the context of each other in order to identify similarities and differences.

In crafting a broad strategic approach, *The QDR in Perspective: Meeting America's National Security Needs in the 21st Century* (QDRP Report) identifies four enduring national interests that will continue to animate U.S. defense policy: homeland defense; assured access to the sea, airspace, and cyberspace commons; preservation of a favorable balance of power across Eurasia that prevents authoritarian domination of that region; and provision for the global common good through humanitarian aid, developmental

assistance, and disaster relief. It also identifies the five grave threats likely to arise to those interests over the next generation:

- radical Islamic extremism and terrorism
- competition from rising global powers in Asia
- continuing struggle for power in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East
- accelerating global competition for resources
- persistent problems from failed and failing states.

This combination of U.S. interests and dangerous threats leads the QDRP Report to conclude that there will be an increased demand on U.S. “hard power” to preserve regional balances in ways mandating that security concerns will remain quite important. In addition, it states that the various tools of “soft power”—for example, diplomacy, trade, and communications—will be increasingly important. The need to apply both hard power and soft power leads the QDRP Report to conclude that the United States must retain its global leadership role while improving its own assets and working to strengthen allies, partners, and international institutions that can contribute to security and peace.

The result is a framework that basically endorses the QDR Report’s four strategy concepts and six high priority mission areas, but urges a more galvanized and energetic set of activities to increase DOD and U.S. Government capabilities for the long haul. In surveying DOD and the government, the QDRP Report warns of an impending train wreck in military personnel, acquisitions, and force structure coming from aging equipment inventories, declining size of the Navy, escalating personnel entitlements, and growing stress on U.S. military forces. To address these and other problems, the QDRP Report advances an integrated set of key recommendations:

- build an alternative force structure with emphasis on increasing the size of the Navy
- modernize the equipment inventories of all Services

- increase DOD capability to contribute to homeland defense and handle such asymmetric threats as cyber attack
- improve DOD personnel policies in ways that strengthen the all-volunteer force
- vigorously reform the DOD acquisition process
- foster whole-of-government and comprehensive approaches and better civilian capacity in order to develop better soft power for national security challenges
- create a new, comprehensive strategic planning process for national security that provides better management, more holistic planning, and improved crisis response.

Building an Alternative, Modernized Force Structure. Focused on ensuring that the U.S. military posture is adequately large and configured to handle threats and perform missions 10 or more years from now, the QDRP Report is sharply critical of the QDR Report's force-sizing construct. The latter allegedly lacks clarity and analytical insight on the relationship between future requirements and force capabilities. In the absence of an adequate force-sizing construct, the QDRP Report calls for a return to the baseline force structure adopted by the Bottom-Up Review of 1993, which was designed to fight two concurrent regional wars. It accepts that U.S. ground forces will remain largely focused on Middle East operations for the foreseeable future, but it wants to ensure that naval and air forces are adequate for future missions in other theaters.

The QDRP Report does not propose major increases to the Army and Air Force postures, but it does endorse expansion of the Navy from 288–322 ships to 346 ships. A key goal, it states, is to increase the U.S. military force structure in the Asia-Pacific region in ways largely anchored in a maritime strategy. Worried about China's rise and a decline of U.S. influence that could undermine existing treaty obligations, it emphasizes forward naval power there in ways that seemingly tilt away from the QDR Report's partial shift to a standoff strategy focused on long-range strike assets. It supports

the emerging DOD attempt to develop a new air-sea battle concept, which seems especially relevant to the Asia-Pacific region. The QDRP Report also calls for parallel increases in force structure in ways that counter antiaccess and area-denial challenges, strengthen homeland and cyberspace defense, and enhance assets for postconflict stabilization missions.

The QDRP Report is particularly intent on urging a faster, more ambitious pace for recapitalizing and modernizing the U.S. military's aging inventories of major weapons and other equipment. Background information here is essential to understanding the differing approaches of the QDR Report and QDRP Report in this critical arena. The governing reality is that many U.S. military weapons for waging major combat operations were procured during the 1980s and 1990s. The Services began developing new weapons to replace them some years ago, but owing to the focus on Iraq and Afghanistan and other constraints, they progressed slowly through the research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) cycle during 2000–2009. As the new decade dawned, the Services had planned to use growing acquisition budgets after 2010 to hasten the development of new tanks, ships, and fighter aircraft, and then to procure them in large numbers over the following years.

Recognizing that these new weapons would cost more than envisioned procurement budgets allowed and doubting the need for some of them, Secretary Gates in 2009 announced his decision to cancel or scale back many of these programs. The new Air Force F–35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) fighter survived the chopping block, but the F–22 fell victim as did much of the Army's Future Combat System program and the Navy's plans to acquire new combat ships. Whereas the QDR Report ratified this choice, the QDRP Report questions its wisdom because, in a few years, it allegedly would leave the Services with too many aging weapons that ultimately will be unable to perform new missions and counter new threats.

Accordingly, the QDRP Report calls for the spigots of modernization to be reopened over the coming decade. It states that the U.S. military should be allowed to acquire a new generation of armored vehicles, warships,

fighter aircraft, sensors, munitions, and other weapons to refresh aging inventories, maintain an adequately large posture, and preserve the qualitative supremacy of U.S. forces over adversaries. In addition, it states, modernization would add necessary new capabilities in such areas as defeating antiaccess and area-denial threats, improving deep-strike assets, strengthening forward presence and power projection, and offsetting adversary acquisition of modern air defenses and precision-strike munitions. In this arena, the QDRP Report is pointing to a significantly bigger and faster modernization than envisioned by the QDR Report. It judges that this robust modernization program cannot be fully funded by projected DOD investment budgets or even with the reprioritized RDT&E and procurement funds being sought by Secretary Gates. Accordingly, it calls for significant, enduring increases to DOD investment spending that would elevate current procurement budgets well above today's level of \$120 billion, and keep them there for the next decade and beyond. The QDRP Report does not say whether this extra spending is to come from elsewhere in the DOD budget or from additional congressional appropriations, but it does call for using technology to drive down the costs of new weapons so that both adequate quantity and quality can be afforded.

Strengthening Homeland Defense and Cyberspace Defense. In both of these arenas, the QDRP Report offers judgments similar to those of the QDR Report, but expresses them in more graphic ways. The QDRP Report expresses concern that during a period of ongoing contingency operations abroad, the U.S. military will lack the assets to perform an expansive homeland defense mission on short notice. It worries about a natural disaster, but a main concern is the prospect of a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) detonation on U.S. soil that could cause immense damage. In such a situation, it judges, DOD would transition from supporting the Department of Homeland Security to taking charge. DOD, it states, needs proper legal authorities to carry out this role, and it should take steps to ensure that a portion of the National Guard can be quickly mobilized to contribute. In addressing cyberspace, the QDRP Report judges that cyber threats are

increasing in ways that menace DOD information networks as well as national infrastructure. It calls for DOD to be able to defend its networks at home and abroad from attack. However, it also states that DOD should possess the capacity to shut down attacks instantaneously at the point of origin as part of a larger government effort to identify the types of cyber attacks that should be treated diplomatically as acts of war and to eliminate them. The QDRP Report calls for major increases in the resources committed to cyberspace security. Similar to the QDR Report, it applauds creation of U.S. Cyber Command, but it notes that a larger cadre of trained cyberspace professionals will be needed.

Strengthening the All-Volunteer Force. In this arena, the QDRP Report puts forth judgments similar to those of the QDR Report, but offers a broader, more penetrating set of improvement measures. The QDRP Report proclaims that recent and dramatic growth in the cost of the all-volunteer force cannot be sustained for the long term. Failure to address costs, it states, likely will result in a reduction of the force structure, fewer benefits, or less qualified personnel. Accordingly, it recommends major changes to the military personnel system. These include greater differences in assignment and compensation between one or two terms of service and a career, increased cash-in-hand for those serving less than an entire career, and use of bonuses and credits to reward critical specialties and outstanding performance. They also include a continuum-of-service model that allows Servicemembers to move fluidly between the Active and Reserve Components and among the military, private sector, civil service, and other employment. Beyond this, the QDRP Report states that current limitations on length of service provide insufficient time for personnel to gain the education, training, and experience needed for 21st-century warfare. It recommends lengthening military career opportunities to 40 years, broadening educational opportunities, and making military health care more affordable. It calls for establishing a new National Commission on Military Personnel to develop its recommendations and build support for them.

The QDRP Report also calls for improvements to professional military education (PME). It calls for offering full college scholarships on a competitive basis in exchange for 5 years of Active service as an officer. It calls for Service academies and Reserve Officers' Training Corps programs to offer better education on military affairs and related social sciences. It calls for programs that offer early career officers the opportunity to attend graduate schools to study military affairs or foreign languages and cultures and that mandate a graduate degree for all officers promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel/commander or above. Calling for efforts to improve the quality of intermediate and senior Service schools, it states that service on a PME teaching faculty should be a requirement for promotion to flag rank, and it continues that PME educational curricula need to be given adequate depth and rigor to better motivate attendees. To upgrade the influence of PME in DOD, it calls for creating a Pentagon Chief Learning Officer at the Assistant Secretary level and for assigning a senior flag officer to be chancellor for all PME schools.

Reforming the DOD Acquisition Process. The QDRP Report looks favorably upon the QDR Report's treatment of the need to reform the DOD acquisition process for developing and buying new weapons and other systems. Nonetheless, it judges that the QDR Report did not go far enough in identifying root causes or proposing effective reforms. Similar to the QDR Report, the QDRP Report laments the well documented failures of the acquisition process, including lengthy delays in producing new weapons, failure to respond to urgent needs of combatant commanders, inflated requirements for new technology, lack of competition, and cost overruns. The fundamental reason for this poor performance, it states, is fragmentation of authority and responsibility for managing acquisition efforts. Such fragmentation, it argues, exists at all levels of the acquisition process, from identifying needs and defining alternative solutions to choosing and resourcing acquisition programs and delivering them on schedule at acceptable cost. This problem, it states, begins from the moment that a new weapon is approved by the Joint Requirements Oversight Committee. It becomes

therefore a program of record that is treated as nearly immortal regardless of subsequent delays and cost overruns. Performance, it states, is rarely traded off, and only in the most egregious cases are flawed programs cancelled; too often, success is achieved only with the personal intervention of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and that of other senior DOD leaders.

To solve these problems, the QDRP Report urges a strong effort to vest authority and responsibility on individuals in positions of line management so that better program management is brought to bear on all major projects. With proper managerial authority and responsibility, it judges, relevant capabilities for current operational needs (for example, needs in Afghanistan) can be delivered within weeks or months, and major new weapons systems can be fielded within 5 to 7 years, not the 10 to 15 years often taken now. Part of the reason for long delays, it claims, is that development projects (for instance, the F-22) typically try to produce major leaps in technology and performance in a single step.

A better model, it judges, is a development process that provides a serviceable weapon within 5 to 7 years—a good time frame for judging achievable technology—and then makes incremental improvements as subsequent models are produced. A good example is the F-16 program, which produced a good fighter in a few years and then subsequently improved it with better capabilities as new models were produced over 20 to 30 years. Recognizing that some programs nonetheless will face challenges, the QDRP Report states, tradeoffs in schedule, cost, or performance may have to be made. It reasons that while often the best model will be adhering to original costs and schedules and accepting less performance, tradeoffs in performance can be judged credibly only by force providers—another good reason for vesting authority and responsibility for program management in the military Services and defense agencies with proper OSD oversight. In addition, the QDRP Report urges greater competition among dual sources before final decisions to develop and procure new weapons are made—a strategy that was employed in a host of successful weapons development programs. Dual-source competition, it states, will require DOD to reverse its current reliance on a small

number of large defense industries by returning to a model of more defense contractors and greater competition among them.

Accordingly, the QDRP Report puts forth a set of recommendations:

- The Secretary of Defense should establish lead acquisition roles in a manner that assigns responsibility for identifying gaps in capabilities and executable solutions to force providers (for example, combatant commanders, Services, and defense agencies), uses OSD and Joint Staff to make decisions about choosing and resourcing solutions, and employs the lead Service/agency to deliver new weapons on schedule and within cost estimates.
- For each program, an unbroken chain of command should be established within the force provider community, one that runs from senior OSD authorities to the relevant Service secretary/defense agency, then to the Program Executive Officer, program manager, and defense contractor.
- When urgent needs arise, adjustments should be made in the formal process to deliver effective products within a period of weeks or months, rather than years.
- OSD should return to dual-source competition rather than single-source contracting.

Fostering Improved Whole-of-government Activities, Comprehensive Approaches, and Civilian Capacities. Many future national security challenges, the QDRP Report states, will require an adroit blending of hard power and soft power. For example, the ongoing operation in Afghanistan and efforts to help failing states necessitate a mix of military forces to suppress violence and build host-nation security forces, coupled with civilian assets to promote good governance and economic development. To address this need in ways similar to the QDR Report, the QDRP Report calls for better capacities to pursue whole-of-government approaches and comprehensive approaches. It defines *whole of government* as efforts to merge multiple departments and agencies into a coherent enterprise and *comprehensive approaches* as efforts to coordinate U.S. activities with host nations, allies and partner nations, and

international organizations. In addition to pursuing progress in both areas, the QDRP Report calls for creating greater civilian capacities for carrying out future political-military operations in key regions.

Arguing that the U.S. Government does not currently do a good job of handling whole-of-government and comprehensive approaches, the QDRP Report calls for measures aimed at fostering improved interagency planning and coordination among DOD, State Department, Intelligence Community, and other agencies. It also calls for a rebalancing of military and civilian capabilities in ways aimed at lessening demands on the U.S. military in stability and reconstruction missions by increasing the cadre of civilians in DOD, State Department, and other agencies that are trained for deployment missions. In addition, it calls for better management of contractors and reforms to expand the scope and flexibility of U.S. security assistance policies. Such goals lead the QDRP Report to put forth the following recommendations:

- Congress should pursue several legislative steps aimed at reforming the national security effort, such as restructuring Titles 10, 22, 32, and 50 in order to enhance interagency cooperation while clarifying roles and responsibilities for departments and agencies, strengthening educational programs, and creating interagency teams that plan and exercise for future deployments.
- The executive branch should establish a consolidated budget line for national security that, at a minimum, includes DOD, State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Intelligence Community; the Office of Management and Budget should develop a mechanism to track implementation of whole-of-government and comprehensive approaches.
- Congress and the President should establish a National Commission on Building the Civil Force in ways aimed at increasing U.S. civilian capacities in multiple departments and agencies.
- DOD, State, and other agencies should strengthen capacities for pursuing overseas missions and comprehensive approaches.

- The U.S. Government should aspire to reform international security and assistance efforts in ways aimed at strengthening comprehensive approach capacities of allies and partners.

Creating a New Strategic Planning Process for National Security. The QDRP Report concludes with a section that is critical of the QDR Report. Specifically, the QDR Report demonstrates an alleged lack of strategic guidance for the next 20 years, its domination by staffs that handle narrow program and budget issues in parochial ways, its failure to put forth a better DOD force structure and modernization plan for the long term, and its lack of vision and innovation. Such problems lead the QDRP Report to conclude that in coming years, the entire QDR process should be scrapped because, presumably, it is beyond salvation. The QDRP Report calls upon DOD to rely on its normal Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System (PPBES) to perform functions now handled by the QDR Report. To help foster new and better strategic planning across the government and the inter-agency community, the QDRP Report recommends the following steps:

- Congress and the executive branch should establish an Independent Strategic Review Panel of outside experts that would convene every 4 years, at the time a new administration is inaugurated, to assess the international environment and recommend changes to existing national security strategy.
- Once this panel has issued its findings, the National Security Council staff would employ them to craft a “grand strategy” that would be formalized as the new National Security Strategy reflecting the President’s views and priorities.
- This new strategy would drive subsequent strategic reviews by key executive branch departments, including DOD, State/USAID, Homeland Security, and Intelligence Community, all of which would be animated by the goals of supporting the new National Security Strategy, integrating departmental reviews with it, and identifying mission critical elements.

- The National Security Advisor will be responsible for guiding and coordinating subsequent strategy implementation by participating departments and agencies.

Strengths, Shortfalls, and Lingering Issues. The QDRP Report effort was launched because the QDR Report left critics dissatisfied with its strategic reasoning and force enhancement proposals. When it was published, the QDRP Report echoed these criticisms, but careful appraisal of its content suggests that is best seen as a complement to the QDR Report rather than a competitor or a replacement for it. Both documents have important strengths, but in differing ways. Whereas the QDR Report does a good job of focusing attention on enhancing DOD capabilities for current and near-term operations, the QDRP Report does a good job of addressing long-term goals and priorities. Both perspectives are valuable. Together they crystallize a critical issue: How much emphasis should be placed on preparedness for near-term operations versus different long-term priorities, and how should a proper balance be struck between them? The two studies answer this question in different ways, but a fully satisfactory judgment can be formed only by referencing both studies, rather than one in absence of the other. For this reason, the two studies feed off each other in ways that are constructively interactive, not mutually exclusive.

Notwithstanding their differences, the two documents are similar in how they address strategic affairs. Both are global in scope, focus heavily on the Middle East and Asia, and warn of troubles and threats ahead such as terrorism, WMD proliferation, rival adversaries, and potential conflicts. Although the QDRP Report talks in more overt geopolitical terms than the more muted QDR Report, they are similar in the ways they endorse national security strategies, goals, and missions; handle Iraq and Afghanistan; and treat foreign countries (allies, partners, neutral big powers, and adversaries). In handling these strategic affairs, the QDRP Report is more concerned with future management challenges facing DOD and the U.S. Government, and more vocal about calls for reforms, but the QDR Report acknowledges these challenges and advocates its own case for reforms and rebalancing. Both studies agree

that in future years, DOD will need to show greater skill at applying its resources because defense budgets will no longer be growing rapidly.

In addressing specific issues, many similarities abound. Both studies call for improvements in U.S. military forces and the all-volunteer force, better homeland security and cyberspace defense, stronger whole-of-government and comprehensive approaches, better interagency coordination, and close working relationships with partners abroad. They both call for enhanced civilian capacities for future operations requiring them, as well as for close civilian-military coordination and cooperation in the field. Both call for reforms to DOD's troubled, slow, and expensive acquisition process to do a better job of producing new weapons and other systems in ways that are faster, cheaper, and more effective. The QDRP Report does a better job of probing root causes for difficulties facing the acquisition process as well as basic management reforms needed to rectify matters, but both studies are advocating ways to achieve the same positive results. Conversely, the QDR Report does a better job of discussing reforms to security assistance, but again, both studies are pushing in the same strategic directions. Because each study often provides a detailed treatment of issues not addressed heavily by the other, together the two studies do well at covering the waterfront even though both suffer from the drawback of not addressing in enough depth DOD/government future budgets and spending patterns.

The QDRP Report is critical of the QDR Report for not proposing a better force-sizing construct and for not identifying a better U.S. military posture for the long haul. But the QDRP Report proposes no force-sizing construct of its own—and in reasoning that the 1993-approved posture makes sense for the future, it quarrels with the QDR Report only by proposing an enlargement of the Navy beyond approved levels. More naval combatants may make sense because of emerging requirements in Asia, but otherwise, the QDRP Report proposes future ground and air forces that differ little from the QDR Report. The QDRP Report differs appreciably with the QDR Report in its call for a faster, more ambitious force modernization of U.S. ground, naval, and air forces. This recommendation has

strategic logic on its side, but in order to carry it out, larger acquisition budgets are needed. The QDR Report's allegedly lackluster treatment of modernization priorities derives partly from awareness that future acquisition budgets likely will not be large enough to fund all of the many desirable weapons and other programs. The QDRP Report opens the door to additional modernization, but because it does not identify where the necessary funds are to come from, it either risks breaking the bank or fails to be clear about where sacrifices must be made elsewhere.

Where does sound policy for modernization lie? Perhaps somewhere between these two perspectives, but identifying a proper path ahead requires a penetrating treatment of future modernization programs and budgets in ways that neither document provides. Because future defense budgets will not be growing in major real terms, much depends upon whether they can be squeezed in ways that channel more funds into procurement and modernization. Part of today's budgetary challenge stems from a multiyear trend that has seen expenses for personnel, peacetime operations, and health care soar. The result has been slower growth in investment spending than otherwise would have been the case. In mid-2010, Secretary Gates announced a gradual effort to shift about 6 percent of DOD spending from lower priority measures to higher priority ones, with investment accounts to be a main beneficiary. If this effort succeeds, it could bolster procurement budgets enough to permit faster modernization. But much also depends upon whether DOD can reform its acquisition process to speed RDT&E programs and to buy new weapons at affordable costs. On this critical matter, the QDRP Report and QDR Report agree.

The outcome of their mutual efforts to reform the acquisition process is yet to be seen, and likely will be a function of how multiple RDT&E and procurement programs are handled by each Service component. Modernization of U.S. air forces seems best poised to operate at a steady rate that provides such new fighters as the F-35 JSF, F/A-18 A/B, and unmanned aerial systems. Modernization of ground forces is less certain. Cancellation of the Army's Future Combat Systems program for high-tech lightweight

ground vehicles has led the Army to pursue a redesigned Ground Combat Vehicle program that is less technologically ambitious and less risky. If the Army opts for improvements to such existing vehicles as the Abrams tank, Bradley fighting vehicle, Stryker vehicle, and MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) armored vehicle, new and better vehicles could be available for procurement in a few years in ways that would provide important marginal improvements, but not a great technological leap forward. But if the Army opts for an entirely new class of vehicles aimed at pushing the technology envelope further, it could face a more prolonged RDT&E effort and thus later procurement, perhaps near the end of this decade.

The Navy faces similar challenges in designing new warships in ways that balance near-term achievability with long-term technological progress. If by mid-decade or later the outcome is the modernizing of air forces but a slower modernization of ground and naval forces, this will produce a stronger U.S. military posture, but not in the faster, comprehensive ways favored by the QDRP Report and QDR Report. The key point, which applies to both reports, is that advocating reforms to the acquisition process makes sense, but actually implementing them is hard because of the many difficult RDT&E decisions that must be made one weapon at a time.

Is the QDRP Report too critical of the QDR Report in proposing that in the future, it should be scrapped? Although the QDR Report is far from perfect, a telling observation is that the QDRP could not have been written so well in the absence of an already published QDR Report to provide a benchmark and a model to criticize. Beyond this, the QDR Report may not be popular in some quarters outside DOD, but within DOD, it performs valuable analytical and planning functions that help inform many civilian and military personnel. Nothing comparable currently exists to take its place. Perhaps the QDRP is correct in judging that DOD could use its normal PPBES functions and documents to replace the QDR Report. But a noteworthy consideration is that the QDR Report was originally commissioned partly because the PPBES process was not producing a synthetic, comprehensive document to guide DOD strategy and planning. If the QDR

Report is abolished, DOD will need to conduct a formal internal strategy review every 4 years, as was done before the QDR Report was created, but these strategy reviews were always classified and unavailable across all of DOD, the U.S. Government, and the general public. If the QDR Report is scrapped, presumably this public communications task would have to be handled by restored Secretary of Defense annual posture statements, which earlier were as long and detailed as today's QDR Report. If the QDR Report is to be killed off, something similar will have to be created to replace it. Perhaps the solution is not to scrap future QDR Reports, but instead to prepare them more fully and carefully, with due attention not only to the near term, but the long term as well.

As for the QDRP Report's suggestion that an Independent Strategic Review Panel of experts be convened to produce strategic guidance before an incoming administration has had time to write its own national security strategy, this idea seemingly makes sense. In 2010, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization followed a similar recommendation by convening such a team of outside experts to provide guidance in the months before the Alliance set about the task of writing a new strategic concept. The result was a useful study (see chapter 6). Perhaps similarly useful studies could be written by Independent Strategic Review Panels in ways that give incoming administrations a useful infusion of outside advice. But ultimately, each new administration will need to go through the exercise of preparing its own national security strategy, its own QDR Report, and comparable studies by other departments and agencies. In this regard, the past and present are prologue.