



## Dissuading China and Fighting the “Long War”

Carl Conetta

In January, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld submitted to Congress the Pentagon’s third Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).<sup>1</sup> Mandated by Congress in 1996, these reviews are supposed to show how the Department of Defense will provision and enact the nation’s military strategy. The 2006 iteration is the first to fully reflect the department’s post-9/11 innovations and the first to encapsulate the putative lessons of the Iraq war. Nonetheless, it came and went with little controversy or even notice. The quiet passing of the 2006 QDR belies its provocative content, which sets America and its armed forces on a high-risk and costly road—one more likely to lead to calamity than security. Critics of the Bush administration may find comfort in the belief that the influence of neoconservatives is waning, but the 2006 review will be part of their lasting legacy. Its influence on thinking and planning inside the U.S. armed forces will not soon fade.

The 2006 review advances two new strategic vectors to guide the armed forces in their development efforts: the so-called long war against Islamic radicalism, and an increased emphasis on shaping the behavior of China by means of military “dissuasion.” Both are ill-conceived. The practical effect of the first vector is to embed defense planning in an unusually broad and open-ended wartime framework. The second vector imposes an overlapping “cold war” framework, raising the prospect that what lies at the end of the present “long war” is more of the same.

As I will argue later, neither vector accurately portrays the military threat to U.S. interests or maps a realistic path to enhanced security. Indeed, the administration’s strategic imperatives are more likely to precipitate the dangers they purport to guard against—and there is no surer sign of strategic bankruptcy than that. At heart, this is a failure at the level of national security strategy. The review simply serves to move it to the center of the defense planning process. But the review also fails in its assigned purpose—which is to align strategy, missions, assets, and budgets. Secretary Rumsfeld sets ambitious new goals for the U.S. armed forces, but he fails to show how the programmed forces fit the strategy or how the proposed budget can support the force.

### *Future Missions*

In accord with the goals of the “long war,” the review adds significantly to U.S. military missions in the areas of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, stability operations, and nation building. Similarly, it makes a bid for significantly expanding the armed forces’ responsibilities and authority in the areas of intelligence gathering, covert operations, and foreign security relationships. There is no corresponding contraction in the Pentagon’s traditional or conventional military missions, however. Indeed, by explicitly linking these more closely with concerns about China, the QDR insulates them from retrenchment.

Looking to the future, the QDR usefully divides proposed military activities into two

categories: “steady-state” and “surge.” Steady-state activities include:

- Conducting multiple, irregular missions of varying duration. These comprise counterterrorist operations as well as smaller scale counterinsurgency, stability, and nation-building missions—as in Afghanistan and Colombia.
- Maintaining a global presence in order to dissuade, deter, and defend against threats to the U.S. homeland, U.S. allies, and overseas assets.
- A special emphasis on detecting and interdicting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
- Increased interactions with a growing roster of security partners for the purposes of reassuring them, building their military capabilities, and creating closer working relationships.

Compared with the previous QDR, the most notable addition in this task list is the imperative for continuous irregular missions. Of course, the steady-state missions named above do not exhaust the services’ roster of routine activities. In addition, they will have to generate, train, and sustain the nation’s armed forces—an imperative that encompasses not only the reproduction of ready units, but also their transformation. Transformation activities, loosely defined, include reconfiguring America’s global base posture, developing new capacities for irregular warfare, improving interservice cooperation, and building “network centric” armed forces. The army, in particular, will have to train to a new tactical structure. And all the services will have to integrate new generations of “big ticket” platforms.

The review’s second category of activities—the so-called surge missions—include:

- Helping to manage the consequences of domestic WMD attacks and other catastrophic events.

- Conducting large-scale protracted counterinsurgency, stability, transition, and reconstruction operations.
- Waging two nearly simultaneous conventional campaigns, with the aim of “regime change” in one of the campaigns.

The two-war standard has been a consistent feature of America’s post–Cold War defense strategies, although the Bush administration added the goal of regime change in 2001. The 2006 QDR adds the goal of conducting a major counterinsurgency campaign. This could count as one of the wars described in the “two war” construct. Nonetheless, adding insurgencies to the big war mix does impose new requirements because military units and assets are not fully fungible across different types of conflict. Thus, the two-war rule now encompasses four types of large-scale operations (as well as mixed cases):

- Wars like the Afghan and Kosovo conflicts, in which air power plays the primary role.
- Conflicts like the conventional phase of the 2003 Iraq war, which involve large numbers of mechanized units and air power in a traditional form of air-land battle.
- Operations like the current counterinsurgency and nation-building effort in Iraq, which are heavily dependent on dismounted troops and Special Operations Forces.
- A major navy-centric conflict—such as defense of Taiwan—which also would draw heavily on air force assets.

Are planned force enhancements sufficient to support another quantum leap in activity? For that matter, are they sufficient to close the existing gap between missions and capabilities apparent in Iraq? The force

development program set out in the review leaves considerable room for doubt.

### *The Implications of the Iraq War*

The difficulties encountered in Operation Iraqi Freedom provide a good indicator of the challenge the armed services may face as they attempt to implement the review's strategic imperatives. Moreover, the QDR's treatment of the Iraq experience is an indicator of how Secretary Rumsfeld thinks the Department of Defense should manage such difficulties in the future.

Reasonable people can disagree about the wisdom or necessity of the Iraq war, but no one can reasonably deny that the effort has turned out to be a "long, hard slog," as Rumsfeld belatedly observed. Together with other commitments, the war has required Marine units to spend 25 percent more time deployed than is optimal. Active army units have been exceeding their deployment standards by 60 percent. These rates would have been even higher except that the Pentagon leaned heavily on National Guard and reserve units, deploying as many as 80,000 reserve personnel overseas at one time for tours averaging 342 days. The stress on equipment is equally great, with utilization rates in Iraq exceeding peacetime standards by two- to ten-fold—a pace that quickly depletes the useful life of equipment.<sup>2</sup>

What is most sobering about the effort poured into Iraq and Afghanistan, however, is that it has not yet brought peace, stability, or development to either place. This lends credence to former army chief of staff Gen. Eric Shinseki's early estimate that victory in Iraq would require many more thousands of soldiers than were deployed. But a more fundamental requirement is a counterinsurgency doctrine that works, which the Pentagon has not yet demonstrated. And, of course, it is possible that no such method exists for cases in which an insurgency draws on genuine popular opposition to foreign occupation.

The review is not entirely immune to recognizing the difficulties that the Iraq case poses. It allows that "operational end-states defined in terms of 'swiftly defeating' or 'winning decisively' against adversaries may be less useful for some types of operations...such as...conducting a long-duration, irregular warfare campaign."<sup>3</sup> This is a welcome retreat from the notion that the U.S. military had developed a new method of fast, decisive, and low-risk warfare, which the Pentagon peddled during the run-up to the Iraq war. Still, this concession to reality is cold comfort because it does not involve an adjustment of either strategic ambitions or resource allocation. Instead, it suggests that policymakers should simply lower their expectations of easy victory. This reflects no strong commitment to avoid or surmount "long, hard slogs" in the future.

### *Force Development Plans*

Some congressional critics see in the Iraq experience good reason to increase the number of U.S. armed forces personnel by between 30,000 and 85,000.<sup>4</sup> This seems a minimal degree of adjustment if the nation is to stay its present course. The administration sees requirements differently, however, as the QDR makes clear. The Pentagon is actually planning to *reduce* the military rolls by between 40,000 and 75,000 troops. This will bring the size of the armed forces down to the target level set by the Clinton administration: approximately 1.35 million active-component personnel.

The Pentagon plans to reassign 13,000 personnel to the Special Operations Forces (SOF), adding to the current cohort of 52,000 SOF troops. The Pentagon also hopes to become more efficient in how it utilizes personnel by altering the division of labor between active and reserve components and by freeing 70,000 troops from their current stations in Europe and Asia for use elsewhere. Finally, the army will reorganize its units in order to boost the number of active-component combat brigades from 33 to 42.

(In recent years, as many as 20 active army brigades have been deployed overseas simultaneously.)

While the increase in special forces personnel is clearly relevant to the growing emphasis on irregular operations, other initiatives are less convincing. The QDR directs the army to improve the competency of its regular troops in special operations skills. But given the high tempo of current activities, it is unclear how this might be accomplished without degrading other skills. And, as noted above, neither the army nor the Marine Corps has yet demonstrated a reliable, winning formula for counterinsurgency operations.

With regard to unit stress, redividing the army's assets can increase the brigade count, but the brigades will be weaker than before—at least until new technologies and fighting techniques are integrated and proven effective.<sup>5</sup> At any rate, 42 brigades are still not enough to cover the army's current commitments. No more than one-third of the total should be operationally deployed at any one time.

Although spending authority for defense research, development, and procurement is slated to rise above \$170 billion annually by Fiscal Year 2008, little of this increase will serve counterterrorism or counterinsurgency needs. One exception highlighted in the review is the plan to purchase 322 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) by 2011, which will nearly double the size of the current fleet.

The review is more generous in supporting the development of prompt global strike capabilities, which will give the United States a greater capacity to strike targets with little warning from very great distances. Initiatives in this area include the conversion of some Trident nuclear submarines to a conventional role, the arming of Trident missiles with conventional warheads, and the early fielding of a new long-range bomber. These capabilities are useful for destroying suspected weapons of mass

destruction. And they will generally enhance the credibility of U.S. deterrent and coercive threats.

Overall, there is little evidence in the QDR of the administration's early pledge to "skip a generation" of weapon systems and pursue a more radical transformation of the armed forces. As before, numerous traditional weapon platforms are going forward simultaneously, including several types of combat aircraft and new classes of destroyers, submarines, and aircraft carriers. Least impressive is the progress toward and plans for improving interservice cooperation and assembling a "network-centric" military to succeed the present "platform-centric" one. Thus, while the review sets a radical course of strategic action, it marks a setback for those who have imagined an innovative restructuring of the armed forces.

The fact that much of the U.S. defense dollar is being devoted to traditional forces and their modernization does not mean that developments in these areas will be inconsequential, however. During the next five to ten years, the U.S. military's capacities to deliver accurate firepower will increase substantially with the addition of smaller, smarter bombs and missiles as well as new launching platforms. These will be able to simultaneously put at risk four or more times as many targets as today. And the average standoff distances from which platforms deliver their fire should more than double. As a result, fewer platforms will be required to conduct large-scale bombing and missile campaigns, making it easier to prosecute several at once—or one of enormous intensity.

America's growing capacity to deliver an avalanche of fire and steel will not make "winning the peace" any easier, though, especially where insurgencies are involved. Of continuing relevance will be the paradox illustrated in Iraq. There, successful precision attack was just an entrée to utter and seemingly intractable chaos.

Where does this leave us regarding the concordance between proposed missions and the review's force development plans?

Unfortunately, the 2006 review continues a trend evident since the mid-1990s of providing less of the quantitative data needed to assess accurately the match between assets and proposed missions. Such data might illustrate how the Pentagon would allocate forces to undertake different combinations of routine and surge tasks—and also show how these forces might stack up against prospective foes. Lacking this, only broad generalization is possible. But recent experience and current plans suggest that the United States will continue to lead the world by a substantial margin in the area of conventional warfare. Of course, this does not mean that the United States can win all prospective conflicts of this sort at an acceptable cost. Scale, circumstance, and the quality of one's opponent matter. Or, to put the issue bluntly: China is not Iraq. The review also leaves doubts about the nation's capacity to successfully prosecute large-scale counterinsurgency campaigns or to create stable democracies by military means. Nothing in recent experience or in current Pentagon planning provides reason for confidence on this score.

Another problem is the fit between the Pentagon's plans and its proposed budget. Currently, the Pentagon plans to spend \$2.5 trillion during the next five years—not counting the incremental cost of operations. But a 2006 report by the Congressional Budget Office concluded that Department of Defense budgets may actually underestimate requirements by more than \$60 billion a year—and this on the assumption that the incremental cost of operations declines from the current \$120 billion a year to less than \$25 billion.<sup>6</sup>

Federal fiscal trends pose a more fundamental problem: even at current spending levels, the review's ambitions are not easily reconciled with bringing the national debt under control while also meeting pending

demands on Social Security and Medicare.<sup>7</sup> Of course, this dilemma has dogged U.S. national leadership persistently since the 1980s. But it gains greater urgency if the nation is on the cusp of a new era of war, as the QDR contends. In this light, Secretary Rumsfeld's determination to just keep slogging along suggests an unusual willingness to run risk. At minimum, what is due is a closer look at where the administration's national security strategy proposes to take the nation and why.

### *The "Long War"*

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review marks a transition from the "global war on terrorism" to the "long war" against Islamic extremism as the policy framework for responding to the September 11 attacks. The notion that the West must wage a long war against radical Islam or Islamic extremists is not new, having been a staple of neoconservative thinking since the fall of 2001 at least.<sup>8</sup> The proposition took some time to wend its way to the center of U.S. military planning, but four years of combat and contention with diverse Islamic militants in Afghanistan and Iraq has served to reinforce the idea. And it has found an advocate in Gen. John Abizaid, the head of U.S. Central Command, who has been energetically briefing top military and political leaders on the notion since early 2005. The "long war" concept reimagines the U.S. counterterrorism effort through the lens of the Iraq war experience.

From the start, the global war on terrorism drew criticism. The most trenchant critics questioned the logic of proposing to wage war on something that was not a political entity, but a tactic or means of warfare.<sup>9</sup> Not only was the putative target unbounded, but extinguishing the sources of terrorism in general might be a task that no amount of military power could accomplish. This made a mash of strategy, which at minimum requires that the target and goals of a war be well defined. Strategy also requires

that the causal chain by which war or forceful action is supposed to achieve its goals must be rigorous, plausible, and clear. These were demands that the global war on terrorism framework could not meet.

Unfortunately, the “long war” formulation does not significantly redress the weaknesses of the old framework. Although it narrows the focus of military effort in some respects, it broadens it in other ways that promise to increase the number and scale of ill-conceived U.S. interventions abroad. Moreover, it gives the impression that the United States is engaged in a crusade against Islam or Islamic power—to the benefit of extremists.

The “long war” as envisaged in the QDR defines an agenda and scope of action for the U.S. military that is virtually indeterminate—insofar as its purview encompasses the entire Muslim world. Identifications of the enemy tend to be categorical, rather than specific, and the criteria for inclusion in the enemy camp tend to be highly subjective. This approach to defining enemies runs the risk of dissipating American efforts and precipitating threats where none presently exist.

According to the 2006 review, the target of the “long war” comprises global terrorist networks (like al-Qaeda), associated movements, and their supporters, including state sponsors (such as Syria and Iran). The enemy is “Islamist terrorist extremism,” which employs “terror, intimidation, propaganda, and violence to advance radical political aims.” These aims include “subjugat[ing] the Muslim world under a radical theocratic tyranny,” “perpetuat[ing] conflict with the United States and its partners,” and “oppos[ing] globalization and the expansion of freedom it brings.”<sup>10</sup>

These views substantially echo those that General Abizaid presented to the Senate Armed Services Committee in a September 2005 briefing.<sup>11</sup> Abizaid further elaborated the list of enemy objectives to include: carrying out jihad, driving the United

States and Zionists from the Mideast, overthrowing apostate governments, establishing Islamic law in Muslim-majority countries, and reviving the Caliphate. (“Caliphate” refers to a central, global authority for all Muslims. The historical Caliphate was abolished by the Republic of Turkey in 1924.)

President Bush offered a more expansive description of the “long war” in an October 2005 speech at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington.<sup>12</sup> He identified the war’s target in ideological terms variously as “Islamic radicalism,” “militant jihadism,” and “Islamofascism.” Under these rubrics, he included “borderless terrorist organizations” like al-Qaeda, unaffiliated local cells, and regional groups, including “paramilitary insurgencies and separatist movements in places like Somalia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Chechnya, Kashmir, Algeria.”

The president also specified the Caliphate as a “radical Islamic empire” spanning from Spain to Indonesia. One of the most important goals of the “long war” was “to deny the militants’ control of any nation” which could serve as a base for their efforts. This is a rationale for involving the U.S. military in local counterinsurgency and pacification operations throughout the globe.

The authors of the “long war” strategy characteristically do not define its target as a distinct political or military entity, or even simply as a network. Instead, as evinced by President Bush in his October speech, they seek to “ideologize” the threat—that is, render it a coherent “-ism.” They fail even at this. What is set out in the QDR is no more than a list of putative threat signifiers, such as “Caliphate,” “jihad,” “Islamic law.” The problem is that the concepts these words evoke enjoy at least mild assent among a very substantial percentage of the world’s Muslims—the vast majority of whom are not insurgent, violent, or even especially political. But it may not escape their notice

that adherence to these common Islamic concepts may now mark them as potential enemies in the eyes of American military leaders.

The review further defines the enemy as employing or supporting terrorism, other forms of violence, and intimidation to achieve its political aims. This qualification carries the war far beyond al-Qaeda and its partners to also encompass insurgencies, civil conflicts, and separatist and antigovernment movements.

In many conflicts with an Islamic element—for instance, in Chechnya, the Philippines, Israel-Palestine, Indonesia, Xinjiang, and Kashmir—local conditions and real grievances play a major or even principal part in driving violence. In such cases, Islam may serve only as the idiom of militancy, not its source. At any rate, knowing that a movement opposes what it calls an “apostate” government or that it seeks to advance, among other things, some form of Islamic law does not tell us much about its relationship to U.S. and regional security.

It is a mistake to put these conflicts into the same strategic basket as al-Qaeda’s anti-U.S. operations. Doing so makes it harder to gauge the value, feasibility, and cost of any prospective U.S. involvement.

Central to the “long war” framework is the assertion of a unitary challenge from a “global Islamic insurgency” that is worthy of comparison to the challenges of the Second World War and the Cold War. But the “global Islamic insurgency” does not exist except as a construct in the minds of jihadi fanatics, a coterie of neoconservative thinkers, and the authors of the QDR. What does exist are a number of separate local insurgencies with a strong Islamic element. Seven of these are substantial in size and intensity, but none are simply wars of Islamic assertion. In most cases, the linkages among them are not robust, nor vital to their functioning. Thus, while foreign fighters constitute a small percentage of the insurgents in Iraq, most are neophytes, not seasoned itin-

erant warriors.<sup>13</sup> Among the insurgent movements and organizations, differences of belief, program, and composition are as prominent as similarities. The “long war” concept has the unfortunate effect of bleaching out these differences.

In addition to indigenous insurgencies, there are several clusters of Islamic terrorist cells that routinely operate regionally or globally.<sup>14</sup> These form a loose network, of which the most prominent and influential portion is the cluster around Osama bin Laden. Between September 15, 2001, and May 15, 2006, members of this network conducted approximately 50 attacks on international targets (outside Afghanistan and Iraq) causing about 800 fatalities.<sup>15</sup> Most of this activity was decentralized, however, and not planned, directed, or financed by any type of global headquarters. Al-Qaeda and kindred groups often participate or originate in the local insurgencies and draw recruits from them. But these internationalists are not leading the insurgencies, and their focus on fighting distant enemies is often at odds with local concerns.

To give substance to the assertion of a “global Islamic insurgency,” the “long war” narrative depends heavily on parroting the grand schemes of Osama bin Laden, his Egyptian collaborator Ayman al-Zawahiri, and other Islamic extremists. For instance, General Abizaid’s September 2005 briefing to the Senate Armed Services committee included a graphic from an extremist website that maps the imagined march of the insurgency across the globe toward its millenarian end: a worldwide Caliphate. It is as though bin Laden and al-Zawahiri were Hitler or Stalin directing hundreds of divisions to our gates. This view utterly misconstrues the actual dynamics of their influence and distracts from the real and present dangers they pose.

#### *China in the QDR*

According to the 2006 review, one of the key priorities of U.S. defense policy is

“shaping the choices of countries at strategic crossroads” by means of dissuasion. In this regard, the QDR breaks new ground by marking China as the nation with the “greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States.” What is important here is not the statement of fact, which is obvious, but the official declaration of concern, which is portentous. More important, the review clearly links its concern about China with a need to develop “forces capable of sustained operations at great distances into denied areas.”<sup>16</sup>

China also figures centrally—and explicitly—in U.S. plans to reposition its forces globally. Currently underway is a multi-billion dollar effort to improve U.S. military headquarters and bases in the Pacific. This includes preparing Guam to receive B-1 and B-2 bombers. The navy will assign to the area an additional aircraft carrier battle group and several additional submarines, including the Trident submarines converted to carry cruise missiles. On the diplomatic front, the United States has concluded new security cooperation and military assistance agreements with both Japan and India that focus on China as a central concern. Japan, with U.S. encouragement, is developing its security ties with Taiwan—for the first time citing China-Taiwan tensions as a matter of Japanese national security interest. Commensurate with these developments, the U.S. armed forces are increasing the scale, extent, and frequency of their military exercises overall and with other nations.

By explicitly elevating China as central in U.S. defense preparations and activity, the crafters of the 2006 review presumably did not mean to precipitate, signal, or seal a dedicated military competition. But this may hinge on Washington’s ability to maintain the distinction between dissuasive and deterrent uses of military power.

Dissuasion supposedly offers a way to manage those international relationships that have a potential for confrontation but

that have not yet become adversarial. Effective dissuasion weighs against a proscribed behavior (or path of development) by persuading an opponent that it is unlikely to achieve its ends at an acceptable cost. However, dissuasion is not supposed to involve explicit threats of conflict or retaliation. Instead, it entails a material expression of interest in a specific situation or outcome. The aim is to communicate implicitly that an undesirable competition or contest is likely to ensue if another nation or actor persists along the proscribed course of action. In a sense, dissuasive acts “stake a claim.” (In a land rush, once a parcel of land has been “staked” by an individual, other individuals desiring that parcel must recalculate the costs of acquiring it to include the prospect of confrontation with the first claimant. But the staking of a claim does not necessarily announce that one actor sees the other as a threat.)

Unfortunately, the 2006 review does not “speak softly” in outlining its dissuasive aims. Indeed, by naming China as a factor in war planning, it subverts the logic of dissuasion. This certainly will certainly influence the thinking among China’s national security elite—to the benefit of the hawks. And it may help edge the U.S.-China relationship toward open military competition. By contrast, the 2001 review, which introduced the administration’s dissuasion strategy, did not mention China at all.

In assessing the U.S. approach to China, it also is important to recognize that some forms of “claim-staking” can be provocative—especially if expressed by military means. The success of dissuasive acts in discouraging, rather than provoking, competition partly depends on what behaviors they target and what interests they engage. It would be relatively easy, for instance, to dissuade Beijing from stationing naval vessels in the Caribbean. It is quite another matter to dissuade Chinese naval activism in the South China Sea. Energetic U.S. counter-moves would likely prompt acquiescence in



the former case, but stiff competition in the latter.

Generally speaking: to the extent that dissuasive acts impinge on the internal affairs, sovereignty, core interests, or normal prerogatives of a target country, they are more likely to prompt resistance than compliance. Likewise, if Washington seems to be claiming extraordinary rights or privileges through dissuasive acts, the targeted nations will either resist complying or strive to alter the power balance between themselves and the United States.

U.S.-Chinese differences over Taiwan clearly go to the heart of what the Chinese consider to be their core national interests and none of America's business. Nonetheless, in mutual assent to the "one China" principle, there is a means for containing this difference. And it will hold so long as neither China nor Taiwan forecloses the prospect of their free and peaceful reunification.

A more fundamental issue is whether the United States can foresee accepting China as an equal—first regionally, then globally. If the 2006 review is a guide, the answer is clearly "no." Its goal is to integrate China as a "responsible stakeholder" in an international order led by the United States. This subordinate relationship is unacceptable to Beijing and will become more so as China grows more powerful. On the American side, there is a tendency (evident in the 2006 review as well as in its two predecessors) to equate U.S. national security with the defense of U.S. global primacy, with Washington viewing challenges to the latter as threats to the former. Taken together, the Chinese and American views portend an era of contention and possible confrontation.

For the present, China's strategy is to lie low, build its economic and military power, and not provoke the "hegemon." At present, the United States and its allies enjoy a quite substantial margin of military superiority in the region, making major confrontation an

unenviable option for China. Although the economic and military gap is bound to narrow in the coming decades, the United States may be able to limit China's future options in other ways. But that will depend on the outcome of the "long war."

### *Opposite Pulls*

The requirements of a potential conflict with China and those of the "long war" pull the Pentagon in almost diametrically opposite directions. Preparations for tank-heavy warfare pull in yet another direction. Covering all three sets of requirements as well as other missions poses a serious fiscal challenge. From the perspective of building bureaucratic consensus, however, the new constellation of tasks and challenges puts every military service, branch, and asset fully to work (with possible future claims on additional budget dollars).

There is a deeper logic that unites the two strategic vectors, however. It centers on emphasizing the maintenance of U.S. primacy as an overarching goal and approaching the "long war" as integral to that effort. Essentially, the "long war" as presently conceived is not about simply disabling those terrorist groups or networks that threaten the United States with violence. It is about prompting or even compelling political and societal transformation throughout the Arab world. The efforts to deal with "rogue states" and proliferation problems by means of "regime change" are also perfectly consonant with this thinking.

If it could succeed, the "long war" would secure for America an important geostrategic flank—along with the world's most critical strategic asset: oil. Success also would gain America new allies, while denying them to potential competitors, and allow U.S. bases and security partnerships to spread to the southern edge of Russia and the western borders of China. These accomplishments would better position the United States to extend against all challengers its tenure as sole superpower.

In practice, the administration's geo-strategic vision rests on an abiding faith in the utility of war and armed force. And it, like the Quadrennial Defense Review, seems relatively insensitive to issues of cost, risk, and inadvertent effects. But most of all it begs the question that is neither asked nor answered in the most recent review or its predecessors: is primacy really worth the candle? ●

## Notes

1. Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2006* [hereafter, *QDR*] (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, February 6, 2006).
2. Congressional Budget Office, *The Potential Costs Resulting from Increased Usage of Military Equipment in Ongoing Operations* (Washington, DC, March 18, 2005); Janet A. St. Laurent, *Observations on Recent National Guard Use in Overseas and Homeland Missions and Future Challenges* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, April 29, 2004); William J. Perry, *The U.S. Military: Under Strain and at Risk* (Washington, DC: National Security Advisory Group, January 2006); William J. Perry and Michele A. Flournoy, "The U.S. Military: Under Strain and at Risk," *National Defense*, May 2006; and Loren B. Thompson, Lawrence J. Korb, and Caroline P. Wadhams, *Army Equipment after Iraq* (Washington, DC, and Arlington, VA: Lexington Institute and the Center for American Progress, April 2006).
3. Rumsfeld, *QDR*, p. 36.
4. George Cahlink, "Hell No, We Won't Grow," *Government Executive*, March 16, 2004; and, Lawrence J. Korb, Caroline P. Wadhams, and Andrew J. Grotto, *Restoring American Military Power: A Progressive Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, January 2006).
5. Elaine Grossman, "Study Faults Army Brigade Team Plan," *InsideDefense.com*, January 27, 2006; and Col. Douglas Macgregor, "Army Transformation: Implications for the Future," testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, July 15, 2004.
6. Congressional Budget Office, *The Long-Term Implications of Current Defense Plans and Alternatives* (Washington, DC, January 2006).
7. Steven M. Kosiak, *Analysis of the FY 2007 Defense Budget Request* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, April 2006), pp. 7–8.
8. Eliot A. Cohen, "World War IV: Let's Call This Conflict What It Is," *Wall Street Journal*, November 20, 2001.
9. Jeffrey Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, December 2003).
10. Rumsfeld, *QDR*, pp. 1, 9–18, 20–24, 28.
11. Senate Armed Services Committee, "United States Military Strategy and Operations in Iraq and the Central Command Area," *Federal News Service*, September 29, 2005.
12. "President Discusses War on Terror at National Endowment for Democracy" (Washington, DC: Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, October 6, 2005).
13. Anthony H. Cordesman, *New Patterns in the Iraqi Insurgency: The War for a Civil War in Iraq* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 27, 2005); Nawaf Obaid and Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Militants in Iraq: Assessment and Kingdom's Response* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 19, 2005); and Reuven Paz, *Arab Volunteers Killed in Iraq: An Analysis*, Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (Herzliya, Israel: Global Research in International Affairs Center, March 2005).
14. Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 70–73, ch. 5.
15. *The MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base*; <http://www.tkb.org/Home.jsp>.
16. Rumsfeld, *QDR*, p. 30.