

Three weeks ago the terrorist strikes against the Pentagon and the World Trade Center shocked the world. Today, we who serve in uniform are focused on taking down the network of terrorist organizations responsible for these acts and all those that support them. And, as General Shelton said in his farewell remarks at Fort Myer on Monday, our brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and coastguardsmen are ready for this challenge.

But even as we fight this war on terrorism, we must also continue our efforts to transform our military. To ensure we remain ready, in the years ahead, to meet America's future security challenges.

That's why this year's Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is so timely and so important. The report, released by Secretary Rumsfeld on 30 September, will be an important guidepost as we continue our transformation efforts in the years ahead.

During the past months, senior military officers, to include the Joint Chiefs and the CINCs, were all heavily engaged in the QDR process.

Their involvement ensured the best military advice was made available to the Secretary and was taken into consideration by his team. Additionally, this high level of engagement ensured that this QDR was well-grounded on strategic requirements.

I would like to emphasize two key points:

First, the QDR faced two critical tasks: ensuring the near-term ability of the force to protect and advance U.S. interests worldwide; and transforming our forces to meet the security challenges of the future.

The difficulty, of course, is addressing these two challenges simultaneously. In my view, the program recommendations and defense strategy outlined in the QDR, if matched with the necessary resources, will move us toward accomplishing both; while balancing the associated near-, mid-, and long-term risks.

The second point I want to make is that we have much more work to do to. Including detailed studies and analysis. The QDR is not the endgame. It is an important step forward along the path of transformation.

We believe that the QDR moves us in the right direction--towards achieving a sustainable balance between strategy and force structure--and a balance between the demands of today with those of the future.

Achieving this balance, and maintaining it, will take a lot of hard work both by those in uniform and those in the Department of Defense. It will also require the continued support of this committee. But it is essential that we get this right if our Armed Forces are to remain the finest fighting force in the world.