

**COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES**

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
SEAPOWERS AND PROJECTION FORCES
CHAIRMAN

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME, TERRORISM,
HOMELAND SECURITY, AND INVESTIGATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
THE CONSTITUTION AND CIVIL JUSTICE



2135 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6365

9401 COURTHOUSE ROAD, SUITE 201
CHESTERFIELD, VA 23832
(804) 318-1363

505 INDEPENDENCE PARKWAY
LAKE CENTER II—SUITE 104
CHESAPEAKE, VA 23320
(757) 382-0080

J. Randy Forbes
United States Congress
4th District, Virginia

February 12, 2014

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
Office of the Secretary of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1300

Dear Secretary Hagel:

I am writing today regarding the pending release of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and my concern that, at a time when the Department could be using a document like this to shape its future forces and build a case for the resources it will require to meet emerging challenges, it may again fall below expectations.

As you are aware, this will be the fifth QDR since the Congress established the process as part of the 1997 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Since that time, I think it is fair to say that QDRs have had a mixed history. They have served to guide the Department in new directions on important issues like the future of long-range strike, security assistance, and the size and shape of our Special Forces community, among others. However, while they were intended to bring some consistency to long-range defense planning and investments, they have instead been employed by various Secretaries as rubber-stamps to justify a lowest-common-denominator, consensus-driven approach to national security.

Since the first QDR in 1997, this Nation has fought a global conflict against Islamist terrorists, witnessed the rise of disruptive states pursuing nuclear weapons like Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and watched the People's Republic of China vastly expand its military modernization efforts. Yet despite facing a more unpredictable and in many ways more dangerous world than the years immediately following the Cold War, subsequent QDRs have accepted a shrinking force structure and reduced modernization investments. As a result, many elements of our Nation's military continue to depend on weapon systems that were first designed and fielded in the 1980s or even earlier. With each QDR and Presidential Budget came a new promise that our Nation could do more with less. While the ingenuity and commitment of our men and women in uniform could often times generate greater efficiencies, some two decades later this equation no longer adds up.

The net effect of our decisions has led to a slow abandonment of a two-conflict, force-planning construct that has been a cornerstone of our defense planning for the last twenty years. Indeed, in 2010 the Department failed to even include a force-planning construct in the final document. The Independent Panel that assessed the 2010 QDR concluded that it was a "missed opportunity" to not include a "clearly articulated force-planning construct that the military

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
February 12, 2014
Page 2

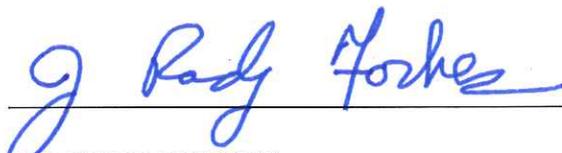
services and Congress can use to measure the adequacy of U.S. forces.” I fundamentally believe that maintaining a National ability to conduct two, simultaneous major contingency operations is a necessary requirement for the United States to continue to shape the emerging security environment and maintain its status as a globally capable superpower.

Even more remarkable, despite the changing shape of threats the United States has faced over the last two decades, each of the military services have continued to receive a relatively static level of budget resources. It is hard to believe that despite our shifting global commitments from deterring a crisis in places like Iraq and North Korea during the 1990s, to counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan during the 2000s, and now to a more air and maritime focus along the littorals of the Indo-Pacific, our defense investments have somehow remained remarkably similar across the services. This approach means that all the services benefit in flush times and all share pain equally in times of scarcity, irrespective of overarching national strategy and emerging threats. I would expect that a true strategic assessment of our force modernization plans in this coming QDR would step back and consider the individual contributions each service can make to our national defense strategy in the coming twenty years and then proceed to build a budget from there.

Finally, despite the shortfalls of the QDR and our defense-planning process, one of the real advantages of this exercise is that it requires the Department to “define sufficient force structure” and “force modernization plans” to “execute successfully the full range of missions called for in that national defense strategy.” These specific figures and plans are a central component to the QDR and important for the Congress to comprehend the direction the Department intends to go inside the Future Year Defense Program (FYDP) and beyond. Without these details, the QDR would not only fall short of its legal requirements under Title X, Section 118, subsection (b), but we would be left to consider budget year requests absent an understanding of our long-term requirements. While one may ultimately disagree with the force structure included in the 2014 QDR, its inclusion as a declaration and measurement for this Administration’s plans and outlook is absolutely necessary.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to continuing to work with you and the Department on these important issues facing our Nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Randy Forbes". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

J. RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress