

Revising the Strategy Formulation Process and Related Documents

By: Mark Cancian
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SUMMARY

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the existing strategy formulation process and resulting documents because of their perceived lack of prioritization and the disconnect between goals and resources, as well as the burden the processes place on staff and decisionmakers. As a result, both congressional chambers made proposals for reform. These proposals complement each other in some places and conflict in others. Common themes are more centralization to allow a unified vision and less susceptibility to staff-level consensus, more classification to allow increased candor in the documents without risking criticism by outside groups, and simplification of statutory requirements to allow focus on the key issues and reduce staff burden. FY 2017 is not the final opportunity for reform. The Congress can make further changes in the future as insights are gained from the outcome of these reforms and from the next set of strategic reviews.

The table below summarizes the Senate, House, and administration positions in each topic area. The paper then describes the existing strategy documents, discusses the legislative provisions in detail and assesses each, and finally proposes a way ahead. The appendix provides excerpts of the statutory language for each provision.

Table 1: Remarks from Congress and Administration

	Senate	House	Secretary Carter/Administration
National Military Strategy (NMS)	<p>Section 921: Revises Chairman's duties regarding the NMS. Taskings are similar to the existing taskings but more general.</p>	<p>Section 905: Replaces existing NMS language. Taskings are similar but more general.</p>	<p>[No administration comment]</p>
Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)/Defense Strategy Review (DSR)	<p>Section 1096: Replaces QDR/DSR with annual classified National Defense Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 902: Repeals QDR/DSR (10 USC 118)</p> <p>Section 904:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replaces QDR/DSR with defense strategic guidance document from Secretary of Defense every four years. 2. Requires Secretary to annually provide guidance to subordinate elements for program and budget review. 3. Requires Secretary to provide, every two years, guidance to the Chairman for the preparation and review of contingency plans. 4. Finally, requires Secretary to submit to the congressional defense committees a copy of the guidance documents and "any additional or alternative views of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." 	<p>White House SAP on Senate Section 1096: Strongly objects to annual national defense strategy as unnecessary and an administrative burden.</p> <p>White House SAP on House Section 904: Strongly objects to providing internal, pre-decisional guidance documents to Congress. Argues that release would impair candid discussions and that information is protected by executive privilege. Providing CJCS dissenting views "would impair candor and confidentiality of pre-decisional advice given to the Secretary and the President."</p> <p>Levine-Waldhauser study: The department will review the strategic guidance documents and the processes for developing them to increase clarity and reduce staff burden, especially the QDR/DSR.</p> <p>Secretary Carter's "Heartburn Letter": Expresses concerns about "the many intrusive provisions that are not routine-and-vigorous oversight but instead micromanagement, for example, providing guidance documents to the Congress."</p>

	Senate	House	Secretary Carter/Administration
National Defense Panel (NDP)	<p>Section 1096: Simplifies NDP taskings, makes report classified with unclassified summary, and establishes earlier deadline (Nov 1).</p>	<p>Section 902: Repeals NDP (10 USC 118(b))</p> <p>Section 903: Instead of NDP, establishes a "Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States" to examine and make recommendations on the U.S. national defense strategy.</p>	[No administration comments]
National Security Strategy (NSS)	<p>Section 1090: Changes NSS guidance from submission "in both a classified form and an unclassified form" to "in classified form, but may include an unclassified summary."</p>	[No comparable provision]	[No administration comments]
Study on Strategy-Resources Alignment	<p>Section 1078: Requires report by independent organization on "the adequacy and sufficiency of the force structure of the Armed Forces to meet future threats to the United States."</p>	[No comparable provision]	[No administration comments]

BACKGROUND

The current state of play with the key strategy documents, before any changes in the FY 2017 NDAA, is shown below, in the order of the hierarchy that such documents represent.

- National Security Strategy (NSS). Envisioned as a whole-of-government document, the NSS is issued by the President and coordinated by the staff of the National Security Council. Current legislation (50 USC 3043) requires an annual report (actually

two, initial and full) that sets out national interests, commitments, capabilities, and uses of national power. Administrations have rarely issued reports with this frequency, however.

- National Defense Strategy (NDS). The NDS does not have a statutory basis and was last issued by Secretary Gates in 2008. Its purpose is to outline how DOD will support the objectives outlined in the NSS and provide connection to the NMS. It describes the United States' overarching goals and strategy and establishes planning objectives for military force structure, force modernization, business processes, supporting infrastructure, and required resources (funding and manpower). The contents of a NDS have generally been subsumed within the Quadrennial Defense Review (see below).
- National Military Strategy (NMS). The NMS is required by 10 USC 153 and produced by the Chairman, with input from the service chiefs and the combatant commanders. It describes the armed forces' plan to achieve military objectives and provides strategic direction on how the joint force should align military ends, ways, means, and risks.
- Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). Required by 10 USC 118 at the beginning of an administration, the QDR establishes DOD strategy, programs, and priorities. The statute specifies the elements of the review in detail. The CJCS conducts a separate risk assessment, which is included with the QDR report. The report is due by March 1 of the year following the beginning of a new administration. The report can include a classified annex, but administrations have rarely used this authority. The FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act changed the name of the QDR to "Defense Strategy Review" (DSR). A major substantive change was that the review could explicitly consider resources in developing a strategy, whereas previously the QDRs had to be fiscally unconstrained. Other changes included considering three timeframes—near-term (5 years), mid-term (10 to 15 years), and far-term (20 years)—and reducing the number of specific topics that had to be addressed. In the view of most experts these were positive steps.
- National Defense Panel (NDP). Required by 10 USC 118(b), the NDP provides a strategic assessment of defense by outside experts, independent of DOD and the QDR.
- Annual guidance to DOD components. As long required by 10 USC 113, the Secretary annually gives program and budget guidance to subordinate elements of the department. Various names have been used, including Consolidated Guidance, the Defense Planning/Programming Guidance, and the Guidance for Development of the Force, among other names; this guidance sets up the Secretary's annual review of programs to produce a budget.
- Contingency guidance. Currently called the Guidance for the Employment of Force, the Secretary establishes guidelines for prioritizing force use, to include a presidentially-approved Contingency Planning Guidance that directs the development and maintenance of key operational and concept plans.

There have been many criticisms of the current strategy documents and processes, of the QDR especially. These criticisms include the following:

- A lack of clear priorities,
- "Lowest common denominator" recommendations as a result of development by consensus,
- Lack of candor about decisions for fear of alienating some interest group,
- Weak connection between strategy and resources,
- Slowness in responding to changes in the national security environment, and
- The high staff burden.

A sample of criticisms are cited below.

Michele Flournoy testified before the SASC that both the bottom up nature of the QDR and its eventual release as a public document has allowed the QDR to be dominated by a "tyranny of consensus," that renders it a "glossy coffee table brochure written primarily for outside audiences, including the press, allies and partners, defense industry, and the Hill."¹ Eliot Cohen similarly argued that, "Most public documents, to include the National Security Strategy of the United States, are the vapid products of committees. A much better system would be something like the White Papers produced by the Australian and French systems, not on a regular basis but in reaction to major international developments, and composed by small, special commissions that include outsiders as well as bureaucrats."² Jim Thomas argued for developing strategy by small groups, rather than committees: "Historically, single individuals and small groups have tended to formulate the best strategies. Their details are classified to avoid signaling to adversaries how we intend to compete, deter, counter, or defeat them. They are also kept secret to avoid embarrassing our friendly foreign relations...."³

Some have noted that, despite its shortcomings, a QDR process does have value, having helped initiate several major shifts in strategy. Shawn Brimley and Loren DeJonge Schulman noted that past QDRs are "remarkable historical snapshots of how Pentagon leaders saw the strategic environment, the major operational challenges facing the U.S. military, and the necessary programmatic investments needed to address them."⁴

Concerned about the strategy formulation process, the Congress required a study in the FY 2016 NDAA (section 1064). That study will look at the process and documents broadly,

¹ http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/Flournoy_SASC-Written-Statement-Dec-2015.pdf

² Eliot Cohen, Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee On Defense Strategy, 114th Cong., 1st sess., October 22, 2015, http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Cohen_10-22-15.pdf

³ Jim Thomas, testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, 113th Cong., 1st sess., February 26, 2013, <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS06/20130226/100299/HHRG-113-AS06-Wstate-ThomasJ-20130226.pdf>

⁴ <http://warontherocks.com/2016/06/au-revoir-qdr/>

examining all the major documents, assessing the historical experience and several case studies, and making recommendations about best practices. To ensure objectivity, the study must be conducted by an independent research entity. The study results are due to the secretary 18 months after NDAA enactment and to the Congress 90 days after that. Since the NDAA was signed December 19, 2015, the study is due in August 2017. Section 906 of the House bill makes a minor addition to the study's task list.

SECTION DETAILS AND ASSESSMENT

There is broad agreement that current strategy documents are not as useful as they should be, and that change is needed. However, in their proposed changes, the two chambers have competing versions of replacement language for the QDR/DSR and the NMS, and each bill has its unique restructuring provisions. Despite these inconsistencies, there are three overarching themes: centralization, simplification, and classification. Centralization means developing strategy with a single voice and not being the consensus product of a committee. Simplification means focusing guidance on the big issues and away from details about specific topics. Classification is a way to allow more candid discussion about tradeoffs and priorities without risking public backlash from affected groups and interests.

National Military Strategy

Senate section 921: This section changes the duties of the CJCS, including the requirements for the NMS. The new NMS language is similar to the existing statutory language, but the taskings are more general. For example, existing language identifies specific areas for assessment such as operational contractors, alliance contributions, and engagement with other governmental departments whereas the new language deletes those provisions and calls for the more general "establishing a strategic framework" and "assessing strategic and military risks."

House section 905: This section replaces the existing statutory language for the NMS. According to the committee, the purpose of the change is, "to provide a strategic framework for the development of operational and contingency plans by the combatant commands, and to provide joint force and joint capability development guidance to guide resource investments by the military services. To provide such guidance, the committee also believes that the NMS should be a classified document."

Consistent with the committee's report language, and with the committee's general approach of focusing the Chairman and the Joint Staff on broad strategic questions, the new language is similar to the existing statutory language but more general. The new language is also very similar to that in the Senate bill. The effect will be to move the Chairman and the Joint Staff out of budgetary and programmatic issues and more into joint coordination and strategy assessments.

Despite NDAA report language supporting making the NMS a classified document, there is no statutory requirement in the new language to make the document classified.

These House and Senate sections were not opposed in either the SAPs or heartburn letter. The inference is that both the Secretary and the Chairman can accept the changes. Further, the changes have not engendered outside criticism. Some concerns might arise if the document becomes entirely classified, but that may be mitigated by the existence of so many other national security documents.

Quadrennial Defense Review/Defense Strategy Review

Senate section 1096: This section would replace the QDR with a national defense strategy issued in January of every year. The new language is similar to the existing QDR/DSR language covering threats, strategy, programs, and budgets but is more general (four tasking paragraphs v. the existing eight paragraphs). It does emphasize the need to prioritize missions, containing the phrase twice.

The provision also requires that the strategy at the beginning of a new administration be issued "as soon as possible" after confirmation of the new Secretary. This is a major change from the existing language which requires QDR submission with the next budget, or about 13 months after the new administration takes office. The committee argued, "The length of time needed to develop the QDR made the report irrelevant to actual national security decision-making because the national security environment evolved more quickly than the review process. The more frequent review and development of a classified guiding strategy document would more rapidly develop the necessary level of detail...."

The fundamental point that strategies may need to change more frequently than every four years has merit, and has been seen in the past, for example, after passage of the Budget Control Act of 2011. However, annual presentations would be a burden, given the elaborate processes and extensive coordination mechanisms that DOD uses to produce strategy documents. In theory the secretary could present the same strategy document over multiple years or an updated document. However, resubmitting the same document would open the secretary to criticism that the department was ignoring all the events that had occurred during the previous year. Telling DOD to be more efficient in drafting documents will not help, given the many internal players who have equities, need to be involved, and can derail the result if not brought into the process. Further, such an annual document would need to be de-conflicted from the annual program and budget guidance that the Secretary already produces.

The accelerated timeline for preparation of a new administration's strategy makes sense. Under the existing timeline, a new administration must amend the current year's budget, submit a new budget, and then develop the next budget, all before it has formally developed a strategy. (For the next administration, that means amending FY 2017, submitting FY 2018, and developing FY 2019 before it develops its strategy.) The accelerated timeline is also achievable. The Bottom Up Review (BUR) of 1993 and the QDR of 1997 were both completed by May of the administration's first year. The BUR was completed even though only a handful of political appointees were available. The Bush

administration got its first QDR out by September of its first year. Waiting until February or March of the following year, as the current statutory requirement holds, is a long time.

House section 904: The comparable House section revises the duties of the Secretary of Defense regarding guidance documents, including the QDR/DSR. The committee's explanation is as follows: "[T]o simplify the strategy and policy guidance required of the Secretary of Defense and to establish a hierarchy for Department of Defense strategy and policy guidance documents. The committee has previously expressed disappointment that the Department's seminal strategy document, the quadrennial defense review, was insufficient in providing a means to set Department priorities, shape the force, guide capabilities and resources, and to understand the relationships between missions, risks, and resources."

The House would replace the QDR/DSR with a requirement for the Secretary to provide classified guidance to the Department every four years on national defense strategy with prioritized military missions and scenarios, force assumptions, risks, and resources. In effect, this would combine the QDR/DSR and the NDS. This change would put the Secretary more in control of the document, making it less of a department-wide consensus effort. Putting the guidance in 10 USD 113 (Duties of the Secretary of Defense) emphasizes this point. The documents would also be inwardly focused on giving guidance to the department, rather than outwardly focused on explaining the department's strategy and programs. By making the document classified, it could be more candid, though it would not provide the public explanation and justification for strategy and programs that the QDR has done in the past. The language describing the guidance is similar to that of the existing QDR/DSR, specifying threats, missions, force size, programs, and resources. There is no requirement for a separate description of strategy, but rather to "support the most recent national security strategy report." The guidance emphasizes prioritization of missions and programs.

The Department already does this to some degree, with the Secretary providing classified terms of reference for recent QDRs. The new provision would expand these classified terms of reference into a complete document.

The section also revises language on the Secretary's annual program and budget guidance to the Department. The new language is similar to the old, but more pointed about prioritizing missions and objectives. It seems unobjectionable.

The section revises the guidance on contingency planning. The new language is very similar to the old, the main difference being omission of "guidance on employment of the forces." This omission is presumably to send a message that civilians should not be directing military operational planning. The Department did not specifically object to this.

Finally, the section requires that a copy of the documents be delivered to the Congress plus a summary of the classified elements, including "any additional or alternative views of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." The existing statutory language (established in the FY

2015 NDAA) only requires summaries, with no requirement for submitting CJCS views to Congress. However, the executive branch, under any president, is sensitive about disclosing internal discussions, pre-decisional documents, or internal disagreements. In particular, executive branch lawyers have long considered contingency planning guidance to be part of the President's commander-in-chief responsibilities set forth in the Constitution. Thus, the SAP strongly objects to the release of these documents to the legislature and to airing any disagreements with the CJCS.

National Defense Panel

House section 903: This section creates a "Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States" as a replacement for the NDP, which was deleted in section 902. The armed services committees' chairmen and ranking minority members appoint the twelve members, similar to the NDP's 10 members but without any appointed by the Secretary. The commission is tasked to "review the current national defense strategy of the United States, including the assumptions, missions, force posture and capabilities, and strategic and military risks associated with the strategy." Final report is due December 1, 2017, with an interim briefing to the Congress on June 1, 2017. This timeline makes the commission's work an input to the administration's strategic review. The NDP, which under existing law would not report until about May, 2018, acts as a commentary and critique.

The tasking and structure are similar to those of the NDP. Compared with the Senate's proposed commission in section 1078, this commission focuses more on strategy and less on resources. The one-time nature in the provision is apparently intended to test the concept before making it a recurring requirement.

The committee's justification is as follows: "[T]he strategic environment has evolved since the current defense strategy, as outlined in both the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance and 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, was formulated. For example, the strategy does not reflect a resurgent Russian Federation, the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or the fragile security environment in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The committee believes that the strategy and the assumptions underpinning it should be reviewed and revised, as appropriate. The committee further notes that the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, in its 2009 final report, achieved a largely bipartisan consensus on its recommended strategic posture and nuclear weapons policy for the United States. The committee believes that the Nation will benefit from such a bipartisan consensus on national security and that a new administration can leverage the work of the commission in its own defense strategy and posture development."

Senate section 1096: The section that replaces the QDR also revises the language for the NDP, though the new language is similar to the existing language. There are three major changes: the panel taskings are simplified, the report is classified with an unclassified summary, and the report is due much sooner (November 1 of the year it is established; e.g.,

November 1, 2017 for the next panel, rather than the existing deadline of three months after the QDR, or about May 2018).

Report on Strategy-Resources Alignment

Senate section 1078: This section requires a report on "the adequacy and sufficiency of the force structure of the Armed Forces to meet future threats to the United States"—i.e., strategy-resources alignment. Many studies have argued that a strategy-resources gap exists, including studies by CSIS, so such a requirement is not surprising.⁵ The report must be produced by an independent organization, not DOD. The statutory language is extensive about what the study should cover and how the analysis is to be conducted.

Being a one-time report, this requirement has not generated controversy. It would produce a snapshot of strategy-resources alignment and whether, and where, a gap exists. That might be useful as the new administration develops its strategic review, whatever form that ultimately takes.

There was no comparable House provision and no administration comment.

Nation Security Strategy

Senate section 1090: The main change is to make the NSS primarily classified, with the option for a corresponding unclassified document. This changes the current approach which is for "both a classified and an unclassified form."

This section has drawn no criticism in the SAPs or the heartburn letter. The notion that a classified document can be more candid about priorities and tradeoffs has merit. However, there will be concerns in the outside community if the only version of the NSS is classified and entirely taken out of public view, especially if other documents like the QDR/DSR replacement are also classified. Part of the job of the NSS is to inform the public and the world about U.S. policy, however imperfect that communication may be. The language allows an unclassified summary, but does not require it.

There was no comparable House provision and no administration comment.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A WAY FORWARD

The new administration will take office in January 2017 and begin its strategic review immediately. Congress, therefore, needs to take action soon if it wants to influence the new administration's approach. However, the FY 2017 NDAA does not need to be Congress's final word on this topic. Additional reforms are possible in later NDAAs, aimed at shaping future strategic reviews. For example, to help next year's deliberations, the Congress will

⁵ Mark Cancian, U.S. Military Forces in FY 2017, CSIS, 2016, p.4-6, <http://defense360.csis.org/u-s-military-forces-fy-2017/>

have the report of the strategy formulation study (due by August 2017) that it directed in the FY 2016 NDAA.

Recommendations for individual documents and their underlying formulation processes are related; that is, what is done with one document affects the others. Reform proposals therefore need to consider all the documents together.

One overarching possibility is to charter a commission, or task a group like the NDP, with devising and recommending to the Congress a coherent set of strategy documents. These documents need to balance several objectives: provide enough candor and prioritization to be useful in giving direction to the different elements of the executive branch, explain the administration's and Department's strategy and programs to the public, and engage relevant elements of internal expertise without constituting an undue staff burden. Such a strategy commission could build on and implement the work in the strategy formulation study.

The following lays out a way ahead on the individual sections that would make real changes that both chambers could agree to, but without risking a veto.

Senate Section 1078/ Senate section 1096 (NDP)/ House section 903: All of these sections get at a similar concern—providing an outside assessment of threats, strategy, and resources. The committees' provisions, however—with three different commissions reporting at three different times—need some consolidation. One approach would be to roll the guidance into a single commission, namely an updated NDP. Senate section 1078 has specific guidance about assessing strategy-resources alignment, for example, and this could be added as a one-time tasking to the next NDP. The commission taskings in House section 903 could be combined with those of the NDP. Both the House and Senate provisions call for an earlier report submission, in November/December rather than the existing deadline of around May of the following year.

Another approach would be to have two separate assessments in the NDP: a near-term look, reporting out in the late summer of 2017—along the line of Senate section 1078—and a longer term look, reporting out in the late-spring of 2018. The House provision already contains this notion with an interim briefing in June and a final report in December. The near-term look would influence the administration's on-going strategic review, while the longer term look would comment on the administration's strategic review after it was published. The panel would need to get started very quickly to meet this timeline. This might be hard, however, given how difficult it is for congressionally-chartered groups to get established and to conduct their business. Although the Senate's language envisioned two separate commissions, it would be hard to get two similar commissions going at the same time since they draw on the same sorts of members and staff. Thus the recommendation here is to have a single commission, the NDP.

Senate section 921/House section 905: The two chambers are in substantial agreement on the approach—making the NMS more strategically focused—and there has been no

objection to the change, either from the administration or the broader community. Therefore, the conference should include the new language on NMS. Staff can iron out the minor wording differences between the two versions.

Senate section 1090: Instead of direction that the NSS “may” include an unclassified summary, substitute “should.” That would provide something for the public, but still allow discussion of sensitive, and candid, elements to be limited to a narrower audience.

Senate section 1096/House section 904: Both of these sections would replace the existing guidance for the QDR/DSR. Given the major changes to the QDR that the 2015 NDAA made just two years ago, it seems reasonable to see how these changes play out in the next strategic review before adopting a whole new approach. Nevertheless, consistent with the themes of this year’s congressional reforms, several important changes could be enacted now in time for this next review.

First, keep the proposed language about earlier submission since past experience shows that to be possible and makes the product more relevant—driving rather than following budget decisions. A shorter process also reduces staff burden since the work will expand (or contract) to fill the time available.

Continue to allow the final report to have a classified annex (which is in the existing language and has been the practice in recent QDRs) and encourage the administration to produce such a document. That allows a more candid discussion of sensitive topics without sacrificing the public diplomacy function of the document.

Require the Secretary to give substantive guidance at the front end of the process to focus it and provide unifying direction. This would codify current practice. This guidance would specify the issues to be considered, the analyses to be conducted, and the policies to be implemented based on the new administration’s platform. It would go beyond the usual front-end process guidance about establishing timelines, assigning tasks to offices, and creating a hierarchy of committees.

Require that the Secretary provide to the Congress a classified letter at the beginning of the QDR/DSR process to describe what the Secretary sees as the main issues, the planned focus areas for analysis, and how the Department will obtain answers to key questions. In this way the Congress can get some information early without requiring that the Department divulge what it regards as internal discussions.

Instead of a full statement of strategy every year, require that a statement about any changes to strategy be included in the Department’s annual budget presentation. That way DOD must inform the Congress about any changes in strategy, but without the burden of a complete strategy development process.

Given the strength of the Administration’s objections about releasability, drop the requirement for the release of internal documents to the Congress. There is no point in having the NDAA vetoed over this relatively minor provision. Instead the committees can

hold hearings or receive briefings on areas of concern. Retain the existing statutory language (enacted in 2015) about DOD providing summaries of the classified contingency plan guidance and the annual program and budget guidance (10 USC 113(g)(3)).

House section 906. The existing strategy formulation study reports out in August, 2017, too late to include the results of the changes in the FY 2017 NDAA and the next strategic review. However, Congress will want insight into how that review went, so it can make appropriate adjustments. The original Goldwater-Nichols process lasted four years, so there is no reason to curtail this reform effort after only one year. Therefore, building on the change already in section 906, the NDAA should add a follow on set of tasks for the study, a phase two, due in late spring 2018. The findings would inform the FY 2019 NDAA and the next set of reforms for strategy formulation.

The phase two tasks would include the following:

- Does the administration need four separate strategy documents—NSS, NDS, NMS, QDR/DSR—a question asked in DOD's internal Peter Levine/Gen Waldhauser memo.
- Do classified documents encourage candor?
- Does classifying documents unduly inhibit public diplomacy?
- Does a top-down approach produce a more coherent, prioritized document?
- Does a top-down approach sacrifice consideration of a range of perspectives and inhibit interaction and information sharing among staffs?



Mark Cancian is a senior adviser with the CSIS International Security Program.

APPENDIX: EXCERPTS OF STATUTORY LANGUAGE

	Senate	House	Secretary Carter/Administration
Summary	Yes—National Security Strategy made primarily classified; annual defense strategy published instead of QDR; one-time study directed on strategy-resources alignment; revised language for NMS.	Yes—Eliminates the QDR/DSR and the NDP. Requires Secretary of Defense to issue guidance for defense strategy every four years, for contingency planning every two years, for budget preparation annually. Guidance documents to be provided to the Congress. Revised language for NMS.	Accepts need for some reform; rejects disclosure of internal documents and imposition of excessive administrative burden.
National Military Strategy	<p>Section 921:</p> <p>[Each even-numbered year] the Chairman shall provide [a] national military strategy or update...based on a comprehensive review conducted by the Chairman in conjunction with the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands. Each national military strategy or update...shall describe how the military will support the objectives of the United States.</p>	<p>Section 905:</p> <p>The Chairman shall [conduct] a comprehensive review that shall describe how the military will support the [national security] objectives of the United States...each National Military Strategy (or update) shall be a mechanism for...developing military ends, ways, and means...assessing strategic and military risks...establishing a strategic framework...prioritizing joint force capabilities...and establishing military guidance for the development of the joint force.</p>	[No administration comment]

<p>Quadrennial Defense Review / Defense Strategy Review</p>	<p>Section 1096: Replacement of the Quadrennial Defense Review with National Defense Strategy...[I]n January each year, the Secretary of Defense shall present to the congressional defense committees a defense strategy for such year. The strategy shall be known as the 'national defense strategy' for the year concerned.</p>	<p>Section 902: Repeal of Defense Strategy Review [Quadrennial Defense Review and National Defense Review]— Section 118 of title 10, United States Code, is repealed.</p> <p>Section 904: Defense strategic guidance—The Secretary of Defense, with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shall provide every four years..., written strategic guidance expressing the national defense strategy of the United States.</p> <p>Policy Guidance on Development of Forces—In implementing the guidance [above], the Secretary of Defense, with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shall provide annually,...written policy guidance [to subordinate elements] for the preparation and review of the program recommendations and budget proposals ... to guide the development of forces.</p> <p>Policy Guidance on Contingency Planning.— [T]he Secretary of Defense, with the approval of the President and after consultation with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shall</p>	<p>White House SAP on Senate Section 1096: "The Administration strongly objects to section 1096, which would require DOD to publish a new national defense strategy annually... If a document is truly strategic, its shelf-life will be far longer than one year. A new strategy takes time to integrate and ... would create substantial administrative burden..."</p> <p>White House SAP on House Section 904: The Administration strongly objects to provisions of section 904, which would direct the Secretary of Defense to submit to the congressional defense committees copies and detailed summaries of classified aspects of defense planning guidance, raising constitutional concerns...Release of this guidance risks impairing the confidentiality of the Secretary's direction to Departmental Components, which contain sensitive national security information protected by executive privilege...</p> <p>Regarding contingency planning, information about potential future military operations used in the preparation of contingency plans is limited even within the Department ...Release of this information would interfere with the prerogative of the President and the Secretary of Defense to communicate direction to subordinate military commanders containing sensitive national security information that is protected by executive privilege. In addition, the required inclusion in the guidance of "any additional or alternative views of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of</p>
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	Senate	House	Secretary Carter/Administration
		<p>provide, every two years or more frequently as needed, to the Chairman written policy guidance for the preparation and review of contingency plans.</p> <p>Submission to Congress— ...[T]he Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a copy of such guidance [documents]... and any additional or alternative views of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."</p>	<p>Staff, including any military assessment of risks associated with the defense strategy," risks...compromising the candor and confidentiality of pre-decisional advice given to the Secretary and the President.</p> <p>Levine-Waldhauser study: "Improved Strategic Guidance Documents: Review the Department's strategic guidance documents and the processes for developing them, with goals of providing greater clarity and cohesion, minimizing complexity, and reducing offices that exist to write and staff these documents that are often overlapping and sometimes contradictory. For example, we will reconsider the Defense Strategy Review (formerly known as the Quadrennial Defense Review) and the extensive processes used to develop it, most of which duplicate existing strategic planning activities."</p> <p>Secretary Carter's "Heartburn Letter": "The many intrusive provisions found in the House and Senate bills are not routine-and-vigorous oversight but instead micromanagement...for example, the requirement that the Dept. provide Congress with restricted, sensitive, and confidential planning documents raises concerns regarding the ability of the Department to carry out confidential, candid, pre-decisional activities."</p>

	Senate	House	Secretary Carter/Administration
National Security Strategy	<p>Section 1090: [Guidance for the National Security Strategy, 50 USC 3043] is amended by striking "in both a classified form and an unclassified form" and inserting "in classified form, but may include an unclassified summary."</p>	[No comparable provision]	[No administration comments]
Study on Strategy-Resources Alignment	<p>Section 1078: The Secretary of Defense shall...submit to Congress a report setting forth an assessment, obtained by the Secretary from an organization independent of the Department of Defense, of the adequacy and sufficiency of the force structure of the Armed Forces to meet future threats to the United States.</p>	[No comparable provision]	[No administration comments]

	Senate	House	Secretary Carter / Administration
National Defense Panel	<p>Section 1096: National Defense Panel. Not later than February 1 of a year following a year evenly divisible by four, there shall be established an independent panel to be known as the National Defense Panel...composed of ten members from private civilian life who are recognized experts in matters relating to the national security of the United States.</p>	<p>Section 903: Commission on the National Defense Strategy For The United States. There is hereby established a commission to be known as the "Commission on the National Defense Strategy for the United States." The purpose of the commission is to examine and make recommendations with respect to national defense strategy for the United States...</p>	