

**INCLUSION for 2026 NDAA RE NATIONAL DEFENSE REFORM  
PROPOSED BY STARRS, MS, CTG**

WHEREAS, the geopolitical and domestic situation has drastically changed since the Goldwater/Nichols Act (GNA) was enacted in 1986. The Soviet Union collapsed and the Warsaw Pact dissolved; China has emerged as our greatest peer competitor; global terrorism sponsored by Iran is causing conflicts and global unrest; NATO is weak; our military is weak; a Space Force has been formed; and homeland security remains threatened by consequences stemming from the previous open borders policy.

WHEREAS, the 2024 report from the bipartisan congressional “Commission on National Security Policy” said:

“The United States confronts the most serious and the most challenging threats since the end of World War II. The United States could in short order be drawn into a war across multiple theaters with peer and near-peer adversaries, and it could lose.”

WHEREAS, in its comprehensive annual report “Index of U.S. Military Strength” the Heritage Foundation rated the overall strength of our military as “*weak*;”

WHEREAS, we have the smallest active-duty military since before WWII; we have experienced the greatest recruiting crisis since the all-volunteer military began in 1973; and the interest on the national debt exceeds the entire DOD budget;

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was formed and yet we have suffered open borders with 10-20 million illegal aliens in our country, rising crime, ~100k fentanyl deaths per year, child and sex trafficking, and cartels controlling access across our southern border;

WHEREAS, since enactment of the GNA, the size of pentagon staffs have grown with duplicate organizational structure among the OSD, the service secretaries, and the uniformed services causing sluggish responses; a bureaucratic focus on processes; and continuous changes in the programming and budgeting cycles;

WHEREAS, the number of SES’s, generals, and admirals in the pentagon has expanded since the GNA of 1986; DOD civilian control of the military has concurrently grown to the point where it must be asked, “how much DOD civilian control of the military and inside the pentagon is enough and how much is too much?”;

WHEREAS, the DOD acquisition system remains sluggish, costly, and inefficient;

WHEREAS, robots, drones, hypersonic missiles, and the rapid expansion of AI applications will have an ever increasing impact on warfighting strategy, tactics, techniques, and procedures requiring more robust interfaces among joint forces and the rapid application of new technology on the battlefield;

WHEREAS, cyber operations are an ever increasing threat to our national security;

WHEREAS, our defense industrial base, both organic and commercial, has been allowed to deteriorate causing major vulnerabilities in the capability to not only replenish expended materiel in a timely manner but also to surge production during a conflict;

WHEREAS, many components critical to our weapons and systems come from foreign sources including China, our principal adversary;

WHEREAS, 20+ years fighting the GWOT with a force too small to meet national security requirements resulted in multiple rotations of troops into the combat zone; the inability to adequately train for joint operations against a peer competitor; degradation of the readiness condition of major items and depletion of munitions and other materiel;

WHEREAS, the force structure size of our military was inadequate to meet the GWOT requirements and is certainly too small to meet a major contingency operation with a peer competitor;

WHEREAS, increased DOD funding is essential to meet the requirements of the 21st century; increasing from the current ~3% to ~5% of the GDP is needed along with eliminating the current wasteful spending and lack of accountability evidenced by DOD failing its annual audit for seven consecutive years;

WHEREAS, considering the national and domestic security threats, consideration should be given about whether the U.S. Coast Guard with its law enforcement and national defense missions remain under the DHS or whether there are more effective alternatives including the DoD;

WHEREAS, projecting timely combat power requires a ready fleet of strategic transportation assets and licensed Strategic Sealift Officers/Merchant Mariners; heavy ground combat forces must be moved by ships to overseas operations making our strategic sealift assets an essential national security capability; this capability has badly eroded under the Dept of Transportation; and serious consideration must be given to moving management of our strategic sealift capability and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy to the DoD.

WHEREAS, combat readiness includes having a medical battlefield casualty treatment and evacuation system that is responsive, rapidly deployable and capable of supporting a major war with a peer competitor; additionally, it must provide responsive care during peacetime to all eligible patients; the entire defense healthcare system requires a thorough review as the Defense Health Agency has become overly centralized and apparently focused on peacetime operations; WHEREAS, the 1998 U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century addressed many emerging threats but, like the GNA, the current and emerging domestic and foreign threats have largely outpaced the study;

THEREFORE, the President of the United States shall, through executive order, commission a blue ribbon panel in-depth study to identify what changes are needed to the GNA and the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century to address the above-stated facts and other facts; and

THEREFORE, the results of such a comprehensive study will be provided to Congress for their consideration regarding an updated GNA and any legislative changes needed to implement recommendations coming from the new National Security/21st Century study.