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IMPLICATIONS OF IRAQ POLICY ON TOTAL FORCE READINESS

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
JANUARY 23, 2007

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IMPLICATIONS OF IRAQ POLICY ON TOTAL FORCE READINESS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, January 23, 2007.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ike Skelton (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. IKE SKELTON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The Armed Services Committee will now come to order.

We thank you for your attendance, General Schoomaker and Commandant Conway. Thank you very, very much for joining us. We appreciate it. And today our committee will hear your testimony on how the President's recent proposal to increase troops in Iraq will increase our readiness posture and the military and strategic risks it will entail.

Two quick things: I understand that our friend John Kelly has just been named for a second star. I hope that is more than just a rumor. Congratulations. We here in the House feel that we got him ready for the rest of the Marine Corps and the rest of his duty when he had his legislative duties downstairs.

And also it is interesting to note last evening after I left the House, I went back and I was flipping on television, and I found this movie on George Armstrong Custer. And the uniform, the blue uniform he was wearing at that time in the battle, was the same uniform that you now call your present and future Class A. So let me compliment you and thank you for wearing them for the very first time here in our committee room; it is a look backward in history, and I think it is very, very appropriate.

We are now looking at an alternate course in Iraq. We are looking at the opportunity for Members and the American people to understand the ramifications of the President's proposed policy on those units and their training and their readiness.

In July of last year, General Schoomaker, you will recall I asked if you were comfortable with the readiness units in the United States and your answer was "no." I am very interested in learning what your opinion is today and what effect the President's new proposal will have on readiness as we go forward.

Now, based on your previous testimony, General Schoomaker, you may recall Congress had some $17 billion on the leadership of our chairman, then Duncan Hunter, to reset the Army equipment

that was becoming so worn. And we need to know what additional reset money, if you have an opinion today, for the future for both the Army and the Marine Corps will have to be.

We also look forward to hearing from you on the strategic implications that such a policy might have on the overall defense posture. This hearing will be an opportunity for us to explore the second and third possible order effects that may result from the proposed troop increase. For example, how will the proposed troop increase affect unit and individual training? How will units be equipped for the fight, given the equipment shortages being experienced here in the United States?

We are also interested in learning more about how the increase in troop levels in Iraq could affect the morale of the troops and their families and what the services are doing to address potential recruiting and retention challenges that arise.

The war in Iraq, as we all know, has placed a large burden on our reserve and National Guard forces. I hope you will take this opportunity to explain more about the recent policy change in the remobilization and its impact. I understand the Army and Marine Corps are doing their best to address these concerns.

Today's hearing will also include a second panel of witnesses. This is very important, and that is why I am hoping, number one, that you will keep your remarks—the entire remarks will go into the record—keep your remarks to four minutes, if possible; and, again, our committee has been doing a very good job, staying within the five-minute rule.

But we will urge them to continue that because we have a second panel, First Sergeant Ciaran T. Allison, who is stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington, who is with a unit that has been notified they will be deploying earlier than intended. And we have two Marine spouses whose husbands are with a combat unit that will be extended to support the increased troop level in Iraq.

These individuals are directly affected, and we look forward to their testimony, so I certainly hope we can reach them as quickly as possible.

Generals, these are important subjects, and we need to understand. I look forward to hearing from you.

I want to remind our members that this is an open session, and Generals Schoomaker and Conway may not be able to answer certain questions of a sensitive nature that could only be answered in a closed, classified setting. I urge members to remain and return for our second panel and, remember, we will strictly adhere to the five-minute rule.

And now for his remarks, Mr. Hunter, the Ranking Member.

STATEMENT OF HON. DUNCAN HUNTER, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERFVICES

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks for holding this hearing which is very timely and very important.

And, General Schoomaker and General Conway, thank you for everything you have done for our country and for your leadership of our troops.

Mr. Chairman, you have focused appropriately on this readiness issue, and one thing that I would like to elicit and to engage in as we go through the testimony, gentlemen, is the reset.

Now, last year both of you came to us, when we were well past the initial markup stages of the defense bill, and said, we are going to need a lot more money to reset and that means basically to repair the tanks, trucks, aircraft that are utilized in the warfighting theaters and have been run pretty strongly and need lots of repair. And we asked you to come in and give us every dime of what you thought you needed, and you did that and did, I thought, a good job of it.

We went over that largely in classified session, to some degree in open session, and you gave us your requirements and we funded every dime. At least my directions and the ranking member's directions to our staff were to fund every dime and come up with what ultimately was—after you took out the amount of reset that was embedded in the President's budget and what was in the supplemental, the balance that was unfunded, we added together and we came up with a package. It was right at $20 billion.

And the Appropriations Committee followed us. The Senate did the same thing. And we ended up with the President's signature on that funding package.

Now, in November, when I checked, I looked at how much had been obligated. It was a fairly low number. I think it was 3.8 billion about halfway through November, and that bothered me because this message that you gave us was one of some urgency; and one thing that we looked at before we engaged in markup, the reset requirement, was checking our industrial base, mainly our depots, to find out if we had the capacity to execute, because the worst game in show business in this town is to come up with funding and then come up with a nonexecution status on the moneys that we have directed to the reset.

When we looked across the depots, the array of depots in the country that will be relevant to reset, most of them had lots of capacity, around 50 percent. So we said, okay, we have got plenty of depot capacity; we can do this.

So one thing I would like you to address today is how far down the line we are and should we surge the depots. Because the depot manager, who comes out of a business school, often likes to see a gradual glide path in terms of hiring, in terms of contracts, so that he has an operation which is smooth and is long lasting.

Exigencies of war require lots of people and lots of contracts working very quickly and in large numbers even though sometimes you lose economies of scale and economies of what I would call "gradualism," but you get stuff prepared fast.

So I would like your opinion on whether we should be accelerating the reset so that we have got that old fire engine back in the firehouse ready to go to the next fire as soon as possible.

Second, Mr. Chairman, I would like the gentlemen to tell us a little bit about their thoughts on the President's plan, the Baghdad plan, the several Iraqi battalions out in front with the American battalion as a backup and the prospects for using that plan as a blueprint to get all of the Iraqi battalions, which we see as 129 battalions on paper, trained and equipped, to get them rotated into the

operational setting so that every one of them, even if they come from a quiet area in Iraq, from one of the nine provinces where there is very little going on, get them some operational experience so, you know, number one, they will come when called, they have got a chain of command that responds to the Ministry of Defense, number two, they have some combat effectiveness.

So if you could comment on the President's plan and whether you think it has got potential to be used as a pattern with which we could stand up the entire Iraqi force and give them a stand-up which is capabilities based because they will have operational experience, rather than geographically based because they are located in a certain part of the country.

So give us your take on that if you would.

Last, thank you for calling the family members of folks who have deployed and are experienced in this high operations tempo (OPTEMPO). That plays an important part in our responsibility to take care of those families, to oversee the setting in which they operate; and I am interested in new insights.

So thank you, and I look forward to the hearing.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hunter, thank you very, very much.

Gentlemen, you may proceed with your summarized version of your more lengthy testimony.

General Schoomaker.

STATEMENT OF GEN. PETER J. SCHOOMAKER, CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY

General SCHOOMAKER. Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the committee. On behalf of the Secretary of Army, Dr. Francis Harvey, and the more than one million active guard, reserve soldiers and civilians of the United States Army serving around the globe, I welcome the opportunity to and thank you very much for this opportunity to be with you today and talk about the need to improve Army readiness, to increase strategic depth and to decrease our overall risk.

We are in very dangerous and uncertain times, as we have talked many times before, and as you know, current demands exceed the strategy that was outlined in the Quadrennial Defense Review.

Strategy involves establishing a proper balance amongst ends, ways and means and policy; and strategy discussions often focus very much on the ends and the ways and fail to sufficiently address the means. The recent decisions by the President and the Secretary of Defense to grow our ground forces and to assure access to all components of our force will help us to establish the balance required to meet and sustain a level of strategic demand by Army forces by providing additional means.

We have received considerable support from this committee and the Congress to increase the readiness of our Army. As a result, the soldiers we have deployed into current theaters in operation are the best trained, best equipped and best led that we have ever put in harm's way. As I explained in the testimony before this committee last June, our immediate challenge lies—the immediate challenge lies in the readiness of the nondeployed forces. We will need your continued support in six key areas that I would like to

outline for the record to restore the strategic depth of our Army necessary to respond decisively to potential strategic contingencies.

First, recent decisions to expand the Army reflect a clear recognition of the dangers we face and the strain that five years of sustained demand placed on the all-volunteer forces. We plan to grow six new brigade combat teams and enabling organizations in our active components and other enabling components in Army National Guard and Army Reserve. This will expand our rotational pool to 76 brigade combat teams and more than 200 enabling organizations in the operational force of the total Army. Our goal is to provide a continuous supply of 20 to 21 brigade combat teams to meet global commitments.

We remain committed to generating whole, cohesive units that are fully manned, trained and equipped, that are fully ready for the challenges they will face. This will require a national commitment to sustain the predictable resourcing over time and to build our force in a balanced, coordinated fashion while providing adequately for the needs of our all-volunteer soldiers and their families.

Second, in the near time to prosecute the long war and to sustain the full range of our global commitments, we must have all components of the Army—active, guard and reserve—ready and able to deploy together.

The changes in reserve component mobilization policies, recently announced by Secretary Gates, are essential. Our reserve components comprise 55 percent of our Army's capabilities. We must fully enable them to perform their new role as an integral part of our deployable force. These new policies will provide predictability and facilitate the deployment of trained, ready and cohesive units, while decreasing the burden on our soldiers and their families. We are working to implement these changes rapidly and will require continued congressional support to do so.

Third, with the support of this committee and the Congress, we have been provided the resources needed to restore battle losses and repair worn equipment through an aggressive reset program. We are well ahead of schedule in executing these funds in fiscal year 2007. In just the first quarter, we have already obligated $10 billion of the $17.1 billion appropriated.

As I testified last year, we anticipate that our fiscal year 2008 will be approximately $13.5 billion, a figure that will increase as we plus up forces in current theaters of operation and increase the size of our Army. Because the replacement of equipment can take up to three years following the commitment of funds, we seek to make that funding available to use as soon as possible. To overcome the unprecedented stress being placed on our equipment today, reset funding will be required for a minimum of two to three years beyond the duration of the current conflict.

Fourth point: With your support, we have made great progress in increasing soldier and unit effectiveness through our modernization efforts. As I have said before, we have historically entered conflicts flatfooted. This current conflict is no exception. Investment accounts were underfunded by approximately $100 billion in the previous decade, resulting in nearly $56 billion in equipment shortages across the Army.

To meet combat commanders' immediate needs, we pulled equipment from across the force to equip soldiers deploying in harm's way. This practice, which we are continuing today, increases risk for our next-to-deploy units and limits our ability to respond to emerging strategic contingencies.

The changed conditions of warfare necessitate that we can no longer assess risk and how we equip our combat support and combat service support units. There are no front lines in today's battle space. We must equip all units with force protection, night vision goggles, crew served weapons, radios and other critical items needed to operate.

Your continued support is helping to fix what I call "holes in the force." I ask you to increase your support for this effort as we work to break this historical cycle of unpreparedness. We must remain committed to investing in technologies and equipment that enable our most important asset, the soldier, to remain ahead of our adversaries, who are constantly adapting to our methods, tactics and tools of warfare. Investing sufficiently in our future readiness is a strategic necessity which must be viewed as a matter of priority, not just affordability.

Fifth, our ability to grow the force to meet rotation requirements is jeopardized today by our inability to execute nearly $6 billion worth of scheduled military construction. We have developed a carefully synchronized, closely knitted stationing plan to enable us to meet our global commitments while fighting the long war. Current delays in funding military construction projects contained in the 2007 Military Quality of Life and Veterans' Affairs Appropriations bill limit our ability to build our modular force and to deliver quality-of-life improvements which our soldiers and families both need and desire.

I have addressed my concern in two separate letters. In November, I coauthored a 16 star letter with the other service chiefs, and in December, Secretary Harvey and I reemphasized the impact of this delay. I recently requested to speak with Speaker Pelosi to emphasize how imperative it is to pass this legislation without delay, especially now while we are at war. To properly house, train, and prepare our soldiers, we need Congress to pass the appropriations bill or amend continuing resolution language to permit execution of all military construction and BRAC projects requested in the 2007 President's budget.

Sixth, we will require access to supplemental funding for fiscal year 2007 by April, and possibly sooner, to properly sustain the Army. We cannot repeat last year's near disastrous "cash flow" experience and meet the increased operational demands now facing us. For fiscal year 2008 and beyond, we must fully resource the Army to enable it to flow as projected.

We are continuing to work with the Department of Defense (DOD) to revise our equipment and investment strategy and to obtain the additional resources needed to support that strategy. These requirements should be transmitted in the fiscal year 2008 President's budget. I ask you to increase funding for these necessary requirements.

The fundamental challenge impacting Army readiness and strategic depth is the need to establish a proper balance between strat-

egy and resources. Had we funded the Army to requested levels in recent years and endorsed policies to ensure access to all of our capability, we would be in a better strategic posture today.

I am greatly encouraged by the actions of the Congress, the President and the Secretary of Defense, which reflect clear recognition of the compelling need to rectify our situation. I look forward to working with this Congress to enhance the readiness and strategic independence of our Army.

Mr. Chairman, thank very much. That concludes my oral statement.

[The prepared statement of General Schoomaker can be found in the Appendix on page 77.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, General Schoomaker. It is interesting to note that from the very seat you are now occupying, Lieutenant General Ted Stroup in 1995 testified the need for adding an additional 40,000 soldiers to the United States Army, and we are finally getting there. I hope someone picks up the phone and calls the general and thanks him for his foresight.

And General Conway.

STATEMENT OF GEN. JAMES T. CONWAY, COMMANDANT, U.S. MARINE CORPS

General CONWAY. Chairman Skelton, Representative Hunter and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the men and women of the United States Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps is currently engaged in what I believe is the first battle in the long war against Islamic extremists. Alongside our fellow servicemen and women, we have been in that fight now for almost five years. Though the troops in the operating forces are being pushed hard by the operational tempo and the frequency of deployments, morale has never been higher because they believe they are making a difference.

They also believe, ladies and gentlemen, that the people of the United States and its Government are behind them. The evidence of that support is everywhere to be seen: the fielding of new materiel and equipment to make their mission success more certain and protect them from enemy blasts, the reset of the force so as to be able to accomplish missions, follow-along missions throughout the globe and, most recently, the request by the Secretary of Defense to grow our end strength.

While the morale of our Marines remains high, we also see leading indicators that the impact of multiple deployments on Marines and their families is being felt. More significantly for the Nation, we believe our training, our other missions are also being impacted.

The recently proposed increase in our end strength to 202,000 active duty Marines will go a long ways to reducing the strain both on the individual and the institution. If this end strength is approved, we will grow our Corps approximately 5,000 per year. This plan will gradually decrease the deployment-to-dwell ratio of some of our low-density, high-demand units. Currently, many of these units are deployed for seven months and home for only five months before they return to combat.

Because over 70 percent of our end strength consists of first-term Marines, we are making plans for the necessary increased recruiting and retention, which will be challenging. We will need the continued support of Congress for enlistment bonuses and other programs, such as advertising, which will be essential for us for meeting these growth challenges.

This end strength increase is separate from, indeed it predates the plus-up operation that has been directed in Iraq. For this operation, approximately 4,000 Marines are affected. Three of our combat formations will be extended by some 45 to 60 days. These extensions have already impacted our Marines and their families, but we have been emphatic about keeping our families informed about the details. We believe that unit programs and family support systems in home stations will help our people meet the challenges associated with the extension.

I am glad you asked the two spouses of our affected battalion, 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, to join you later today. The voices of our families are heard loud and clear in our headquarters, and I appreciate they will be represented today in the Congress as well.

On the issue of equipment readiness, with your help over the last two years we made substantial progress, but there is still much to be done if we are able to win the current fight and respond to other challenges that face the country. We have the right processes in place to reset our force as well as make additional equipment purchases and, of course, when it makes sense, will procure next-generation equipment to keep pace with technology improvements.

Chairman Skelton and Congressman Hunter, thank you for the opportunity to report to you on behalf of the valiant men and women of our Corps. They remain committed to the mission and know the American people and its Government will support them in its endeavor. Your Corps stands ready to serve in any time and place, but your continued support remains a vital and much appreciated foundation to the service.

I look forward to the questions of the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. General, thank you very, very much.

[The prepared statement of General Conway can be found in the Appendix on page 83.]

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask General Schoomaker once again, are you comfortable with today's readiness of the United States Army that is within the United States today?

General SCHOOMAKER. Sir, I have continued concerns about the nondeployed forces, as I stated in my statement. I have no concerns about how we are equipping, training, and manning the forces that are going across the berm into harm's way, but I still have continued concerns about our armed manual readiness.

The CHAIRMAN. General Schoomaker, based upon our recent announced deployment and increase in troop level in Iraq, what impact will that have upon our readiness in strategic risks, in other words, our ability to fight elsewhere if called upon?

General SCHOOMAKER. Sir, obviously it puts continued pressure, increased pressure upon the nondeployed forces.

The CHAIRMAN. General Conway, I ask you the same two questions: Are you comfortable with the level of readiness of the Marines that are within the United States today?

General CONWAY. Sir, I cannot say that I am comfortable. I will talk somewhat around it because we are in open session, but suffice to say that we have examined other war plans and our capability to respond to those plans, and we see that we are lacking in some areas with our ability to do so.

The CHAIRMAN. Are we running a strategic risk if the Marines were called upon to fight elsewhere today?

General CONWAY. Sir, we feel that there is risk. We feel like—that we would be able to respond with those forces that are not committed to Iraq or Afghanistan, that the response would be slower than we might like, would not have all of the equipment sets that ordinarily would be the case; and there are certainly risks associated with that.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Conway, of the 21,500 reinforcements that are being sent to Iraq, 4,000, as I understand, are going to the Al Anbar Province; is that correct?

General CONWAY. That is correct.

Mr. HUNTER. Tell us a little bit, in a general way, about why you need those 4,000 Marines.

General CONWAY. Sir, I really believe, after having visited there just after the Christmas holidays, that we are going to be reinforcing success in the Al Anbar Province. Things are going quite well out on the border in a place called Al Qa'im, where I think the Marines have brought that success; and likewise, in Ramadi I was somewhat surprised to see things are as encouraging as they are there from the efforts of both the Army brigade and some great Marine battalions that are in the region.

So I think that in this instance, the commitment of additional forces is timely, and that they will be able to assist the commander in reinforcing the success that they are seeing in these areas of operation.

Mr. HUNTER. And are the Marine commanders on the ground there, are they the folks who wanted additional Marines to come out?

General CONWAY. That is correct, sir.

In conversation with General Zilmer while I was there, on the concept, of course, there was a wide range of options; and in discussion at the time, he indicated that he could use some help, but did not think that he needed as much as was being talked about in some of the planning. But he felt a couple of battalions could make a significant difference.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you.

Gentlemen, General Schoomaker, I understand that you have obligated now the ten billion dollars of the additional moneys that we have funded for reset. Have you taken a look at the prospects of obligating this money faster?

And let me just tell you, as we watch the business process, we have often sent our teams out from the Armed Services Committee, particularly on up-arming the vehicles; and we say, how come we are not doing this faster in a particular case, and the answer is, we are only getting our steel so fast.

We then sent a team to the steel company, and our professional staff members would say, how come you are not doing the steel faster? They say, because we didn't get a request to have more shifts, and we think that even if we did get a request, we might have a—we are going to have to work with the unions.

And our professional staff members would say, let us talk to the unions; and we talk to them and they say, we have got kids over there, we will go with more shifts. And we would be able to actually move the production of up-armor to the left, that is, get it done sooner; not because we weren't working smoothly and not because funds weren't being obligated, but simply because we didn't ask the system, can you get it done faster.

So my question to you is, can we get it done faster, this reset?

General SCHOOMAKER. Sir, I share your concerns about the typical management process of trying to be the most efficient, and, you know, managing through what I call each eye of the needle on the perfect slope, and—that has been a frustration of mine. And we have worked very hard, the leadership, and much of the leadership behind me has worked very hard to push that mentality to the side and to move.

As you know, the $17.1 billion that was appropriated, that you authorized and was appropriated this year for us to reset, is broken down roughly into two roughly equal pieces. One piece of it is procurement which actually goes out and buys things, materials, and end items, out of industry. The other piece of it is for work. It is operation and maintenance money that pays for labor and for the actual work. We have obligated the first piece of that against the requirements, put that stuff onto contract.

The thing that would regulate the expenditure of the rest of it is, we pay for work performed so that is going to be metered out at a different rate than what the other is. We have reset now, since the beginning of this war, over 20,000 pieces of equipment. And we have doubled the depot output. But as you know, in the depots, there are different lines, and some of those lines are constrained by long lead-term items that we are making investments in now that are going to affect us down the road, but because we didn't make the investment previously, are hampering the kind of effect that you are talking about.

So my view is that we agree in principle on the necessity to be unconventional in the approach as we do it. The investment we are making today is going to pay off for us, but we are only four months into the deal. I believe that we have maximized our obligation of that money. I believe that it is going to pay off. But as you know, this continued pressure on deployment pressure and reset pressure is going to eat through that pretty quickly.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentleman.

Mr. Ortiz.

Mr. ORTIZ. General Schoomaker, General Conway, thank you so much for your dedication and your service to this country.

I am concerned about the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report that recently reported that 40 percent of our armed forces equipment is currently in the Central Command (CENTCOM) theater or Iraq or Afghanistan. With the added de-

ployment of five additional brigades, and then to have to reset and refit some of the equipment, and also trying to be sure that the prepositioning shifts that we have are stocked and that the National Guard and the reserves have their equipment not only to be ready when they are activated, but for them to train in case of a natural disaster, what is left here in the United States for them to train and to respond to a national disaster? Do we have enough equipment?

I mean, we have got so much, you know, when we look at the depots and they have to refit the equipment, and then we look at the National Guard, they don't have equipment, and then 40 percent in the Central Command. I mean, are you comfortable?

General CONWAY. First—I will speak first and say that I am comfortable that the battalions, first of all, going in for the plus-up operation will have the equipment that they need. They are going to be taking their sets with them. It is going to require some time to get that to theater, but that is in work as we speak.

There are 14 to 15, let us say, recent counterinsurgency related types of equipment that will have to be a spread-load to the Marines in the theater, based on these two additional battalions coming in. But the commander has looked at that, and they are comfortable that they will be able to execute their mission without significant risk to their force.

The second part of your question about the prepositioned ships. I will tell you that sets one and three are back to full complement of equipment on board and are not in use. Set two, which has been used in the Central Command theater, is in the process of replenishment and will be back fully loaded by the end of calendar year 2008. So we are in good shape in that regard.

The third part had to do with the equipment in the United States, and it is a continuing concern. We are not yet fully reset based upon production lines being such as they are. You have a lag between purchase and actual delivery of some of the equipment sets. So we are not yet fully at 100 percent or even Capability 1 (C1) with regard to our home base units, which gets back to the question that the chairman asked originally with regard to readiness.

Mr. ORTIZ. General Schoomaker.

General SCHOOMAKER. I think your general observation is correct. We disagree with the GAO report; we think they overstated. However, regardless of the exact number, there is a lot of equipment in the CENTCOM theater of operation.

The units at home station do not have all of the equipment that we would like them to have to train; and as you know, the specific equipment, like the up-armored Humvee and the crew devices and the kinds of things that are used in Iraq and Afghanistan, are primarily there. We don't have much of that in the United States because we have loaded it forward where the people are in harm's way and need it. So that, too, is the case.

This is an unclassified session, so I don't want to discuss our prepositioned equipment other than to say that we are not in as good shape as the Marine Corps is in terms of prepositioned equipment. We have had to use those pre/post ops in certain places to be able to meet the current demand as well as the surge. And the

fact that we did rebuild those stocks is one of the reasons why we are capable of doing the surge that we are being asked to do.

Mr. ORTIZ. One of the things that concerns me is that we want to be sure that before they deploy, you know, that they become familiar with the equipment that they will be using, not to go to Kuwait and then train a couple of weeks and then they have to become familiar with the equipment that they are using. I just wanted to be sure that they have the equipment and that they train with the equipment before they get into harm's way.

General SCHOOMAKER. The majority of the equipment that is required by those units that are deploying, they are getting, but there is important equipment that is only available in Kuwait that they must train on before they cross the berm.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. McHugh.

Mr. MCHUGH. Thank you.

Gentlemen, welcome. Thank you for your service.

In response to the comments about the uniform, I hope they work out better for you than they did for Custer.

General SCHOOMAKER. I had the same feeling when he made that statement.

Mr. MCHUGH. General Petraeus has commented in written documentation over the last several days to the Senate, talking about some of the criticisms he has—and I think all of them are wholly legitimate—about some of the lessons learned in the early days of Iraq. And one of the things he talked about was lack of contingency planning, failure to react quickly, et cetera.

When I look at this surge, for lack of a different description, I get concerned when our contingency may or may not be as to the purpose of the hearing here today. When we engaged a former effort in a Baghdad operation, as I understand it, the Iraqis were charged with bringing six brigades to the fight; they brought two. I worry about what happens if, for whatever reason, the Iraqi part of this operation does not fully materialize. What do we then do as a contingency and how does that affect our force structure?

We are planning that about 21,000 troops total could carry those into Baghdad. Do we have a contingency plan should either the Iraqi force not materialize or if the plan does not go according to script and we have to take another tack? And, if so, what does that do to the force?

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, first of all, let me say that neither the Commandant nor I have direct access on a daily basis to what is being planned in theater. So the question probably is better addressed to the commanders on the ground.

Nor am I familiar with what General Petraeus has submitted to the Congress, although I have had many discussions with General Petraeus and largely share his assessments in our conversations. I have largely shared the—you know, the assessments that he has made.

I was in—like the Commandant, I was in theater, you know, for my fourth Christmas since being in this job. I met with my counterpart over there, General Ali, who is a ground force commander for the Iraqi army, and had serious discussions about what his feelings were in terms of ability to deliver; and he was optimistic that

they would deliver. And by the way, our conversations were right on the heel of turning over the 3d Division battle space that they have assumed, you know, in this plan. And he was optimistic.

Yesterday, I met with the chairman's equivalent of the Iraqi army, General Bakhtiar. Met in my office with him and had a very similar conversation. And he, too, felt that this was a significantly different operation as has been laid out.

Again, I don't have the specific details, but he was confident that they would deliver. And I would tell you, from our position, we will be watching as this thing unfolds; and there will be opportunities for us to assess whether or not the metrics are being met as we exercise this surge. And that is what I am sure the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joints Chief will be keeping their eye on as we do it.

So I am not providing you all of the detail you would desire, mainly because I don't have all of the detail, but I can tell you from my observations and from the discussions I have had with the Iraqis, they appear optimistic that they will be able to deliver to expectation, and they think this is significantly different than what we have done heretofore

General CONWAY. We need to get into the execution of what is planned at this point before we are able to identify what might be, then, some spiral opportunity off of that plan.

Second, that we do have two new commanders coming into the theater, and I think we are going to have to give them the opportunity to assess and determine where we need to go next.

Third, I have seen it characterized as the "Hail Mary," that is, kind of the last play of the game; and I don't necessarily see it that way. I think it is the latest in a series of operations to attempt to stabilize Baghdad and the Al Anbar Province, and I am not sure it will be the last.

Mr. MCHUGH. I appreciate that, gentlemen. I understand your lack of full information as to what may or may not happen.

Look, we all want to be optimistic, but I am just saying it seems to me we ought to have some scenario, if not exactly what the action on the ground would be, but rather where the available troops, if any, might come from if they were needed. And that is my concern. As I think I have heard you both say here today, under a strained force, how much more strain can we place on them?

Mr. Chairman, I see my time is almost up. With your permission, I would like to submit a question about troop needs in Afghanistan that I heard about on my recent trip and also what impact that might have on Iraq.

The CHAIRMAN. Certainly. Without objection.

Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

General Schoomaker, I feel our main concern that we are having a disproportionate, large number of deaths and injuries in Humvees. And I appreciate your need to reset the force and replace what you have already lost. The Marines have already outlined what I think is a very ambitious policy of replacing Humvees with something that is going to have a V-shaped bottom to deflect the blast from mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), some-

thing a little bit higher off the ground, hopefully, to buy them some space between that blast and the people riding in the vehicle.

I was wondering what the Army is doing, because it was General Blum that actually explained to me the Humvee is actually worse than a flat bottom. It has got a concave bottom that actually channels the force of the blast into the cab, which explodes the gunners airborne 20, 30 yards from the vehicle once the mine goes underneath.

Given what former Chairman Hunter said about the delays that all of us felt and the frustration all of us felt in up-arming the Humvees, and the message not getting sent first to the industrial base and the people working in those factories and the people in the plastic plants, this is important. This isn't a job program; this is a mission to be accomplished by the private—American private sector.

What is the Army doing so that we can replace these vehicles with a more capable vehicle in a timely manner, keeping in mind that this is where a very disproportionately high percentage of our deaths and injuries are coming from?

General SCHOOMAKER. I think that is an excellent question. The first thing I want to do is dispel the myth that the Marines have a different program than the Army. This is a joint program. Both of us are working on the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles together.

Mr. TAYLOR. The 4,000 vehicles that the Marines said they wanted to have in inventory by next January still leaves us far short from the, approximately off the top of my head, 20,000 vehicles in theater. So what is the plan?

General SCHOOMAKER. Therein lies the dilemma. First of all, the MRAP is the one we are talking about, is the mine resistant ambush protection vehicle that is an interim solution to a better vehicle, a joint vehicle, that will—that clearly needs to be designed, you know, for the future.

The Marines' requirements are only a fraction of what the Army's requirements are in Iraq. It is a much smaller subset of the whole; and the Marines, like the Army, we want to accelerate the interim solution. This MRAP, which is the lightest of the three versions, you know, the next is the Cougar and then the Buffalo level 2 and 3, which we are doing. And it is the light version that is the issue; that is the Humvee version.

So we support what the Marine Corps wants to do because we want to do the same thing. We want to accelerate the fielding of these, but our requirements are much larger.

Mr. TAYLOR. To the point—I was really impressed with the Marine Corps general in charge of this program that not only gave us a target figure and target date for delivery—what is your target figure and what is your number of vehicles and what is your target date of delivery so that, hopefully, Congress can work with you to make this happen?

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, the target figure, the initial target figure, is 2,500. But as I told you, we want to make sure that we are ramping toward a better solution, which is the joint one that is designed, you know, with the latest technologies to be able to re-

sist the deal. And I will have to give you what our target date for that is.

We are moving forward to a Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) from one which is customarily inadequate, trying to make the MRAP the armed solution.

What I am describing here, what the Marines are talking about, is an interim solution. 2012 is the point at which some people think they can bring it, and of course we want to bring it to the left.

Mr. TAYLOR. If I can give you one last thought, one of my frustrations—I think also of many members of this committee—is a continual game with words that says we have "met requirement," and requirement wasn't 100 percent of what needed to be done, whether it is body armor, whether it is up-arming. I would hope "requirement" is every vehicle in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Bartlett, please.

Mr. BARTLETT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note Mr. Conaway's very faithful attendance at these hearings and consistent with my policy of usually relinquishing my time to a junior member, I am very pleased to yield my time to Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank my good friend from Maryland for the opportunity.

Generals, thank you both for being here. I appreciate your service to our country.

General Schoomaker, I mentioned some measure of concern on the readiness for the troops in country here, yet to be deployed. Without violating security issues, can you talk with to us briefly about, is it people, is it equipment, is it training; what is it that does concern you?

And then to finish off with, you mention the military construction (MILCON) problems you are having. The ranking member talked to us about the ability to spend $70 dollars on a dime. The problems that you are having with the MILCON delays as a result of Congress is what both Republicans and now the Democrats are not doing. I look at a list that was provided by you: replace family housing, maintenance, infantry squad, battle courses, a wide variety of military construction that I suspect reaches all across the readiness issues and everything that we are doing with the quality of life. I have got barracks complexes; I have got replacement of family houses; urban assault courses. Those are the Army's problems.

And General Conway, if you could talk to us about the Marines' problems with MILCON being delayed; and General Schoomaker, if you could mention what Speaker Pelosi's response to you was.

General SCHOOMAKER. I have not met with——

Mr. CONAWAY. You requested it?

General SCHOOMAKER. I understand that I will have the meeting, and I will lay out some of what I say here.

First of all, to your first question, I testified in June that I had concerns with the strategic disposition of the Army. That was about seven months ago. Since that time, we have got increased stress on the Army. We are using the supplemental funding to reset the Army as fast as we can, but as you know, there is leniency in deliv-

ery. You know, we have got it moving very quickly, but the delivery has yet to be taken.

So my concerns are increased over what they were in June in terms of what the pressure is on our force, both in terms of low time, in terms of equipment, in terms of time available to train, and all of the rest of it. So we have a slightly different problem. Our primary in the active force is equipment on hand and the time to train properly and fully. On the reserve side, we have personnel issues and equipment issues as we reset the reserve components. That is primarily what it was.

The second question had to do with the MILCON. I will give you an example. Not getting this MILCON budget is going to affect the stationing and conversion of three brigades at Fort Bliss, Texas. I was out there looking at it and the ground has all been pushed around, the foundation is starting to go in. But it is going to stop because we don't have the money. It is going to prohibit us from consolidating the 173rd Airborne Brigade that is now split between Germany and Italy. It is going to prohibit both the growth and the stationing of the 7th Special Forces group. We are supposed to grow an additional battalion in the 7th Special Forces group. Nor will we be able to station the 7th Special Forces group in Eglin Air Force Base, which we have planned.

Additionally, it will impact two barracks complexes. In other words, we will not have barracks in which to put the forces we are growing.

It will affect 30 training and training support facilities. It will affect 46 operation and maintenance facilities. It will affect approximately 90 reserve component facilities in 45 states. It will affect over 5,000 homes in the family housing and 16 child development youth centers, affecting approximately 4,000 children.

Mr. CONAWAY. Can we let the Marines weigh in?

General CONWAY. Let me talk to the readiness in the United States issue, as well, because General Schoomaker referenced this training as large. What we are developing right now is the best counterinsurgency force in the world, both Army and Marine, but that is essentially what they are focused on because of the limited dwell time stateside and the turnaround. So we need to be able to train toward other major contingency types of operations, and we are not doing it.

On MILCON, my service is up against the wall. We have needed new barracks for 20 or 25 years, but every year when we have had to prioritize what else was out there that we had to have, barracks went to the bottom of the list. We have taken that as far as we possibly can. We are scheduled to have 105 new barracks built between now and 2012. They are going to be replacing Korean War era barracks, open squad bays, in some cases, and that is just unsatisfactory. My predecessor initiated this program last year, and it is critically important to us because we just pushed it off as long as we possibly could.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Reyes. Mr. Reyes is next on the list.

Mr. REYES. Generals, thank you for being here and thank you for your service. I agree with you on the issue of the MILCON funding; in fact, we tried very hard to get it passed before the end of the last session and we will continue to work on that with you.

Before I ask you a couple of questions, I think it is important to articulate that while the President's strategy calls for 21,000 additional troops, I don't support that and I will tell you why. I feel strongly, like you and others, that the greatest threat in Iraq is security. And this very dangerous environment is fed by the militias. Last summer and early fall I listened to military leaders who were of the opinion that, if given the mission to neutralize these militias, our military could do so with a temporary increase of between 20,000 and 30,000 troops. So I felt that was reasonable and a worthwhile investment that would result in a more secure environment for both our troops and to give the Iraqi Government an opportunity to establish itself.

However, since that time, the security situation has badly deteriorated, and when the President made his announcements and gave us—individual groups of Members of Congress—briefings at the White House about his plan, he told us that that was essentially—he attributed it to Prime Minister Maliki, which concerned me because of his spotty track record in the past. At one of those meetings with the President, I directly asked him if, in fact, his plan, would be to neutralize these militias which—he said it was not intended to do that.

I think it is important because I believe the solution is to make the Iraqi Government accountable for both their own security and also, with our support, to find a political solution to the sectarian differences and violence that are creating the environment in Iraq.

I don't know if either of you wants to comment on that, but the question that I would want you to comment on is the fact that over the weekend there was a report that we might be asking or we might be moving troops from Afghanistan into Iraq. So can both of you assure this committee that no troops will be pulled from their mission in Afghanistan to fulfill this 21,000 plus-up in Iraq?

And then the other question, General Schoomaker, is in the doctrine of training to fight with the shortages in equipment and the challenges that you have articulated here this morning. What does that do to that doctrine when you have to—you have to cross that threshold?

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, to answer your last question first, what we are doing is rapidly cross leveling equipment within the United States, so that the people that are deploying have equipment to train on, to go. So what that does then is you get the second order of effect, third order effect of the units the equipment come from, not being able to do the things they need to do, so that when they are in line, we have to move the equipment back to do that. We are basically sharing equipment.

Now, one of the initiatives, you know, the modular force, where we are standardizing the force, one of the things we were able to do when we swapped out the 1st Cavalry and the 4th Infantry Division (ID), was because both of them were modular, we were able to move the people of the 1st Cavalry Division into Iraq on the equipment that the 4th Infantry Division had there and leave the equipment at Fort Hood, so when the 4th ID, came back they fell into the equipment that was there that had been fixed.

This saved us almost one billion dollars in transportation costs on this last swap out and picked up seven months in terms of

equipment availability so that we are able to train those units. We are doing all kinds of things, you know, to get around it. But the fundamental thing is, we are sharing equipment, is pushing it around.

But I can promise you that we are putting the best-trained people we can across the berm. But the more short time this dwell time is, the more difficult that is to do.

You had a question up front on moving troops from Afghanistan to Iraq. I know of no effort to do that. I have heard nothing like that. We certainly have not sourced this plus-up in Iraq with any forces out of Afghanistan.

Mr. REYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Reyes.

The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Forbes.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you both for the great job that you do and for all that your men and women do.

One of the major things that you mentioned, General Schoomaker, when you began your testimony, was the balance that has to be struck so many times between the issues. One of the big things our forces have been able to do is create a deterrence from other nations doing things that perhaps we would not want them to do.

One of the things that I would ask both of you to comment on, is, based on where we are now, relative to where we are, let us say, in 2002. If you had to rate it on a one-to-ten scale, is our deterrent effect overall for our forces worse now, better now, than it was in 2002?

General SCHOOMAKER. I would, first of all, I think that getting into this in too much detail is not appropriate for this session. I recommend that you take a look at the classified data that we provide the Congress that shows our readiness and take a look at the chairman's risk assessment, which we all contribute to and that he submits. I think that will answer you in more detail.

I can assure you the United States of America has got considerable deterrent capability. Our concern is, when you take a look at some of the plans, because of the strategic depth problem that we have, it will be slower to execute some of those plans in terms of the timelines that are expected, and that, you know, there will be a greater crunch in that respect. In many cases, we would have to use joint capabilities to offset some capabilities, perhaps we don't have the depth we need. I think I will leave it at about that level.

General CONWAY. Sir, to answer it this way, if you would just take a look at the numbers, the percentage comparison between then and now, you might not be pleased with what you see. However, I would say it is a much more capable force in terms of the combat experience, in terms of the additional equipment sets that we now have, those manner of things, which allow us then to, if called, to go somewhere and be able to respond.

Mr. FORBES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Dr. Snyder.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Gentleman, thank you for being here. General Schoomaker, we appreciate your service here. You were drawn out of retirement at a very difficult time in our Nation's history. We appreciate you.

General Conway, you are the new man on the block, born in Arkansas, I might add.

I wanted to address some of my questions to you, because you referred to the trip that you made with your Marines in Iraq over the Christmastime. You actually, in your statement, you use the term "surge," and words are, and have all kinds of means and uses and we have all kinds of political dynamics to them, so we are hearing the word "surge," we are hearing the words "escalation," "fluctuations." What do you think the appropriate term of art is for an increase of 21,000 proposed over a force of 140,000?

General CONWAY. Sir, that is a tough question to answer, because we don't know what the end state is going to be or potentially when those troops will come out. But by a strict military definition of "surge," a commander makes a conscious effort to mass his troops at a specific point and place in time in order to achieve a desired result.

But on the backside of that effort of a surge, there must be what we call a "payback," and that is that you will have forces to employ at a later period of time because you have used them in some form or fashion. What I think I would term what we see happening now is more a plus-up of forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, not a surge.

Dr. SNYDER. One of the things you said in response to a question, I think in response to Mr. McHugh, that this may not be the last effort or new effort, or trying to think of a response as a Hail Mary, which I think is a very candid thing to say.

As these discussions are going on around the country, I think there is a lot of Americans that think this is more of the Hail Mary, that this is our one last chance to get it right.

In fact, Secretary Gates, in his statement, both oral and written, said if this isn't going well, we may stop it before we get to the 21,500. But your testimony is here today, if this doesn't work, we may well try some other things, is that a fair statement?

General CONWAY. Sir, it is my personal conviction that we have to be successful in Iraq. I have a concern that we are on a certain timeline to accomplish success. Marines and soldiers are seeing incremental success, I think, on a daily basis in the country.

But my concern is that that timeline that we see needed is not the same time line that the country is prepared to provide us. I just have dire concerns that if we leave before the job is done, conditions in the Middle East, the enemy statements in terms of his strategy, his grand strategy, are such that we could be going back in there some day in order to assure national vital interests are maintained.

Dr. SNYDER. General Conway, you referred that there are several different plans and that your troops on the ground in Anbar, I think were your words, could use a couple of battalions. As these different plans were being discussed, is it fair to say that the military leadership was coming down on the side of lesser numbers than the civilian leadership? Is that a fair statement?

General CONWAY. Sir, you are right. There were a number of plans out there. One of them that I saw called for as many as four

regiments in the Al Anbar province at any one time. That is not consonant with what the commander of Marine forces in Iraq said he thought he needed or could use, again, against an achievable military objective.

Dr. SNYDER. The Marine Corps through our history has always had the reputation of being able to work in counterinsurgency operations. What is your assessment, given that you have only been on this particular task now since November, where we are at with regard to the political and economic, the nonmilitary side of what is going on in Iraq?

That is, for a lot of us, that is the issue. I mean, I continue to be disappointed how quickly the President dismissed the Iraq Study Group's recommendations. What are your perspectives of that?

General CONWAY. Sir, I think those that you mention, political and economic are absolutely essential to success over time. I think our chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, General Pace, has said publicly that it is a three-legged stool. Security is one aspect of it, but the political and economic are the others that will prop that stool. They have to be in place for this plan, and I think for our success in Iraq to find a satisfactory end state.

Dr. SNYDER. Final question, do we need additional troops in Afghanistan?

General CONWAY. When I spoke to the commanders in Afghanistan, they were concerned that there is a spring offensive coming, and it is their belief that they could use some additional troops in Afghanistan.

Dr. SNYDER. Is this going to interfere with our ability to give them the troops that they are requesting, the Iraq surge?

General CONWAY. Would you repeat that question, please.

Dr. SNYDER. Is the Iraq surge proposal going to interfere with the ability of us to meet the demands and requests of the commanders on the ground in Afghanistan?

General CONWAY. I would say it will impact it. It will not interfere with it to the extent that it will preclude it.

Dr. SNYDER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Generals, for being here. I am very grateful. The district I represent includes Ft. Jackson, such an extraordinary training facility, Parris Island, training for the Marines east of the Mississippi, the Beaufort Marine Air Station, and I am just really grateful for those installations and the dedication of the persons who serve there and the young people serving in the military.

Additionally, I am grateful that this month, the 218th Mechanized Infantry Brigade, General Schoomaker, of the South Carolina Air National Guard, I served in it for 25 years, has been mobilized. It is the largest mobilization of the National Guard in South Carolina since World War II; and the members of that brigade are so proud to serve.

I had some come visit me yesterday before they actually leave the country. They brought their family by to visit and tour the Capitol.

But I am, indeed, concerned for guard and reserve members as there is greater mobilization. Could both of you, particularly General Schoomaker, indicate are there any programs, are there any legislative initiatives being proposed to assist guard and reserve members?

General SCHOOMAKER. To assist guard and reserve members in what regard?

Mr. WILSON. Their families, in terms of any benefits that are being proposed, or greater consideration for disruption of their employment? Obviously, an issue that always is near and dear to me and others is to provide for the retirement age to be reduced, not to apply to me, from 60 to 55. Are any of these going to be potentially enhanced this year?

General SCHOOMAKER. Sir, I would have to take part of that for the record and provide that to you.

But I can tell you in a broader sense, we are making an extraordinary commitment in the budget, in the program, to recapitalize the guard and reserve. Right now, it is some $23 billion across the program and equipment.

I know, and I have got Lieutenant General Clyde Vaughan with me here, who is the director of the Army National Guard. He has got some extraordinary programs going that are working with the states on family support programs, the networks to support people.

I know across the force, we have worked with the Department of Defense for certain compensations and incentives for these deployments. For instance, those soldiers who are extended in theater will see an additional $1,000 a month, about $200 a month, in hardship duty pay, and about $800 in assignment and incentive pay, I believe, that is involved in that, these kinds of programs.

On the backside where the families are back, obviously, in the guard and reserves, now that we have a coherent policy of mobilizing units rather than doing this tremendous cross leveling where it takes 20 or 30 states of individuals to put together a unit, we now have a better ability to deal through a coherent command structure so that we can support the families at home, and so that we can give predictability to the guard members.

Now that we have a policy that says our mobilizations will be a year, you know, and that we are going to frontload prior to that year, give an early alert to a guard unit so that they will have a year to prepare, will reduce the post-mobilization training that is required so we will have a year to mobilize. Of course, this will reduce the year's number of months boots on the ground, probably, somewhere, eliminating it to nine or ten months boots on the ground, but it is a better policy. It is one, I think, that will pay back.

Mr. WILSON. General, I really appreciate you and all the Generals being soldier-concerned and family-concerned.

Another issue that I work with and am very proud that the recruiting school is located at Ft. Jackson and really for both of you, and I know it needs to be brief, but are there new tools that are going to be made, again, programs, and let us say initiatives, that could help in regard to recruiting and retention?

General SCHOOMAKER. We have, well, I speak for the Army. We had our most successful year in the active last year, most success-

ful in the National Guard in 13 years, last year. We recruited over 175,000 soldiers last year, in 2006, a very successful year.

Of course, it had to do with the tremendous amount of incentives, it had to do with the amount of recruiters, the way we train recruiters, our approach, advertising, you know, very comprehensive plan on how we did that.

This is going to continue to be a competitive market. We are competing for the very best in America. You know, 100 percent of the soldiers that come into the United States Army have a high school degree or the equivalent of a high school degree.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Washington, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, gentlemen, for being here.

I have a couple of questions on the readiness of our troops. How is the training in counterinsurgency going in terms of the troops when they are back here and ready to go into the field, because we have had some extraordinary successes in Iraq? You mentioned al Qaim and a couple of other places, but the impression I have gotten from talking to other people is sort of hit or miss.

There are some troops, some units, like General Petraeus when he first showed up there, that are ready to go on counterinsurgency, focused, trained, and their commanders and their leaders in their field moved them there. Others, it is not really a priority. How comprehensive is the counterinsurgency training for readiness when our troops go over there?

General CONWAY. Sir, I will speak first and will say that it is extensive and comprehensive. We have what we call a five-block training program that takes about five months of seven months that a unit is home, on average. The last block, and most sophisticated aspect of it is conducted at what we call the Mojave Viper training exercise, conducted at Twenty Nine Palms, California.

There we have about 250 Iraqi-Americans who live in a village who create with great frequency and a level of angst issues and problems, and those situations that our commanders and our troops are going to face in Iraq.

Mr. SMITH. You are confident, at this point anyway, that troops in Iraq, troops going over there are trained and ready to go in counterinsurgency?

General CONWAY. We don't send a unit to Iraq unless they have completed all five blocks of that training.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

General SCHOOMAKER. Sir, I would agree with that, but I would remind you we cover an extraordinary large number of missions. For instance, we have people running convoys; they train to run convoys. We have people that are security force companies that are either guarding facilities, protecting convoys, doing things in the security role; they train for that function.

We have people that are going to be operating in urban environments. They train for that. We have some that are operating on nonurban environments. We have a wide variety of functions, so we tailor to task and we train. Now, every soldier is trained to a certain level.

I can tell you that we have made huge improvements, not only in our doctrine, but in the way that we are applying that doctrine

as we learn this. Then I will remind you that counterinsurgency isn't just a military function. As has been pointed out, there are a lot of other nonmilitary components to it, and we attempt to train in that environment as best we can, you know, to prepare people for that.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. I wanted to follow up also on a comment you made about we have to succeed in Iraq. We hear that a lot. I understand that. I want to tie that a little bit into Afghanistan, because what really concerns me is in Afghanistan, al Qaeda is still there. Bin Laden, Zawahiri, they are not gone. While there has been some speculation that their occupational capacity has been destroyed, there is still a lot of evidence there is still training going on up there, that is sort of the central point for al Qaeda. We know, without any doubt, that they will threaten us. They have done it before; they will do it again.

In Iraq, it is a much more complicated picture; it is absolutely a threat. I am not—don't interpret me as minimizing that whatsoever, but whereas in Iraq it is a threat, what will happen if Iran gains undue influence? What direction will the Shi'a go? How much influence will al Qaeda have?

In Afghanistan, it is more of a guarantee. I just worry that we are not placing enough emphasis on what's going on over there. I just sort of want to make that plea. I am interested in your comments, of course. As far as succeeding in Iraq, I have heard this, "Gosh, if we don't succeed, we will have to come back."

I am curious, it is hard for me to picture at this point, success reaching that level where in some reasonable timeframe, let us say 5 years, we can walk out of there and go "Don't have to worry about that for 20 years." It seems to me we have reached a point in Iraq where our ideal outcome when we went in isn't happening.

So I am worried that we haven't sort of shifted the mission to say "Okay, what does success look like?" Instead of just saying, we have to win, what does it mean, because we are not getting what we wanted. How can we get it to a reasonably stable point?

I am curious, have we evolved in our thinking on that in terms of what success would look like in Iraq? Also what will we do to make sure that Afghanistan gets the attention that it deserves?

General CONWAY. Sir, I think we have evolved to a degree in terms of what the commanders would now term end state in Iraq, and without quoting their specific mission statement, it entails a country that is successfully stabilized, is self-governing, that is not an ungoverned space and an area where terrorists can operate freely as a base of operations. We think that we can achieve those things that, in state, will be considered positive.

I think that there is a long-range concern for the security of Iraq as a region. Iraq is potentially a very rich country. There is a concern for its long-term security, and that must have proper consideration, but we are talking about large investments of troops in order to be able to do that.

Mr. SMITH. Absolutely.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen, for being here. I notice the entire panel today was my classmate at one

time or another, probably explains a lot about something, I am just not sure which.

General CONWAY. Means you are pretty old, sir.

Mr. KLINE. It does. Thank you for pointing that out, General.

But I want to reflect back to a couple of things. I want to follow up about what Mr. Wilson said about the National Guard and put my plea in, because you have the director of the Army Guard behind you to follow up what we are doing in the Minnesota Guard with the reintegration program, what we are doing with the troops when they come back, particularly important now that the Minnesota Guard, 2,600 soldiers, are being extended for this surge.

That is my plug, and you won't hear the end of it. We really need to do that, and I hope that you will be able to spread that guard-wide.

Then, thanks also to everybody involved, you, all of you here and to the Secretary for the additional $1,000 a month, very important for those soldiers and Marines who are being extended.

Now, to get back to the old days, we are here to talk about the impact of the increased number of troops in Iraq on our readiness, and we have heard testimony from both of you about spreading and leveling of equipment. I have confidence, and I think you do. If you don't, I hope you will say something now about the state of training and equipment for those troops that are deployed everywhere in CENTCOM, certainly in Iraq.

But I remember in those bad old days, gentlemen, you and I were classmates in the mid–1970's and getting a little bit better, General Conway, when you and I were classmates in 1982. But in the 1970's, there were literally days when we had to park the planes and park the Jeeps. We could not train at all.

The famous example is when we asked the married Marines to bring their toilet paper in so the Marines in the barracks would have some. We were not anywhere near that.

Can you just sort of, in comparison, tell us what the state of our armed forces were in the 1970's and what the state of our forces now is in terms of training, equipment and morale, those that are back in the states; just a quick comment from each of you, please.

General SCHOOMAKER. When you and I were classmates together at Quantico, in the Marine Amphibious Warfare School, I had just come from Korea, where I was a battalion S–3 in a tank battalion on the demilitarized zone (DMZ). We had no heaters on our tanks, no canvas on our vehicles. We had so little fuel that we had to make a decision.

We only had 50 miles a month in fuel. We had to make a decision whether to heat our barracks or to run our tanks. We would run an entire tank gunnery on five tanks for a battalion because we didn't have the track, the road wheel, the sprockets and the gun tubes and ammunition to do that.

There is no comparison between this Army and the Army we had in the 1970's. It was in total disarray. This is nowhere near that kind of a situation.

However, the strategic demand on this force is higher than it has ever been in our history. It is so much higher than it was in the Cold War, and we cannot fail to invest, to stay ahead of this, for the good of the Nation, for the good of the soldiers, the Marines

that are in the force, and for the good of the family members that support them.

General CONWAY. I can add a number of examples to emphasize the same point, but it would all wind up in the same place. I think General Schoomaker is exactly right. These plus-ups of our service that are being considered are absolutely essential with regard to the strategic appetite and the importance of taking the stress off the individuals that are seeing these repetitive deployments.

We have got the potential to have a great Marine Corps ten years from now with all the combat experience and the things that are now developing. My concern is if we lose large numbers of our mid-level leadership, both in the enlisted and the officer ranks, we are going to suffer then as a result.

Mr. KLINE. I thank both of you for your comments. I just shudder to think we could ever move even one step in that direction. I hope you will both be here pounding the table if you ever feel we are moving in that direction. That is just absolutely unacceptable.

Final comment, I am delighted that we are increasing the end strength. I felt like, as a number of members of this committee, we were shouting at the wall for some time. We want to make sure when we do that they are adequately equipped. I thank you so much for your service.

Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentlelady from California, Mrs. Tauscher.

Ms. TAUSCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As one of those who shouted at the wall for quite a while and couldn't get Secretary Rumsfeld to agree that we needed to increase the size of our active duty forces, I am glad we now all agree.

Unfortunately, I think it is three years later than any of us really believed was necessary or important to do, but I actually have something in my office happening that I have to deal with, so I am going to yield my time to Mrs. Boyda of Kansas.

Mrs. BOYDA. Thank you so much. I am Nancy Boyda from Kansas. I bring you a message from my husband, Steve, who was a Marine during the Vietnam period. He just says he is very, very happy to see the Army and the Marines working together so well these days. Thank you for that and thank you for your service.

I would like to follow up on my colleague's question, Mr. Snyder, from Arkansas. You were saying that you don't think that if we needed more troops in Afghanistan, that this troop surge in Iraq will have an impact. I would like to get some clarification on that.

You are saying if we need troops this spring in Afghanistan for any kind of a conflict increase there this spring, are those troops going to be available and where would they come from?

General CONWAY. Ma'am, let me answer your question quickly and then turn to General Schoomaker, because I anticipate at this point that they will be soldiers, not Marines, so I think this is for the second half of your question.

I will simply clarify. There is impact any time we send in more troops than we are sending in right now. It impacts this dwell ratio that we spoke of. It makes it more difficult in equipment sense and getting them in the theater and those manner of things. So I would

emphasize there is impact, but interfering to the degree we would not or could not provide those additional troops is where we draw the line. We can do those things. It is just that there is impact.

General SCHOOMAKER. I agree totally with that. We may very well have to do that. We will be able to do it. The impact is such things as extension, such things as reduction of the dwell time, additional movement of equipment, compressed training time and all the rest of it, so there is an impact. We will be able to do it.

The question is, again, just like what the commandant said, on the backside of these kinds of actions, you pay a price. You pay a price on the backside.

Mrs. BOYDA. My additional question has to do with the same area. The surge plan does call for five combat brigades to be sent to Iraq, but we haven't been told what additional combat support units will be needed to support these units. Combat units, of course, required a tremendous amount of support to remain operationally effective.

Someone has to maintain the additional equipment, provide medical support and other logistical needs. How does the Department plan to provide additional support for these additional combat brigades? Will they be supported by additional military units or by an increased use of Army contractors? If the support is from the military, where will these units come from?

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, the five-brigade surge is Army, and the—right now, we do not anticipate there will be increased combat service support requirements over what is now embedded inside of the brigade combat team that we have. As you know, with the modular brigade now, we now have force—full battalions inside of the brigade itself. We now have engineers, et cetera.

It appears right now in our planning that the combat support, combat service support base that we have got set in Iraq is sufficient to support the five additional brigades that are coming with the embedded combat support, combat service support capabilities that those brigades now have.

Mrs. BOYDA. Thank you. I yield my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Let me ask an interim question, here, the gentleman from California, Mr. Hunter, just reminded me how he and this committee urged the speeding up of production of Humvees. I will ask each of you, and each of you have depots, depots, as we call them back in Missouri, where you are reequipping the force. Are all of your depots working at full capacity, in other words, three full shifts? General Schoomaker.

General SCHOOMAKER. Our depots are not working at three full shifts. We have gone from, I believe, six-day, eight-hour days, six-days-a-week shifts. We have gone to six-day, ten-hour shifts in the depots. Again, that is an average. It has a lot to do with certain lines are running three shifts, seven days a week, because they have the equipment to do it. Others are limited by long-term lead items. It is complex. I would be glad to provide detailed briefings.

The CHAIRMAN. There is some unfixed equipment, am I correct?

General SCHOOMAKER. Certainly, certainly.

The CHAIRMAN. General Conway.

General CONWAY. Sir, let me preface by saying we are not nearly as equipment intense as the Army. We have one functional depot

that is providing the capacity that you speak of. That is at Albany. It is operating at about 70 percent, and it is keeping apace of our needs. In fact, we are conversing with the Army now as to some possibility of getting some of their work sent down to Albany.

The CHAIRMAN. For the record, would each of you respond in detail regarding speeding up the equipment at the depots? We would certainly appreciate that.

Another reminder, a few moments ago, a request was made for the record. Could you make sure that your record is complete within just a few days so that we don't have to embarrass all of us and pick up the phone and remind you that an answer has not come by.

Dr. Gingrey.

Dr. GINGREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Schoomaker, General Conway, thank you so much for your service and for being here with us today. I think I heard, in both of your testimonies, that you were concerned about the ability of us to react to other contingencies, I think you put it, General Conway, in light of the situation, in light of the presence, new plan forward in Iraq, and the 21,000 additional troops, Army and Marine.

I guess really cutting right to the chase, my first question would be, is it worth the risk? You have acknowledged, I think, in your testimony, that there is some risk in regard to the total force situation and what is going on in the Middle East, and the need to plus that up.

Then I will ask you, too, as you respond to that question, my second one, if we had followed the advice of one of your predecessors, General Schoomaker, in regard to the total force needed to be successful, in operation, operation Iraqi Freedom in particular, and I think that was a call for something like 250,000 troops, I think the most we had in theater has approached 160,000.

If we had followed that advice, possibly, that was the correct advice. I don't know, a lot of Monday morning quarterbacks now trying to make that decision, that call. But if we had followed that advice, what would that, indeed, have done to our capability of responding to other contingencies regarding what our total force structure was?

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, sir, first of all, I think you are referring to General Shinseki. He made a statement, I think it was before this committee, that it would take several hundred thousand or a few hundred thousand, some words more. I don't know if he put 250,000 on it, but clearly the inference was it was more than 200,000.

The first part of my answer would be, we had sufficient forces to do the first phase of this operation, which was to defeat the Iraqi forces, the conventional forces, the Iraqi Army and seize Baghdad. We did that very successfully with the force that was committed.

My military judgment, in hindsight, it is clear that several hundred thousand forces following that would have made a difference, it would have made a difference.

But, you know, this is four years later. We are looking back on it, and so I don't think there is any question. History has demonstrated General Shinseki was correct, that following, the follow-

on phases of it, those additional forces would have been necessary, in my opinion, my military judgment.

I would tell you that at that time—we have made such significant strides improving the Army since that time, that my view is the risk would have been even greater in terms of the strategic risks we would have been taking in terms of the depth of members. Remember, the first appearance I made before this committee, I said that I requested from the President permission to grow an additional 30,000 soldiers in the Army, because at that time we were down to 482.

So, in fact, that investment we made temporarily is actually the great big down payment on this growth that we are trying to do. We did not waste the three, three and a half years that it was in there. But we didn't have those forces then, nor did we have the number of Humvees that we have got today, nor did we have the body armor, nor did we have the weapons, nor did we have the radios.

We were 100,000 radios short in the Army at that time. That was an A-load Army. That was an Army that was reporting not against what was required fully in force, but what was authorized based upon the shortage.

The biggest problem we had was in the combat service, combat service support of our Army, and in the National Guard and reserves, which were clearly underequipped, undertrained and ready, in my view, compared to today.

So the answer is, I think in my judgment, I agree with General Shinseki, it would have been useful to have more forces following the success that we had, the initial phase of the operation. Second, had we committed that amount of the Army to endeavor, the strategic risk would have been greater than where we sit today.

General CONWAY. Sir, I have a different perspective on that that I will offer you.

General Schoomaker is exactly right. We had sufficient force to achieve the objectives, to take down the Iraqi Army and to secure Baghdad. But my belief is that as soon as possible thereafter, we had to get the most respected institution in Iraq back in place and functional, and that was the Iraqi Army.

For a combination of reasons, that didn't happen. We thought there were going to be more troops, but we thought they were going to be Iraqi troops, that we would again have them assume responsibilities. That didn't happen, so I don't know that more U.S. troops would have made much of a difference at that point.

General SCHOOMAKER. I agree with that perspective. I was speaking in terms of history now that we saw what happened. Had that happened, it would have been great.

Dr. GINGREY. Thank you, General, my time has expired.

The CHAIRMAN. Whatever the case may be, we can't go back and unring that bell. That is a page in history that cannot be rewritten.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Murphy.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for being here today, and I thank you for your service. I am happy to know that your daughter, sir, is in my former division, 82nd Airborne Division, so I will keep her in my prayers.

Gentlemen, all the rhetoric I hear from our Administration indicates the proposal to escalate the troops in Baghdad and in Al Anbar, so it is not more than a short-term surge.

I know, General Conway, you said it is not a Hail Mary and shouldn't be used that way. The problem that I have with that, gentlemen, is last week we had at this committee, Dr. Kagan, a strong group supporter of the President's approach, and he noted that the operation to clear and hold the center of Baghdad is only the beginning of a larger effort to pacify Iraq.

For example, Dr. Kagan points out that by securing Baghdad, we do nothing to bring Fallujah or Ramadi under control, and that the military action that may be needed to try to provide secure needs, in other words, it seems that the President is pushing a policy that will result in an extended escalation in the number of troops being deployed to Baghdad, not just a short-term surge.

The problem with all these measures that we are talking about, and what is done to facilitate this, as you put it, General Conway, the occasional surge. So my question is, are there plans currently to accommodate longer-term troop escalations in Iraq beyond the current surge in Baghdad, and, if so, what are they?

General CONWAY. We are concerned—our contribution to the Al Anbar province, has been essentially six battalions of trigger pullers and then the commensurate aviation and logistics support that goes with the construction of a Marine Corps, Marines air-ground task force.

If that requirement goes to eight battalions on a constant basis, we are in the process now of looking at what that means. But I can tell you, it will make it more difficult, it is simply going to reduce our dwell time in the other battalions. It will put us, I believe, even below one-to-one, because we have other global commitments that eat up the numbers of battalions that we have available.

So, ergo the difference, and you highlighted it well, I think, between a surge and a plus-up. If it is indeed a plus-up, it is going to, indeed, make our future more difficult.

General SCHOOMAKER. I agree with that.

Mr. MURPHY. General Schoomaker, as you mentioned, when you said you pay a price in the backside, to the backside, would be not just in Iraq, but also then foreseeably, Afghanistan, especially when they are asking for more troops. Wouldn't that be accurate then?

General SCHOOMAKER. It would be accurate to say anywhere in the world that more troops are required there would be an impact.

Mr. MURPHY. What would you say the probability is that there is going to have to be plans for not just the surge, but a true escalation in Iraq, not just to secure Baghdad and Anwar but other sectors in Iraq?

General CONWAY. Well, as I said about the Al Anbar provinces earlier, I think that there is success taking place now that we haven't seen in a number of years, two or three years in the Al Anbar province. How rapidly that will continue to take place, and how quickly we could get over the hump, if you will, in Ramadi, and even Fallujah, remains to be seen.

But there are some very positive indicators out there, and I am just encouraged that this period of time that we expect the troops

to be employed, I think, will be critical. But if we continue along those positive lines, it could be decisive.

General SCHOOMAKER. I was with the Army brigade in Ramadi, which is out with the Marines, first—the first—they are on an extension now. They reported to me great success, as commandant has said. The sheikhs are reaching toward the central government, they are turning toward al Qaeda. There is greater opportunity out there.

When I talked to General Bakhtiar yesterday, the chairman equivalent for the Iraqi forces, he agreed. I asked him, is this real about his. He said, yes, it is real and a very positive kind of deal.

I have already said what he said about the Baghdad business. He thinks it is different. He thinks that we do have a chance of success there.

I would remind everybody that Iraq and Afghanistan are part of something that is much, much bigger. We are up against a very big strategic problem here with this deal. My view is, this is not a short-term deal, that we will be involved in this thing for decades, not exactly as we are today, but in some form or fashion. Iraq and Afghanistan are absolutely essential to the success of this strategy.

Mr. MURPHY. Sir, I think the question a lot of people have, though, is in Afghanistan. If we are taking our eye off there, and we anticipate, as was mentioned today, an escalation, or to spring from our enemy, and the commanders on the ground are asking for more troops, and we are not giving it to them, why are we giving it to them in Iraq but not there?

General SCHOOMAKER. Just remember that in Afghanistan the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) has grown, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces have doubled that are there. There is a different component going on in Afghanistan. Now that General McNeil is going there, this whole effort will be under one single unified command. He will be the ISAF commander. All of the forces will be under that in a much more cohesive, coherent effort.

Mr. MURPHY. Roger, sir. But even the British are asking for more troops from the Americans, I think it was 20,000, and we are not responding. That is accurate—is that correct, sir?

General SCHOOMAKER. I am not sure. There have been discussions about increasing forces in Afghanistan. When the decision is taken, we will make that assessment. But I don't know of any requests that the British have made for additional American forces. We don't have any knowledge of that.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Calvert.

Mr. CALVERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I understand it, the way the plan is to be laid out, by June, there will be approximately 41,000 American troops in the Baghdad area, 50,000 Iraqi troops, for approximately 91,000. How does the police coordinate with you all in that endeavor once if the force is up to that level by June. How will you deal with the police?

General SCHOOMAKER. The knowledge I have of the plan, as it was laid out, in a broad way, over the Christmas period, when I was there, showed that Iraq and the nine different compartments of Iraq, were going to be under the control or the plan had a unified effort between Iraqi Army and Iraqi national police entities,

and that there was a unified command structure there, and that we fundamentally would be involved in both partnership and in embedded—you know, with embedded trainers with this.

General Bakhtiar yesterday made it very clear that with all of that effort, things still are going to be required of the local police to remain present in the areas that we are working, and that will all be under the unified control.

Mr. CALVERT. How many police are in Baghdad?

General SCHOOMAKER. I would have to give that to you for the record.

[The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Mr. CALVERT. Will this troop increase directly or indirectly affect Maliki's government to keep his commitments to stop this political and sectarian violence that is taking place right now? Do you think that is a reasonable expectation that you can do this?

General SCHOOMAKER. Sir, I really have no knowledge. I have never met Prime Minister Maliki.

Again, the Iraqi military indicates that they believe that they would deliver both politically and militarily on the plan.

Mr. CALVERT. Let me ask this one question, because I have a limited time. If, in fact, things didn't go as we expected, how would a retreat or defeat in Iraq affect commitments made by us throughout the world, and, generally, in the war on terror? How do you think that would affect how our enemy looks at us today?

General Conway, would you like to answer that?

General CONWAY. Yes, sir, I will. I think, unfortunately, there is a misperception of al Qaeda to a degree and other nations in the region as well, that they have momentum at this point, and that if we were to pull out of the Middle East, Iraq in particular, and without having succeeded, then I think we would lose a level of credibility.

I think that our leadership as a superpower, would certainly be questioned. I think that our national interests, again, would be vulnerable as a result of that.

Mr. CALVERT. General.

General SCHOOMAKER. I certainly agree with that. I did mention to an earlier question, in response to an earlier question, that we in the United States have considerable joint military capability, and that the degree to which that can be applied to this strategic situation we had is important, you know, an important consideration.

Again, I recommend that you take a look at the classified material that has been provided to the Congress, and look at chairman's risk assessment. I think it amply addresses this issue.

Mr. CALVERT. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Johnson from Georgia.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Generals, it is my distinct pleasure to be here today. This is the first time that I have encountered any of you, along with staff. I just want you to know that I support the military in terms of its readiness, or its need to be ready.

However, I do have some reservations and some—I have never been in favor of the war in Iraq. That is pretty much irrelevant at this point, but I did want you to know that before I start my questions.

Of course, the war, at its inception, was supported by the majority of Americans, but that level of support has declined over the years that the war has been in operation. At this point, it looks like maybe 68 percent of Americans are not in favor of this war.

I would suppose that has had an impact on the ability of the Army, let us start with the Army, to obtain its recruitment goals; is that correct?

General SCHOOMAKER. Actually, my answer would be to the contrary. As I stated last year, 2006, we had the best recruiting in 9 years in the active force, and the best in 13 years in National Guard. Indications are this year that we are in the proper glide path for success this year.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, in looking at my briefing memo in preparation for this hearing today on page six, it talks about the fact that the Army remained the service with the greatest recruiting challenge during fiscal year 2006. Although the Army achieved its accession goal of 80,000, it failed to achieve its goal for new recruit contracts by 20,128 or 17.8 percent. Would you disagree with that figure?

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, I think, first of all, you have to understand that the Army always has the biggest challenge, because if you added up all the recruits the Marine Corps has, all of the recruits the Air Force has, and all the recruits the Navy has and add them together, we recruit more soldiers every year than all of them put together. So got a big challenge.

Mr. JOHNSON. I understand the challenge.

General SCHOOMAKER. The second thing is——

Mr. JOHNSON. But I would like to know whether or not that figure is correct. Did you fail to achieve your goal for new recruit contracts by 20,128 in 2006 fiscal year. Is that true or false?

General SCHOOMAKER. I don't know, since we were successful in our goal, I don't know how we could have failed to do that. So I don't know what that is. But I would be glad to have it checked out and give it to you for the record.

Mr. JOHNSON. I also want to get some clarification. You stated that 100 percent of the recruits in fiscal year 2006 had a high school diploma or equivalent, I believe you may have qualified that, but according to figures that I have——

General SCHOOMAKER. Eighty-one percent have high school diplomas. The rest of them have equivalencies.

Mr. JOHNSON. Actually, your target or Department of Defense goal is 90 percent high school diplomas.

General SCHOOMAKER. That is correct.

Mr. JOHNSON. But yet 2006 fiscal year, 81 percent.

General SCHOOMAKER. And all of the rest of them have General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or equivalencies. Every soldier is a high school graduate, but 81 percent of them have actual high school diplomas. The rest of them have gone through equivalency testing.

Mr. JOHNSON. They obtained those equivalency exams before or after they are recruited?

General SCHOOMAKER. Before they were recruited.

General CONWAY. Sir, if I could comment, you are correct in terms of our studies reflecting propensity for whites, for blacks and for Hispanics. All, we show the propensity to want to join the service is down in recent months.

I think that just reflects the great job that the Army and Marine recruiters are doing out there in order to be able to achieve our recruiting goals on an annual basis. We have a little bit of a dynamic at work there.

General SCHOOMAKER. If I could just say something here, in the 1980's——

Mr. JOHNSON. Real quick, let me get this question in real quick.

General SCHOOMAKER. We were recruiting 50 percent at force, greater than 50 percent. Today we are doing less than 4 percent, big difference.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mrs. Miller.

Mrs. MILLER OF MICHIGAN. Thank you.

Gentlemen, thank you both for your attendance here today. We certainly appreciate your service to our Nation here. I know we are here to talk about readiness of the troops. Certainly, I have a question about that. I am not sure we will be able to get to it.

I just want to take this opportunity to ask a general question of you both about the President's strategy for the surge.

I think there are a lot of us who are expressing some consternation about the way that we are trying to understand how the surge is actually going to be implemented, perhaps because there is not a comfort level about timelines and deadlines and consequences to the Iraqis if they don't meet various parts of the matrix, as you begin to benchmark some of these things.

I am not going to tell you how old I am, Mr. Kline, but I will tell you I am a product of the Vietnam era, and I am not trying to draw any analogies between this and Vietnam, but one of the lessons, I think, that our Nation learned during Vietnam is that we saw an unfortunate circumstance where you had the politicians micromanaging the experts, the military experts and the commanders in theater.

I just am trying to understand, or perhaps you could tell me, how do you feel, honestly, about the surge strategy? I ask that particularly because General Schoomaker—and I don't want to mischaracterize what you testified last week—but I did read somewhere where you said you thought we had a 50/50 chance of success with that strategy?

I am not sure if that is a correct representation of what you said. I guess I would just is like to try to get a better handle on making sure that our military commanders, that this is their strategy, not a political strategy.

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, at some level, you don't divide the two. We have civilian control of the military in this country, and both of us, as members of the joint chief of staff and I can assure you that we provided our unvarnished advice to the Commander-in-Chief and to the leadership of the country on what we—what we thought about this. The Commander-in-Chief has made a decision

on this. We are now in the business of making sure that we are successful.

I would categorize—and I am not going to comment on the 50/50 business because—whether I said it in a closed hearing or I said it here, but I would tell you there is no question in my mind that the United States Army, the United States Marine Corps and the other military elements that are here are going to deliver on our part of this.

As has been properly pointed out, the question is, will the Iraqis deliver and will the other interagency parts of our government deliver in a coherent, counterinsurgency commitment and strategy to this? Therein lies the question.

As we watch this unfold, I think we need to make continual judgments about whether we go forward, sideways or backwards, whatever we do. I know there is adequate flexibility for us to make those judgments as we go through it.

General CONWAY. I think the process was about right. I think it is fair to say we had a tremendously productive session with the President when he visited us in the tank. It was extended beyond the time that was allocated for it. I think we all felt very good about it walking out.

On the heels of that, you saw General Pace and the new Secretary of Defense go into the theater to go eyeball to eyeball with our commanders there. When they came back, they went to Crawford, Texas, and decisions were made.

So I think there was a great deal of vigor that went into all the possible courses of action out there before the Commander-in-Chief decided. I would also highlight that we had two tremendous commanders in theater, who are reaching—really they are beyond their expected time in Iraq in the case of General Casey and still in the case of General Abizaid—so with new commanders coming on and the new strategy that the Commander-in-Chief has opted to invoke, I think we are anxious and optimistic about the outcome.

Mrs. MILLER OF MICHIGAN. Thank you, since I just have about 30 seconds left, let me ask a quick readiness question about guard and reserve.

General Schoomaker, you had mentioned in your testimony that about 55 percent of the Army's capabilities are reserve components. I thought it was in the 30 percentile, so I am sorry, I did not understand that. I guess it is 30 percentile of guard and reserve that are engaged in theater.

I would be interested to know, General Conway, what is a similar number in Marines?

General CONWAY. You are right, ma'am, it is about a third. We have 39,000 active reserve out of a baseline strength of 175,000, so it is roughly about a third.

Mrs. MILLER OF MICHIGAN. I just ask that question. It is very interesting. I actually have a guard and reserve base in my district. When we think about the deployments and redeployments that they have been engaged in, this committee has done everything that we possibly can to achieve parity for the guard and reserve. We certainly want to continue with that commitment.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman, Mr. Courtney from Connecticut.

Mr. COURTNEY. I want to thank the chairman and thank the gentleman for their presence today and endurance.

I want to just will follow up on what Congresswoman Miller was describing, sort of an attempt by, I think, a lot of us and people across the country to understand the sequencing and timeline and approach that is being taken here with the surge.

When Secretary Gates was here, certainly the impression I took from his testimony was that there was going to be some attempt to sort of measure the Iraqi performance, and that there was sort of a pipeline that would maybe be turned on or off depending on how well the performance was demonstrated by the Iraqi Army, which, again, I think a lot of people have concerns about.

This morning's *Washington Post* has an article about General Petraeus' testimony before the Senate, and, basically indicates that he really has no plans to really measure that performance, he is just going to—in fact, the term that is used here this morning is he will be ignoring any Iraqi shortcomings and asking for all five brigades of the U.S. planned reinforcements. The comment was to do what has to be done. They all have to go.

It seems to paint a much different picture than what I think was presented initially, which is, again, we are going to be sort of tying this to some degree to the performance of the Iraqis. I mean, Congressman McHugh asked the question earlier about, you know, what contingencies are sort of left for us, if, in fact, they don't show up and they don't perform well.

I just wanted to see if you had any comments about those press reports this morning about General Petraeus' intention, how that sort of fits in with what the plans are.

General SCHOOMAKER. First of all, I am unfamiliar with the press reports, but I know General Petraeus. I know he is thoughtful. I know that his judgment will apply and that I also know the manner in which these forces are flowing, and I know that we have adequate time to gauge the flow of these forces in either direction.

General CONWAY. Sir, with all due respect, I don't necessarily believe what I read any more entirely.

I also know General Petraeus. I served with him in Iraq. He is very thoughtful. I will be surprised if he doesn't do a series of metrics on a daily basis that determines for him the progress, particularly in and around Baghdad.

Mr. COURTNEY. I hope you are right.

I have one other question, which is, General Conway, in your written testimony, you, I think, very thoughtfully described the quality of life issues which is part of our military readiness and talked about the assistance that has been given to wounded soldiers and their families which for peace of mind who aren't wounded I think is an important service to be provided. But the *Army Times* has an article, it is reported January 20th, which indicates that the Defense Department is closing the Military Severely Injured Center. Workers were told last Wednesday to close up their case files, and their layoffs were affected on Friday.

I didn't know whether you were even aware of that change that took place and the layoff, but it certainly seems that, if people have active cases, it suggests that their services certainly weren't redun-

dant, and it seems to be headed in the wrong direction, particularly at a time when the violence seems to be increasing.

General SCHOOMAKER. Where is this center you are talking about?

Mr. COURTNEY. Arlington, Virginia.

General SCHOOMAKER. I am unaware of it.

Mr. COURTNEY. I would be happy to share this article with you for the record.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 95.]

Mr. COURTNEY. I will yield back the rest of my time, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady from Virginia, Mrs. Drake.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Generals, first of all, thank you for being here with us today and thank you for your service.

General Conway, last night, I read an article that was in the *Marine Corps Times* that has a lot of quotes from you in it about every Marine into the fight. What really caught my eye was the paragraph that says—these are your words, "Frequent deployments and short-term periods have been the norm when they join our Corps. Marines expect to train, deploy, and fight. That is who we are. That is what we do. We must allow every Marine that opportunity."

The reason it caught my eye is because that is exactly what I have heard on my two trips to Iraq across the services, though not just for Marines but from everyone that I have talked to. They use that term, "That is what we do."

I think our perception on this committee—because we thought the sacrifice that our men and women have made is that they have been over-extended, they have been sent repeatedly, that it has been very, very, difficult for them. Yet you read in this article that Marines are actually complaining that they haven't been able to deploy, and then you go into the numbers that out of a 175,000 permanent troops, about 66,000 have not been deployed.

So my question is if you could expand on this article a little bit; and I would also like to ask, is there some way we can get this into the mainstream media so that Americans can see what truly brave men and women we have serving today?

General CONWAY. First of all, I would qualify the 66,000 number, because my manpower did for me, by saying about half of those people are in what we call victory units are headed to Iraq or Afghanistan in a relatively short period of time. So that cuts the number about half, about 30 to 35,000. But even that, in my view, is still a significant number against an end strength of 185,000. So our thought process is we have got to engage those folks to our best of our ability to do so and relieve some of the deployment tempo on some of the Marines that have been two, three, four times at this point.

Now, the manpower people will tell you that the military occupational specialty doesn't match up well or that individual may be critical to a need elsewhere. There are a host of reasons. I won't call them excuses. But we want to blow past those and get these people the opportunity to, one, get into the fight and, second, help

relieve some of these deployment tempo experiences that we are seeing.

Mrs. DRAKE. I think when we see Navy personnel that are serving on the ground of Iraq—so is it a training issue? They haven't been trained.

General CONWAY. Part of it. No, every Marine is trained as a rifleman first. That allows them with the additional training to go into theater and do a job for us. Part of it is a turnover.

Again, I think I commend the opening comment that we have a 70 percent first-term force so a lot of those people are relatively new to the Marine Corps. But, again, they joined since 9/11. My view is they probably came in with the expectation that they were going to fight for their country. I think we need to afford them the opportunity.

Mrs. DRAKE. General Schoomaker, I know that there is sort of a proposal out there by some Members not to go into Baghdad with our forces but to focus on Anbar where we know we are fighting al Qaeda. Do you think that would be workable at all to—and I think the concern is that this is an Iraq-Shi'a-Sunni conflict and why should our men be in the middle of that. But my thought watching it is, when we have 80 percent of the violence there, that that would not be a workable solution, that we have to deal with the violence where it is and that the goal in embedding these troops are to train the Iraqis and give them the combat experience with us standing behind them.

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, first of all, the commanders on the ground are making the judgments on that. My opinion from where I sit—and I am not there day to day—Baghdad is either the center of gravity or the culminating point, either way that you want to look at it.

It has been said that over 90 percent of the violence happens within a 30-mile radius of Baghdad. I don't know how we can approach the end state that we desire in Iraq, which is a unified country that has to exercise sovereignty, being an ally in the war on terror and be a good neighbor in the region, without dealing with the center of gravity. So it is incoherent to me that we would separate the two.

Mrs. DRAKE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentlelady.

The gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Cummings.

Before Mr. Cummings, by my count, there are eight members who have not had the opportunity to ask questions; and there is a very important panel that will follow that has three witnesses. I urge you to do your best to be present for them, because we look forward to hearing from a soldier and some spouses.

I am also told that we would have votes between 1 and 2 o'clock. So we will go on from then.

Mr. Cummings.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Thank you very much.

I want to thank you for your service. On behalf of the American people, we really do appreciate what you and the men and the women in the service are doing.

One of the things that, as I listened to you, General Conway—I have listened to all of the testimony this morning, and one of the

things that I see, that there is apparently a disconnect. And you said it pretty much. You said that we were talking about how long this would go on in Iraq. I think that was what we were referring to.

You talked about a timeline and what you saw as a timeline, how long it might go on; and then you said that—but the American people seem to have a different timeline. The American people's timeline is filled with impatience, as you probably are well aware. And I was wondering, what is it that—and I think the American people have gotten to a point where they have begun to lack trust.

In Covey's book entitled *The Speed of Trust,* he talks about how important trust is. And in some kind of way we need to try to connect these two, that is, the American people and you, just brilliant generals, who have the President's ear.

I am just wondering, what is your timeline and how do you—it has got to concern you that the—you know, when you read the papers and you hear the poll numbers that it has got to concern you that there may be some kind of disconnect here. Because you all are seeing one thing and the American people are seeing something else.

What do you see as a timeline, General Conway?

General CONWAY. Sir, if you study insurgencies over time, it is traditionally somewhere between about 8 and 12 years before an insurgency is sufficiently countered or conquered and a fledgling nation is able to get on its feet, create stability, bring on economic conditions such that the country can then survive. I think that is probably reasonable if you look at our Nation and our own history, how long it took us in the Continental Congress until such time as we were a viable Nation.

I think it is certainly going to take more than the two or three, three or four years that we have seen and probably safe or sure but historically close to a decade.

Mr. CUMMINGS. On another subject, you both have mentioned some specialized equipment will need to be cross-leveled among the units in Iraq; and I would assume that you have not overequipped those units. So will they now be doing the same mission with less? Will the units lose armored vehicles or other equipment? Do you follow what I am saying?

General CONWAY. I do, sir; and those types of items I have scrutinized myself. There are 14 or 15 items. They are sniper rifles. They are enhanced night vision devices. There is some armor, but there is enough armor that it can't be spread load. It is the assessment of General Zilmer, our commander in the west, that those items can be sufficiently spread load amongst the two additional battalions, that one battalion will be able to accomplish the missions and do so without undue personal risks.

Mr. CUMMINGS. About the Humvees, I think you mentioned—who said something about 2012? What was that date? Is that the date that we expect to have the best Humvees available? Was that the date? 2012?

General CONWAY. Sir, my reference to 2012 had to do with our barracks and the completion of the barracks that we have at this point on the docket for build.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Let me talk about Humvees for a moment. In a *Baltimore Sun* article dated January 21st, it says, interviews last week with sea, Army and Marine Corps officers acknowledged that they are struggling just to meet the needs of service members already in Iraq. Even if the Pentagon can find millions of dollars not currently budgeted and even if it can find factories to produce the armored vehicles, most U.S. troops in Iraq will not have access to the best equipment available.

Is that accurate?

General CONWAY. Sir, I will tell you that Marines do not go outside the wire in the Al Anbar province unless they are under protection from either an up-armored vehicle, M1114 or a Humvee, with what we call a Mach 2 kit, which actually provides more side protection than does the up-armor Hummer.

That is by direction of the commanding general.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Thank you very much.

With that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Kentucky, Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. I remember back in the 1970's and 1980's when we suffered many of those issues related to flight hours and parts. I still suffer Post-Traumatic Stress disorder from the character-building opportunity that General Shampo gave us as he sought us more time in the war pit for those of us who needed to grow in character.

But, practically speaking, you are right. It is a totally different force. It is amazing what our young people are doing.

Rather than talk about the specifics of current operations in Iraq, the perspective that I would like to go to is maybe something a little bit bigger, maybe looking back in Haiti in 1994, issues we dealt with in Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, things I have personally seen on the ground. Two things come to mind, and I think particularly whether the Army force generational model has been stressed to where it has exposed some other constraints in the national security process; and what I would like you to comment on is really two-fold, please.

First of all, the traditional struggle within the Army—I am not sure to what point in the Marine Corps it is an issue between what I would consider the Special Operations Forces (SOF) communities civil affairs side of things and the big Army conventional missions versus being structured for more unconventional classic counterinsurgency. The current military structure focus is much more on big war, and we are seeing field artillery, what battalions being converted to military police (MPs) or transportation units but also concerned about the interagency process. How do we structure practically to be able to respond to really what I believe are the strategic threats or the management of most of our strategic threats and the latitude 1040 window, operations other than war low-intensity conflict, constabulary operations, things like that?

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, I can comment quickly. I spent most of my life in Special Operations; and, you know, prior to this job I was Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Special Operations Command, where I was in charge of all services, Special Operation Forces. The Chief of Staff in the Army—we are growing our part of SOF by about 14,000, and that is coming out of our Army end strength, and

we are creating additional five battalions and other special ops, aviation, double in the civil affairs companies, creating another equivalent of battalion of Rangers and psychological operations forces. So we are investing heavily in that.

The next thing I would tell you is that I have never seen a better relationship between our Special Operating Forces and our general purpose forces than we have today. That is on the battlefield, that is in the training arena, that is in every venue.

Third thing, I will tell you the Army and the Marine Corps, in my opinion, have made huge shifts in terms of we have shown great adaptability and agility and have adapted to the world that we are away from the Cold War force. Anybody that thinks that we are continuing Cold War methodologies thought, you know, organization or anything else doesn't understand what it is that we have done in both Marine Corps and the Army, in my view.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. I am not questioning that. I am a bit amazed at the resilience of all training, from initial entry preparing troops for practical missions. It is remarkable how well that is being done. I am thinking more from a strategic perspective the force structures and how we go into this issue with, again, the interagency to address issues that are beyond the military mission.

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, there is an awful lot written and talked about and frustration that everybody has with the interagency, and it has to—transform capabilities have to be developed, and I think Secretary Rice has talked about it. I think she has talked about the things that need to happen.

As we have said, in the kind of threat that we have got as we go forward and the kind of challenges we have got, it is going to require a kind of interagency and a coalition in its approach. And there are limitations in terms of what the military can deliver. You know, we can overdeliver to a point, but then you have to have these other components come in to deal with the other elements of power.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. My final question along this line is, do you feel that other supporting agencies—State Department, Treasury, Department of Justice—have an adequate planning capability, operational planning capability to support these types of operations and a personnel policy that would support that?

General SCHOOMAKER. In my view, they don't.

Mr. DAVIS OF KENTUCKY. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. From my observation, General, I would certainly agree with your last answer. That was from early on I have seen that very lack of coordination and cooperation.

The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Ellsworth.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I would echo the sentiments of your panel and thank you all for your service.

I think a lot of the frustration—we heard testimony the other day in this panel that one of the gentlemen who was responsible for checking on the equipment and the accountability of equipment in theater was having trouble going outside the Green Zone and so he was unable to check on things outside the Green Zone. It sparked a question of me. Over the course of this campaign, would it be possible, General, to describe the Green Zone and how it has

fluctuated, if it has at all, since this campaign began? Whether it has shrunk, grown? Because I would think one measure of success is how much area is safe in theater. And would it be possible yearly, every six months, what it has done? If that is possible to address, to describe, verbally, I guess.

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, I don't spend time in the Green Zone; and I don't have a clue about how big it is, how small it is or what—I have an idea of what happens inside there. But I don't know.

You are not talking about a military person that had trouble getting out and checking on equipment, because we have got teams all over the country that are certainly not in the Green Zone. We don't have anybody in the Green Zone that I know of that is checking on equipment. So I am not quite sure who you are talking about there.

But, you know, the place is dangerous. I mean, there is an active insurgency going on in the country. Parts of the country are less dangerous than other parts, not unlike Washington, D.C. I mean, there are places you don't want to go other than in numbers with the proper equipment, and so I don't know quite how to answer the question beyond that.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Okay. Maybe I could say, would that area, that it is—no area is safe, that the insurgents are getting into what we consider a safe area. Maybe it is safe today; maybe it is not tomorrow. There is not an area that has spread, saying we have secured this and now we have secured more and now we have secured more?

General SCHOOMAKER. I think the Green Zone, I think, is very secure. I mean, that is the seat of government and where our embassy is there and the rest of that. It is not a military facility. There are a lot of contract guards, and there are a lot of procedures there. But, obviously, our forward operating bases are secure; and we secure them so that, you know, we have got bases to operate from. They are more secure than other places.

But I will tell you that depends on where you go in that country. There are various degrees—I don't know anywhere that there is any guarantee of security because, as you know, we receive on occasion rockets and mortars and other kinds of things in the very secure areas.

General CONWAY. I think that is a very large juncture of the country in Baghdad but especially outside of that that have been handed over to the Iraqi security forces for primary responsibility. They have outposts. They have police stations. They have their own barracks facilities, those kinds of things. But they operate outside of Baghdad in particular on a routine basis.

But General Schoomaker is exactly right. The problem is where the insurgents happen to be on any given day.

It is interesting to watch in the background of some of the reports that come into our TV media in terms of what is happening just in the wake of an incident and you will see a level of normalcy that the people are experiencing even though it is a very dangerous place.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you.

And, General Conway, if you would elaborate something you said a few minutes ago. I was trying to write it down. But you were talking about, if we pull out before we succeed, al Qaeda would then flourish and grow and take over. Can you help me—and that is something we have been asking for a long, long time. What is the "success"? Is that when we capture or kill all of al Qaeda? Or help me with the "success," please.

General CONWAY. Sir, I would rephrase perhaps what I said earlier about what the commander in Iraq sees as success, and that is a stable nation able to govern itself ideally through democratic principles, but it will be uniquely Iraqi. However that settles out, I am satisfied. Economic institutions at work and essentially not a safe haven for continued operation by terrorists who are there now. I think if we can achieve those three or four elements, then it will be a win for the Iraqis. It will be success for us.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. Thank you both very much.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Hayes.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service, particularly the men and women you represent.

Talk a few moments, if you will, about a couple of key issues. The new plan going forward. What are the key points that make this plan new? I am supportive of the plan, but, from your perspective of the Army and the Marine Corps, what are the key elements of this new plan that are new, that make it new and the reasons that come from that that this will be successful?

General SCHOOMAKER. I will speak to Baghdad very quickly, and then the Commandant will talk about Al Anbar.

Basically, in the clear plan for the clear hold and build construct that you often hear people talk about, the fundamental difference here is not in the clear problem. It is in the hold and build. And the commanders on the ground and those that I have talked to feel that is the significant difference.

Mr. HAYES. They hold. That is what you are saying?

General SCHOOMAKER. We help them clear, hold, and resources come in to build so that—and then people stay. You know, the business here is that you go in and do what you accomplish and somebody stays so that the reconstruction can continue and the building can continue. And I think that is a fundamental difference in it.

Mr. HAYES. And this is the Iraqis holding. That is a huge difference. That is a huge difference.

General Conway.

General CONWAY. Sir, there have been surges in the past, but the troop surges that we have seen before have had a specified objective normally related with election security, and we have seen the forces come out fairly rapidly on the heels of this. This time it has got an operational design on this intended to take down the bad guys in Al Anbar and Baghdad. So we are seeing a surge or plus-up for a different reason this time.

I think what is different about it in Al Anbar is again this issue of success that we have had both out on the border and in Ramadi and arguably in Fallujah where in the past, where we have had success, there has been a place where the bad guys could go, recon-

stitute and replay the game of "whack a mole" to a degree. With the ability, now, to force them out of places with the help of the Sunni tribes and Sunni police and they will restrict their ability to regroup in any form or fashion in Al Anbar, that is going to be new, that is going to be different.

Mr. HAYES. The military leadership under the new plan with the three generals in Baghdad, that to me is a significant increase as well. And trying to get people to talk about the ratio of American forces, the plus-up to the Iraqi force plus-up, which is significantly more than we are doing, I would like to see even more. Can you speak to that briefly? And then the lead indicators, not the lag indicators, that people at home were very concerned for a whole host of reasons, can look at as measuring points that this is something that we are doing.

General CONWAY. I went to a dinner last night sitting next to an Iraqi officer that said there are three Kurdish brigades that are coming down out of the north into Baghdad. That, to me, is a good signal. Because those aren't seen as Kurdish brigades. They are seen as Iraqi brigades employed elsewhere in the country, and they see it as a net positive. Plus we believe those are pretty good brigades.

Mr. HAYES. Speak to Sadr people coming back to the table in the militia, at least going through some motions of disarming themselves, that is significant. It is kind of unreported at this point.

General CONWAY. I don't have details on that. I don't know if General Schoomaker does or not.

General SCHOOMAKER. I only know, again, conversations with Iraqis yesterday—again, that was a question I asked, you know; and his indication was that that is part of this, you know, ideally political accommodation.

Mr. HAYES. Last but not least, you spoke earlier, General Schoomaker—I think you were saying we need to get MILCON construction up and going not under the CR. You mentioned Ft. Bliss, Ft. Bragg got a huge dent in the very necessary armor; and anything that you and General Conway—and, of course, Marines are very important to help push that through, and it is critical to make it go through and pass that bill and it not go into CR.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlemen.

I think just punting the football on to us on that issue.

Mr. Sestak from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SESTAK. You had mentioned we are a much more capable Army today because of this fast investment we have had. If you were able to just remove Iraq, just remove it, would you then say we are then therefore a much more secure America, much more responsive military than five or six years ago?

General SCHOOMAKER. Well, I would say that we are a much more capable military with Iraq.

Mr. SESTAK. I am asking if you were able—if Iraq disappeared because of this investment we made, are we a much more better military, able to beat the war plans better if Iraq were not there because of this investment?

General SCHOOMAKER. Of course. There is significant demand on the forces there, but let me say that, as I said a minute ago, that this is much bigger than Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. SESTAK. I was going to come to that.

General, you said that if we removed ourselves from Iraq, it is going to spiral into civil war. These weren't your exact words, but it is going to become—things will spill over. Is that a military assessment of yours or political military assessment?

General CONWAY. Sir, my comments are tied to what we note to be the strategy of al Qaeda, and that is that they want to eject western influence from the Middle East. They want to destroy Israel. They want to choke off oil supply and bankrupt our economy. So, with that, there is an announced strategy. I think we need to be looking at how we counter that.

Mr. SESTAK. So you have taken the capability to do that into account, not just the word militarily?

General CONWAY. Absolutely.

Mr. SESTAK. General, a question I have, particularly with your background. The shaping that the military, the Army and the Marines, have done over the years, absence of war, the 60 countries at a time, has this been impacted by our involvement in Iraq beginning to get to where you were going?

General SCHOOMAKER. Yes, and it has been focused in areas that are directly related to the broader long war, the global war against extreme violent extremism. That is where our shaping efforts are going, but I would say some of those that traditionally we have had have lesser priority today as a result of that.

Mr. SESTAK. Does that have an impact on our ability to be more secure? Because you put a lot of time over the years and as shaping strategy, specifically special forces as throughout the world, countries that were not involved, in a sense, with conflict, but, you know, the peacetime shaping.

General SCHOOMAKER. I am not sure it is that easy to answer that way. I think that our shaping efforts and our efforts in fact are making us more secure, because they are focused on the problem we have.

Mr. SESTAK. Got it.

My next question comes back to the trends. The Congressman had brought up the question on high school diplomas and all. Back in 2004, at least 92 percent of our incoming recruits had high school diplomas. Now we are down to 81 percent. Still great men and women. But you have done so much with Future Combat Systems (FCS) and modularity in trying to have a military based upon technology and yet the trends are that those coming in are perhaps not quite the same ilk in terms of educational prowess as might have been before to what the standard had been, the 90 percent. But I have also watched you and the Marines focus so much upon with FCS and modularity and the agility to do things. As you talk about our readiness to respond absent shaping the peacetime shaping, where hopefully you are preventing us to go to war because of the good shaping, are we impacted upon that speed of response to where Saddam Hussein, if we were able to respond more readily before we went into Kuwait, we might have been able to preclude our still being there?

I ask that question because of the readiness money that we are pouring in to where it has gone from—as you know, it is $14 billion, soon to be, per month if the operations maintenance division

(OMD)—the next supplemental we heard is going to join the $70 billion, the $10 billion for the reset, the $6 million for the recon, the $10 billion for the increase in forces. When you look at all of that investment that we put into the military, do we have the speed and the agility by remaining in Iraq to meet the future responses we need of which you were trying so hard with FCS modularity and seabase to try to achieve?

The CHAIRMAN. You can answer the question in a couple of words.

General SCHOOMAKER. I can't do it in a couple of words, but I will tell you that, number one, obviously, the demand in Iraq has an impact on our ability to do other things. I testified to that.

Second, we have the finest non-commissioned officer corps today that we have ever had. They are a product of a time in the 1980's when we had far less high school graduates than we have today and where we had 50 percent category 4. That is what the basis of this current noncommissioned officer corps is. The Army has something to do with how people turn out. It is not just——

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

General Conway, I am a bit concerned about putting all of the eggs in the basket of al Qaeda when is it not a fact that al Qaeda is not a part of the Sunni insurgency and that overlying all of this is the sectarian violence between the Sunnis and the Shiites and the Shiites versus Shiites. I am just concerned that in your comments that you are laying it all in one basket when it is far more complicated. Am I correct?

General CONWAY. Sir, what I was referring to was the al Qaeda strategy. Certainly that is separate from the enemy that we face in Iraq.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. I will be quick, because I know we have a second panel.

I want to say to both generals, thank you so much for being here today. This is toward the end. I sit here in amazement.

Last week, we had the Inspector Generals of the United States, Secretary of State, Departmentof the Army and then David Walker. And I sit here and listen to your needs and the needs of our men and women in uniform, and my mind keeps going back to what they said about President Reagan. That when President Reagan—he actually probably brought the Soviet Union down on its knees economically. He broke the economy of the Soviet Union.

Last week, I was not able to be here for the time, but I have heard David Walker say publicly that if this Nation today had to write a check to pay off the liabilities and obligations, if they had to write the check today, the check would be for $43 trillion. And I sit here and I am wondering——

You—all of our men and women in uniform are heroes, Every one of you. But I wonder how much, Mr. Chairman, a Nation can call upon the military and say, you go here, you go there, you fight, you know, try to bring democracy to a Muslim world that the English said—I mean, they gave up in 1920, and I have heard some—read some comments from Churchill and what he said about Iraq. And this is the couple questions, and then I am through.

I used this last week—and you gentlemen have been to Iraq. You will probably go back and forth. This was Lieutenant General Jay Garner, and he is quoted in the *Washington Post* as saying—and I will read quickly, "You will never find in my lifetime one man that all of the Iraqis will coalesce around. Iraqis are too divided among sectarian, ethnic and tribal loyalties. And the loyalties are regional, not national." You are not the policymakers.

I wish that they wouldn't—in fact, Mr. Chairman, I put a bill in recently that I hope this committee will consider, to say that the Secretary of Defense—that anyone that has been in the military, that three years after serving in the military that their name could be submitted to the Senate by the President. Because I think—and this is not to slam Mr. Rumsfeld. I was not a fan of his, and I am glad he is gone.

But the point is, when I sit here and listen to you men and women in uniform who are leading this military nation, I think that maybe if this bill should ever become law—now you have to wait ten years before you could choose someone that has served in the military to be considered by the Senate, by the President to serve as Secretary of Defense. But when I listened to you gentlemen, you are experts. You know today what the military needs. You know what the military needs tomorrow and five and ten years down the road. You should be able—Mr. Chairman I hope you will bring that bill up at least for hearing. You should be able to be chosen by a President to sit in as Secretary of Defense.

This is my question to both of you. I have listened to my colleagues. They have asked great questions. You have given great answers. But the whole issue is this: Give me your opinion, that if we had never gone into Iraq and we had put a hundred thousand troops in Afghanistan four years ago, as we did a hundred plus in Iraq, would Afghanistan be in a situation where it is possible to say in a few years it would be a success if we would put the 130,000 in Afghanistan?

General CONWAY. Sir, I will start and say it is conjecture only. You pose a hypothetical situation. I will give you a hypothetical answer and say there are national borders there that make success in Afghanistan very complicated.

General SCHOOMAKER. I met with President Musharraf this last trip during Christmas, had a long conversation with him. My answer to you would be probably not. This is much bigger than a choice between Iraq and Afghanistan. We truly have a global problem here that is growing, and it is going to come home. We must work this thing, and it is going to take a long time. I don't think the answer is as simple as what you postulate.

Mr. JONES. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Ms. Shea-Porter of New Hampshire.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Thank you, Generals, and I appreciate your service.

I will tell you that sitting here listening to all of you talk about the problems that we are now facing after years of positive reports about the climate in Iraq is very disturbing to me. It makes me remember the time during the Vietnam era and afterwards when my husband was in the military and we had many conversations lis-

tening to military people talk about what had gone wrong and what we were not allowed to do and, you know, how it ended ultimately.

So we have been listening to this Administration talk about these great victories in Iraq, and then I listened to you talking about what we did wrong, and then we sort of summed it up saying, well, we can't go back in history, but we are going forward. And I would hope that we would have some eye on the present and the future and a voice so that we don't repeat this once again. It is so unfair to our military. It is so unfair to our Nation. And while we pay this great economic price and certainly a price in the world, we are also paying domestically here. Because whatever money is going into this problem now is being taken away from our children, our grandchildren, our senior citizens. So I have great concern about this.

I also worry about our stop-loss policy and the impact on the military. I worry about who is speaking Arabic, who is communicating with the people on the ground there, and the shortage of people who speak Arabic in our military. I worry about the helmets and the other equipment. I think there is something tragic when you can go to a Web site and make a donation so that people will have proper helmets in Iraq. Something is very wrong.

I also worry about how we use the word insurgency now. We used to talk about weapons of mass destruction, and that was the mission. And that then we talked about the mission of democracy. We didn't talk about insurgency. Now what I am hearing today is what we are hoping to do is stabilize Iraq not necessarily in a democracy but to stabilize them so we can leave. I can't help but remember that Iraq was stable even though Saddam Hussein was a bad man. If stability was the goal, they had that goal then.

And my question to you—I appreciate you have been here for so long. We have all sat and learned a lot. We said that the mission was now stabilization and self-government. How will the military accomplish this without a political solution? And how will we get a political solution when we have factions that do not wish to be united? The truth of it is that when you look at the Shi'a and you look at the Sunni, they are not interested in working together. We now have a plan, an escalation plan that once again talks in glowing terms about these groups working together; and I want to know what is different now? What has made this plan different? We still hear and read in the papers that the Sunnis and the Shi'as are not getting along.

And I thank you again for your service and for your attempts to work out a solution here.

General SCHOOMAKER. I would like to start at the beginning of your comment, which was part of your question. First of all, anybody that is donating money for our soldiers in the United States Army and I am sure for the Marine Corps for the helmet is being ripped off. We are giving every soldier that is going into Iraq the very best helmet that we have. It is being fitted properly, and there is no reason for anybody to do that. Same thing with body armor. That is a rip-off.

Second, I will tell you that the United States of America today, right now, even with the supplement, is spending less as a percent

of gross domestic product in time of war than it ever has in its history since World War II. We are not overspending on our defense.

Third thing I will say, we can't go back and ring the bell again. That is for sure. But we don't want to ring the bell again the same way in the future. So we ought to learn from where we have been, and that is what we are trying to do.

Last, directly to your question, the challenge is going to be this rationalization. It is going to take a long time. The Iraqis that I have spoken to believe they can make some of these accommodations, but it is going to take time. And I agree with you. I think these are very deep seated. I think it is a very tough challenge that we have ahead. But it is going to have to be Iraqi political accommodation, and we are going to have to help them establish the environment in which that happens to take place, and that is what this is all about.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady, and we are running out of time in two seconds.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. I do believe in the strong defense, for the record, but I am concerned that we are directing the money in the wrong place. My understanding—and I may be wrong—but in Baghdad, in that area in Iraq, that it is only three percent al Qaeda. Is that accurate?

General SCHOOMAKER. I don't know what the percentage is there. I know that——

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Davis of California.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman; and thank you, General Schoomaker and General Conway, for being here throughout the morning. I wanted to follow up very briefly with one point that was made and then move on quickly, I hope, to the other panel.

We talked about the surge. You used the word "plus-up." I am wondering if you could give us your best estimate of how long a plus-up—and it might be on several different levels—could be occurring so that that payback that you talked about, the ability from a readiness standpoint to be prepared for either another conflict or more escalation in Iraq or Afghanistan, would be doable. What are the outer limits? Can you give us a sense of that?

General CONWAY. We don't know for sure what the intent is going to be, because we don't know how the plan is going to evolve, what the success is, the issues are going to be with that. We are projecting at this point an eight battalion base. We are saying, okay, if this is indeed a plus-up and the next rotation requires eight battalions instead of six, how are we going to get there from here?

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Is there a time that you are looking at, without being totally specific? But this could go on for six months, a year. I am concerned about that payback time that you talked about.

General CONWAY. Our hope that it is abbreviated through the degree that it is six or seven months, ideally not more than that. That then would represent it as a surge, as opposed to the plus-up; and I think you understand the difference.

But our hope is we can get back to a more normal deployment cycle simply because it, again, enhances our actual time for our

great Marines and sailors at home. That is yet to be determined, based upon the outcome of the situation.

General SCHOOMAKER. I would like to answer it this way. This is a zero sum game. We have what we have. It is either going to be in this corner or that corner or somewhere. Wherever we push it, there is going to be less where we took it from. And my view is that our capacity makes it especially important that we have got this reserve component mobilization policy and that we are doing the investments we are making in our reserve components, 55 percent of the Army, because that is where we are going to have to go on this.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. This may not necessarily be only in your jurisdiction, but can we do the embedding and the training of Iraqi soldiers at the same time that we do the plus-ups?

General CONWAY. General Casey's intent, and I suspect it will be carried over to General Petraeus, you will have the embedding accomplished by the organic units, those who are in the country. They will provide for the training teams as well as the partnerships for the adjoining Iraqi units.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. May I move to the health of the Marines, Army, particularly in the area of mental health? I know that we are going to have a secondary panel coming in, and I hope that we will have a chance to focus on the families as well.

How do you see that we have approximately 20 percent, as I understand it, of soldiers coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan with Post-Traumatic Stress syndrome (PTSD)? Some of them apparently are going back into the field. With Marines, we know that, you know, it is still—there is a stigma of mental illness in the Marines. How do you see that? What kind of emphasis are you putting on this issue so that we actually have people returning healthy or coming home and finding a healthy path to a more productive life?

General CONWAY. We are attacking on all fronts. And we consider that a head injury is as significant as a loss of a limb, both with PTSD and with traumatic brain injuries. The IED is a significant weapon. The head injury is a significant injury that we see coming out of it, and we have to get out of the stigma associated with it.

It is true at the troop level as well as, unfortunately, true in some cases with the leadership; and we are working heavily from a medical perspective, from a leadership perspective, from all kinds of screenings taking place before and after you are in theater, is to identify and then treat to get these people back on board as soon as we can.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Do you feel there is enough out there for families so their partners—they feel these are partners in this? Do you expect that is what families would say?

General CONWAY. I would like you to pose that question to the family members here today, and I hope they are seeing the efforts we are bringing forward. What we do know, it is real, and it is going to be a serious concern if we don't address it.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. I know our veterans group in San Diego have coined a phrase. It is, "This is a military at war, not a national war." is that something that you would sense is true?

General CONWAY. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank the gentlewoman.

We have gone through all of those eligible to ask questions, and I will ask the next panel to step forward.

First, let me thank General Schoomaker and General Conway, not just for your time but for your service. We appreciate it very much.

One last comment. General Conway, you were speaking about head injuries. There is an ongoing study at Bethesda headed by Dr. DeGraba regarding head injuries. Are you familiar with that? Would you be kind enough to furnish this committee with an update and see what, if anything, Congress needs to be doing to further that head injury study that Dr. DeGraba is heading up?

General CONWAY. Absolutely sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I have had some conversations with him.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 99.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you both. I appreciate you being with us.

First Sergeant Allison and Mrs. Zimmerman and Mrs. Shuster, we welcome you and thank you and your family's support of our country. If any of you three have opening statements, we will welcome them, of course.

Sergeant Ciaran Allison is about to redeploy to Iraq. We also have our military spouses whose husbands are serving in the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines out of Twentynine Palms in California and are being extended here in Iraq. So we ask you to take the witness table.

STATEMENT OF ARMY FIRST SGT. CIARAN T. ALLISON, A CO. 2–23 IN, FT. LEWIS, WASHINGTON, U.S. ARMY; ANEL ZIMMERMAN, SPOUSE OF GUNNERY SGT. CHAD ZIMMERMAN FROM THE 3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINES, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA; AND CORI SHUSTER, SPOUSE OF LT. COL. SCOTT SHUSTER, COMMANDING OFFICER OF 3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINES, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA

The CHAIRMAN. First Sergeant.

STATEMENT OF ARMY FIRST SGT. CIARAN T. ALLISON, U.S. ARMY

Sergeant ALLISON. Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the region plus-up of forces into Iraq and the impact on my unit.

My name is First Sergeant Ciaran Allison. I am the First Sergeant for Alpha Company, Ft. Lewis, Washington. I have been in the Army for 20 years. I am married, I have one child, and I have deployed numerous times in continuous operations throughout my career. This will be my second tour for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The majority of the junior enlisted soldiers in my company have not deployed in the past but are well-trained and equipped. However, 70 percent of the leadership are combat veterans. The change in our deployment timeline has had a minimal impact of our training and readiness. In fact, due to some of the changes in training location, married soldiers have more time to spend with their families before departing to Iraq.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Zimmerman.

STATEMENT OF ANEL ZIMMERMAN, SPOUSE OF GUNNERY SGT. CHAD ZIMMERMAN FROM THE 3RD BATTALION, 4TH MARINES, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Hello, my name is Anel Zimmerman. I am the proud wife of Gunnery Sergeant Chad Zimmerman. We have been married for ten years; and we have one daughter, Ashley, who is nine. My husband is currently serving in Iraq and has proudly served in the Marines for 12 years. We have been stationed in Twentynine Palms, California, for almost three years; and we are on our third deployment.

These deployments, even though they are part of the military duty, cause an emotional hardship for the Marine, the family members, and friends. One of the hardest things that I and many spouses have had to learn to do is adjust to is having a single parent's lifestyle.

It is particularly hard for us as military families to shelter our children from the media and constant negativity of war. It is hard for our children to understand why one or both of their parents are not at home. Without the negative outside influences, my daughter is a big daddy's girl and is very proud of what her daddy does, but she often finds herself wishing that her daddy would be home more often.

Something that would really help families cope a little bit better, if the military member would spend more time at home. Right now, they spend more time being gone than at home.

I always hear people saying how high the divorce rate is within the military. Maybe more time at home is a step forward to helping families bond and learn to be a family again. Marriage is hard work. But being married to someone in the military is the hardest job, is one of the toughest jobs, because we have to learn to adapt to physical and emotional changes on a periodic basis.

But it also has its privileges. When I married my husband, I didn't realize that I wasn't just marrying one individual; I was marrying the whole Marine Corps. As a Key Volunteer Coordinator, I have learned that new spouses didn't always have a good grasp as to what military life is like. I don't think anyone or anything could ever prepare you to lead that lifestyle.

Let me explain briefly what a Key Volunteer Coordinator is. My duty as a key duty coordinator is I provide feedback to the chain of command and try to keep my fellow spouses motivated. My duty also entails communicating official notices to the spouses. For example, I make "all clear" phone calls when, after an incident occurs that involves the battalion, I call spouses whose husbands were not involved and let them know that, if they had not been contacted by the Marine Corps already, their Marine is okay.

We only make these phone calls after all of the official notifications to the families have been made and help us negate the shock value of what might be seen on the news.

Of all of the previous deployments, me and other spouses feel this one is the hardest because of the extension. It was something none of us were prepared for. We had just gotten to that point where we could start counting down the months before our Marines would be home.

When I got the news about the extension, I cried and was upset at first. But then I had to prepare myself to do the most two difficult things of all: The first one was the hardest of them all because I knew I would break my daughter's heart. At first, I wasn't sure as to how I was going to tell her. But I just came out and said, "Baby, I need to tell you something," and I proceeded to tell her that her daddy wasn't coming home when we were expecting him to three months later. She cried a lot, and all I could do for her was to hold her and explain that we would continue to pray for Daddy to be safe. I also let her know that the situation could have been worse.

My second hard task was to make those phone calls where I would have to tell one spouse after another that their Marine was not coming home until later. I got some mixed reactions. Some were sad and hung up the phone on me, and others just cried and agreed it could be worse.

They also asked me as to how I told my daughter because they didn't know how they were going to tell their children. Some children are too young to understand, but the older ones know exactly why their fathers' tour has been extended and worry even more.

Ashley and I are fortunate because I can work at her school, Twentynine Palms Elementary. We have the same schedule that allows me to provide some sort of stability for her. There is a good support system there because the majority of employees and children that attend the school are in the military. We are proud of what our Marines do.

Now I would like to leave you with my husband's favorite quote by Ronald Reagan. "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world, but the Marines—and I would like to add their families—don't have that problem."

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Shuster.

Mrs. SHUSTER. I don't have a prepared statement, but I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Zimmerman, let me ask a question, if I may. Your daughter is nine?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And this is your husband's third deployment to Iraq; is that correct?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. And how long was the first one?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. The first one was a couple of months. We had just gotten to Twentynine Palms and about a month—not even a month later we found out that he would have to go.

The CHAIRMAN. And then how long was he there the first time?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. For about four months.

The CHAIRMAN. And then the second time?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. I believe it was seven months.

The CHAIRMAN. And how much time was there between the two?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. It was about six months.

The CHAIRMAN. Between the second tour and third tour, how much time?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Almost seven months.

The CHAIRMAN. This is your husband's third time, and he has been extended?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. You said something about the divorce rate. Have you experienced colleagues and their spouses having marital problems?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you in a position to comment on that?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN.Not really. It is just a really, really tough place to be at.

The CHAIRMAN. Sergeant Allison, you are getting ready to serve your second tour; is that correct?

Sergeant ALLISON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. You were there from 2003 to 2004; is that correct?

Sergeant ALLISON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. You have a family?

Sergeant ALLISON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. How does your deployment affect your family?

Sergeant ALLISON. Same as any other family, sir. My wife, obviously, now becomes a single parent. My son has to, you know, go without his father for a year or longer, and it is just hard on the families. But my wife is a great lady, and we have a pretty good FRG group, Family Readiness Group, that works well together. They are working, trying to build it and make it stronger, so we just have to deal with it.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Shuster, your husband is a commander of a battalion; is that correct?

Mrs. SHUSTER. Yes, it is.

The CHAIRMAN. Can you share with us what challenges the families in your battalion face during deployment?

Mrs. SHUSTER. Well, I think it is pretty self-evident. You can probably figure out a lot of it just intuitively. Separation is hard, but when they are in a combat zone, you have got concerns for their safety, which causes a great deal of added anxiety.

Communication is much better than it was years ago, so that is definitely a help. A lot of people are able to speak by phone or e-mail to their loved ones, so that is helpful. But the stress of the constant coverage does make it difficult. Information is a good thing, but it is double-edged.

So I think a lot of their concerns are all the information that they get almost hour by hour: Does it involve my husband? Does it not? Will I get that knock at my door? It causes a lot of stress, especially for those who don't have a support network, who are more isolated.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can remember being called by my daughter-in-law when my son was in Fallujah, and she had a camera stuck in her face coming out of the commissary

there at Camp Pendleton, and she was asked the profound question, "Are you worried?"

I remember the consequences of all of us traveling up to Camp Pendleton and living there in Marine housing there with our family.

Let me ask you, both of you, a question. I know Marine life is tough, first, Mrs. Zimmerman, whether or not you are in a war like the one we are in Iraq and Afghanistan. When we first became a Marine family, everybody talked about the float. If you went into the Marines, you were going to go on a float. That is, basically, they are like a police car that patrols some bad areas of town. You are always—we always have Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU) patrolling tough areas of the world where, if an embassy gets attacked or a contingency happens or a revolution starts that endangers American interests or American citizens, they have to be right there where they can come off those landing ships and move a MEU, Marine Expeditionary Unit, or a component of that into the fight.

So you have got these long periods of time when Marines are gone. As I understand it—correct me if I am wrong—most of the floats are around, as I understand, five or six months. Is that right?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. They are about six to seven months.

Mr. HUNTER. Six to seven months. So instead of going on a float now, folks go into theater. Our son never went on his float because he went to Iraq instead.

Do you see—did the floats themselves—if you don't have an Iraq or have an Afghanistan, do the floats, that separation—is it your experience that they also can be pretty tough and pretty trying on families?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, sir, they can be, but regardless, they are still gone, so they are not there.

The only thing with the Iraq thing is, you know, the danger is more there. You are more aware of what the danger is.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay.

Sergeant, everybody in the Army is familiar now with the fact that there is a difference of rotation between the Army and the Marine Corps. The Army has a one-year deployment or more, the Marines, seven months, so seven months on, seven months back, seven months back again.

There has been a lot of talk in the Army about adopting the Marine pattern, the seven-month pattern. What do you think? From a family standpoint, do you think that would be helpful, and maybe, Mrs. Shuster, if you have got a comment on that, maybe you could comment, too. What do you think, Sergeant?

Sergeant ALLISON. Well, sir, obviously, shorter tours on easier on the family. So, of course, any cut in the length of the tours—but there is also a tactical side to that, where a longer tour gives the guys on the ground more experience. So if you pull guys out earlier, that means you have to put another unit in that doesn't have the same feel for that area.

But definitely, for the families, it is easier for them.

Mr. HUNTER. Mrs. Shuster, do you have any thoughts on that?

Mrs. SHUSTER. Well, actually, I do, because normally the Marines are out for about six to seven months, but my husband was on division staff in 2004 and 2005 and was gone for a year. So I have actually had the privilege of having a year separation versus seven months.

I can absolutely tell you, seven months is easier. Even if they are only home for a short time, when they get back—that year was tough, that extra few months was extremely difficult for me personally. I suppose it would be different for everybody, but that would be my experience, is that the year was really tough. It was extremely difficult on the kids.

If the Army could, you know, shorten their deployments, you know, then I think they should try, although I have no idea if that is feasible.

Mr. HUNTER. Okay. Well, I know the Army is always looking—or the Marines are always looking for a few good Army leaders to follow their example, so at some point—but in seriousness, I know that has been a matter of discussion in the Army, and I know they have examined the rotation with respect to the family.

We may be needing to look at that in the near future. Thank you, ladies, and Sergeant.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ortiz.

Mr. ORTIZ. Thank you so much. I think that we have heard some very moving and touching testimony by all of you today. You know, there is a saying that when a young soldier enlists—maybe he is not married, maybe he doesn't have children, and they say that maybe the first enlistment, you know, you do it on your own. But the second one, we try to make it comfortable for the families, because you have to be sure that the families agree on your second or your third reenlistment.

A lot of people do not understand the sacrifices that you go through, the stress that you go through and the waiting.

Nowadays, when you see the battles right on TV—let me say that, do you think that we are making life comfortable now? Are we providing the medical services that we should, that your husband has earned? Are we providing adequate housing?

I know the years back in the Bosnia war, I was getting calls from the families, from the wives, who were saying—or their husbands, "We are in Bosnia fighting in war, and then we have to worry about our families who are taking care of the plumbing and the electricity because it doesn't work."

Maybe you can give us a little better insight as to what we can do as a Congress to make life more bearable, more comfortable, because you earned it; you deserve it. Your husband is there fighting for you, for our country. Maybe you can give us a little insight as to some of the things we can do, including you, First Sergeant.

We are here, and let me tell you that we enjoy the freedoms that we have today because of the sacrifices and dedication and loyalty and commitment from the troops who are out there trying to keep our country safe.

Sergeant ALLISON. Well, sir, as far as the medical side, I know a lot of the Army doctors are now included in the rotations, too, so, obviously, that pulls them out of the hospitals. I know my wife has

experienced—she went to the hospital and couldn't be seen because that specific doctor wasn't available. But that is part of the problem, that doctors are needed for the wounded in theater, too, so there is that problem.

As far as the housing goes, I know in Fort Lewis, they are building new houses, and the housing that, when I lived on post, was adequate, but, of course, I was a senior non-commissioned officer (NCO). I know some of the older housing is old and needs to be replaced, and they have a building project on Fort Lewis now.

So as far as the Congress, as far as any help that you could give in that area as far as subsidizing additional upgrades to enlisted housing would be greatly appreciated.

Mrs. SHUSTER. I would agree that making sure that hospitals are fully staffed, because sometimes you can't get an appointment because people have been rotated out, because they need to go and serve as well. That can be very frustrating, obviously, as a mom, when you are trying to get your child an appointment. I don't know what you could do about it, to be very frank with you. I don't know what powers you might have. But certainly making sure that the hospitals are staffed so that we can get the appointments we need.

Housing, I think, at least where I have been, has been adequate. I do know that some women have to deal with moving during a husband's deployment, maybe from an old house to a renovated house, facilitating it so they get the movers there, get the help they need, would be critical.

Again, I don't know what you could do to facilitate that, but that can be a problem during a combat deployment, moving issues from house to house on base. But the housing itself for me has been adequate. Maintenance has been prompt. I haven't had any concerns whatsoever on that score.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mrs. Zimmerman.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. I agree. I have had no problems, but the medical thing is the biggest issue with the doctors rotating also, and the housing has been adequate and Twentynine Palms is working on building new housing, so they are working on it.

Mr. ORTIZ. So there is a great need because doctors, when they are activated or they move, then the family stays behind, and you don't have sufficient staff to attend to the needs of the families.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Correct.

Mrs. SHUSTER. Correct.

Mr. ORTIZ. My time is up, but I want to say, thank you so much for what you do and the sacrifices that you go through, all of you three there. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you saying that there is a shortage of doctors while your spouses——

Mrs. SHUSTER. Well, I know sometimes getting appointments, they will tell me, because we are short-staffed because of people rotating out and what not is the reason why you might not be able to get an appointment promptly. Yes, that is what I have heard.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Zimmerman.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. I guess it would also depend on the urgent care of what you need to go in for. If your child is running a fever and stuff, there are times when they don't have appointments until

a couple days later. If it is a couple days later, it doesn't really do you any good at that point.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you all for being here today. I have a son—as you talk about health care—who is a lieutenant in the Navy in the Medical Corps. I am really interested in your testimony, and I am very grateful for his service in Connecticut right now, although he really enjoyed being in California.

Mrs. SHUSTER. Who wouldn't?

Mr. WILSON. I have missed much of the testimony, but in regard to the Medical Corps, do you have any suggestions? And I know that you have discussed, too, First Sergeant, the housing. Do you all have suggestions on how this can be improved for families?

Sergeant ALLISON. I think the biggest area where they are suffering is in the specialty fields. I know general care or a family practice, there may be enough physicians assistants (PAs) available to help out. But when you start getting into orthopedics and the specialty fields, that is where the shortages are coming in. So if a wife or family member has to go to a hospital for a specialty, then the solution might be to outsource, bring in some civilians to fill up some of the shifts so that the family members can actually get in and be seen.

Mrs. SHUSTER. Yes, access to care is probably—I don't know that I have a lot of suggestions to give you, but I can tell you, access to care is probably, especially, the mom's number one issue.

You know, like Anel said, when your child is sick with a fever and you can't get an appointment for two days, it doesn't do you much good. I don't really know what the answer is, other than staffing, and maybe outsourcing would be a good idea. It can just be frustrating, that is for sure. I don't have any smart answers for you.

Mr. WILSON. Then with the indeterminate use, I appreciate your bringing up about outsourcing, with the fluctuation and change of season, and the different health issue. Fortunately, we have a doctor here with us right in front of me, Dr. Phil Gingrey, so he can bring issues to mind for us. Again, thank you for your service. We are just grateful for military families.

Anyway, this committee, we have got wonderful people in the committee who would want to be helpful to you and our constituents.

I yield.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank our panel. I am sorry it took so long to get to you. I want to let you know how grateful we are for your service and for your families' service.

Sergeant Allison, to follow up on the medical care, I have got to guess that, in the course of your service, you have had some people in your unit injured. I am curious, as they get back to you, as they stay in touch with you, what are they saying about the kind of care they are getting, either through the military, the hospital system or the Veterans' Administration?

Sergeant ALLISON. Well, sir, I have had some—the unit I am in right now is a standup unit, so I have had some NCOs and personnel that have come to the unit, that have sustained wounds in Iraq. And their followup care has been excellent, through physiotherapy, the doctors, and now they are back to full health.

Soldiers, in the past, their care has been outstanding, and they are either out of the military medically now because they can't fully function. But their VA benefits followed them. Any surgeries they had to get through the VA was completed on time, and they got all their benefits.

Mr. TAYLOR. I have only recently become aware of the ruling where I think, if a person is injured and is rated at less than 30 percent disabled, that they can no longer stay in the TRICARE system.

I am just curious, have you heard? I have heard this of some Guardsmen who were wounded in Iraq, who were medically discharged, and yet were not injured to a point where they could get a 30 percent or greater disability, and, therefore, they could not continue to buy into the TRICARE system.

Is that a widespread problem, or is that fairly isolated?

Sergeant ALLISON. I haven't heard that, sir.

Mr. TAYLOR. Okay. The last question is going back to a followup to Mr. Johnson's question on the young people coming here with the GEDs as opposed to a high school diploma.

You have obviously been in a long time, you have an extremely distinguished record. Mr. Arcangeli was an Army officer; he is the one who pointed it out, really, really impressive.

I am curious, in your opinion, since you have been in—even before—of the quality of troops that you are serving with now, how would you rate them compared to the ones you were serving with in the late 1980's, 1990's and now?

Sergeant ALLISON. I think there are two parts to it. I know somebody had mentioned earlier about technology. I know the soldiers coming in, especially the younger guys coming in now, don't have any problem adapting to the new technologies. They are pretty much weaned on computers now, so you have a new piece of technology, and they can figure it out, and they don't have a problem retaining that knowledge, regardless of their education level. Because, if they are not doing computers at school, they are on the computers at home now, and everything is pretty much Windows based any way.

The other side is, physically, the soldiers coming in now aren't as tough as they were back in the 1980's, so it is almost a reversal; whereas, when I came in, technology scared me, but I was physically able to keep going.

Now, technology doesn't scare them, but physically, they tend to break a little easier, so we have had to do a lot of more phased integration into physical training (PT). You just don't throw them into the mix and then try to break them off. You get them in slowly, or you are going to have shin splints and stress fractures.

Does that answer your question, sir?

Mr. TAYLOR. Absolutely.

Ladies, I apologize for missing your testimony, but I am just curious, is there anything as far as the quality of life that we are

missing that is not being addressed that you don't feel like—anything you feel like is getting worse that you feel needs to be turned around?

Mrs. SHUSTER. No, nothing that I think is getting worse, no. I think for most wives, most spouses, I can't say wives, but spouses, just an acknowledgment of what they are going through, especially from people like you who do have a venue to speak, to print media, TV, whatnot, just what they are going through, to be acknowledged in that way goes very far in helping cope with things that can't be changed. I think that most of our families are getting what they need in a difficult situation, at least as far as I can see.

But just acknowledgment of what they are going through would go a long way to help their other burden, I think.

Mr. TAYLOR. Mrs. Zimmerman.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. I have to agree with her. Acknowledgment of what we go through is the biggest thing. But there is always room for improvement on different things. We can't complain because we are getting taken care of. But there is always room for improvements.

Mr. TAYLOR. We thank all of you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Taylor.

Let me ask one quick question of the First Sergeant. If it is taking longer to prepare a soldier because of shin splints and whatever the physical challenge might be, and they are getting deployed earlier, are they ready for a deployment?

Sergeant ALLISON. Yes, sir, a lot of the newer soldiers, they go into standup units, so they get about two years to get ready. What I am saying is it takes them longer, what I meant was, back when we came in, we played a lot more sports before we came in the Army, so, physically, we were more able to endure; whereas soldiers now come in, they haven't played, you know, as many sports. So what we have to do is we have to get—usually takes about six months during the training cycle to get them where we need to get them toughened up so that they are not getting injured as easily, because they are just not used to that much physical activity, but they are ready.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Kline.

Mr. KLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, all three, for being here today.

First Sergeant, for your very noteworthy service, I appreciate your being here and you having served in Iraq before.

Ladies, my hats off to you. I served a whole career in the Marine Corps on active duty, so my kids grew up with me in long separations in different places, Southeast Asia and places like that, so I have some sense of what that impact is. I know it is very tough on the children, at any age. It is very tough on the wife. When I was a group commander, my wife was, still, I think we called it key wife back in 1992 or 1993. It was her everyday job. But yours has been to stay in touch with the other spouses, the other wives.

In those earlier years, when I was deployed for a year or so at a time, we communicated with the family by mail, and sometimes that mail didn't arrive until literally weeks after it was sent.

Communications were very, very slow. Many things could happen between the time the letter was written and the time it arrived. It went both ways.

By the time I was serving in Somalia, we had satellite phone, and occasionally somebody could get a call back and talk to one of the key wives, and they could communicate.

Now my son has just returned this summer with his year in Iraq with the 101st—don't ask me how he is in the Army, and I spent time in the Marines—yes, exactly. I am very proud of him, by the way. But he spent a year over there, and he was communicating daily, for all practical purposes, through the Internet, telephones and so forth.

My question to you, ladies, is how is that daily communication or more frequent communication, does that make your jobs easier or harder, or are you sort of chasing around more? What effect is that having? Either one.

Mrs. Zimmerman.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Honestly, I think it makes it a little bit more difficult for the simple fact that there is so much communication. When the guys have to go out for a mission or something, and you don't hear from them for days on end, then you get those phone calls. Well, how come my husband hasn't called me, it has been a week, even though it has been explained they are just so used to getting that frequent e-mail or phone call and stuff.

So it kind of makes it harder because you have to keep reassuring them they are fine. You know, no news is always good news. So it kind of makes it harder in that aspect of it.

Mr. KLINE. Mrs. Shuster.

Mrs. SHUSTER. Yes, I think it is a double-edged sword. My husband was in Desert Storm. Likewise, we communicated by letters. So this is better in that respect. I get to hear from him more frequently. But sometimes too much communication can be a bad thing. A lot of rumors can start. Well intentioned Marines and sailors will call home with all sorts of bits and pieces of information that then sort of morph into Lord knows what among the wives, so it can make rumor control more difficult.

Mr. KLINE. Are you finding then that communication, the sorting out of those, are you more—and the reassuring, is that falling heavily on you? Are you getting support from the command? I know when the battalion is deployed, you are sort of it.

But I have always been a little bit concerned that we haven't made the connection very well between the active Marines, the people in uniform that are still back at Twentynine Palms or wherever the base is, and, you, the key wife coordinators or whatever that title is. It seems to me that the burden seems to fall on you to sort out those rumors.

Can you, in a minute or so, talk about that?

Mrs. SHUSTER. Well, I think some of it does fall on our shoulders, although we do have a great remain-behind element. We have a wonderful Family Readiness Officer, which all units have who are combat deployed. He is extremely helpful in helping us. So between the Family Readiness Officer, yes, we do try to keep rumor control to a minimum. But it does pretty much fall on us.

That can be difficult. But, usually, communication between the unit in country and the FRO, the Family Readiness Officer and the key volunteer coordinator, or my case advisor, is very good. It is fluid, because communication is so good. So when rumors do crop up, it is usually pretty easy for us to get the straight scoop and to straighten it out. Sometimes it can be difficult, but it can usually be done pretty quickly.

Mr. KLINE. I see my time is expiring here. Let me just say again thank you to all three of you. God bless you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Washington, Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, I apologize. I had another committee meeting at 1 and was unable to be here for the start. At this point, you have probably answered all the questions I would have.

I just want to say thank you very much for coming back here. I know you have a lot of things to do in your life and taking the time to come back here and give us some of your firsthand experience. Some of the most valuable meetings I have had in my district are meeting with family members, both active duty, guard and reserve , to get an understanding of what they are going through, how this is impacting them and what their greatest concerns are.

I particularly want to thank Sergeant Allison, who is from Fort Lewis, from my district, for his service.

I don't really have any questions. I am sure my colleagues have covered most of them, but I just want to thank you for your service and for taking the time to come back here and talk to us and keep in touch with us about what we can do to help you.

I guess if there is anything else that you wanted to add that you haven't had a chance to say, I am happy to hear that. But, otherwise, just thank you for the opportunity to come back.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentleman.

Dr. Gingrey.

Dr. GINGREY. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I would like to thank First Sergeant, Mrs. Zimmerman and Mrs. Shuster for being with us today.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you and the ranking member for having a hearing where we have these very important witnesses. We have lots of hearings where we hear from the really big brass, but it is a very important opportunity for us to hear from the families. I thank you, Sergeant, ladies, for your service. I know it is a great sacrifice, as you have described to us here over the past 45 minutes to an hour.

I did want to ask a couple of specific questions. My good friend behind me blew my cover in regard to my former profession before I became a Member four years ago, but in that regard, I am going to direct the first question to Mrs. Zimmerman, when my soon-to-be wife 38 years ago met me in Atlanta and I had that starched white coat on and that stethoscope, I think she thought that was pretty attractive until after a few years of being up all night and working those terrible hours, and she was somewhat of a single mom as well in raising our four children.

I am not going to put the question to her tonight, does she regret her decision to marry a doctor, but I will put the question to you: Here it is ten years later and you have a nine-year-old daughter

that you told us about and some of the hardships that you have gone through during your marriage, and you have seen other wives go through, other spouses. Would you do it all over again?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. In a heartbeat.

Dr. GINGREY. Absolutely, well, I am glad to hear that. I hope my wife would say the same thing. I trust maybe she would. The Colonel says he is going to ask that question of her.

In regard to these morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) issues, we talked about things like health care, education—maybe we didn't discuss that—housing, recreation, commissary, base exchange (BX), post exchange (PX).

Do you feel, Mrs. Shuster, from your perspective, that is pretty good, that is a pretty good benefit, that we are doing okay in regard to that?

Mrs. SHUSTER. I think it is an excellent benefit, specifically the commissary. It is great. That is a huge, huge benefit to military families.

There is so much else available, at least within the Marine Corps—I can't speak to the other branches—available to the families to help deal specifically with combat deployments or extensions.

You know, counselors, chaplains are available. We had a town hall meeting, I think within ten days of the notification that we were extended, where the commanding officer of our regiment came and spoke with spouses, moms, dads, whoever was—three, four—helped with questions. We had chaplains available, counselors that were available.

There is a lot that is available through the Marine Corps right now that is helping these families cope. I have to say, I think it is pretty impressive. I am really pleased to see it. Again, our Family Readiness Officer is great. There are great Web sites.

There is just a lot available right now if the wives and the moms and dads avail themselves of it. I am really pleased, because it is a difficult, difficult situation. But there is a lot out there to help you cope with it if you choose to use it.

Dr. GINGREY. Well, I know all the members are pleased to hear that. We will continue to provide that for you.

Sergeant Allison, I would just say that, in regard to the issue of the physical fitness, I am a former school board member, too, of a public school system back in my great State of Georgia, and I think part of the problem is having gone to having physical education as an elective. The kids are the not really required—and many of them don't want to change uniform, maybe for the girls, they don't want to take a shower in the middle of the day and mess up their hair.

But for whatever reason, I think this is part of our problem, physical education. I think you stated that very well. I think they probably need to go back and make that mandatory for our school children.

Thank you all very much. We really appreciate your service.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Before I call on Mrs. Davis, there is a saying that we have heard in this committee a good number of times: You recruit a soldier,

but you reenlist a family. I assume all of you would agree with that.

We had in our kitchen, to remind me of my lovely wife, a sign that said, if momma ain't happy, ain't nobody happy. I assume that is the situation with our spouses in the military.

Mrs. Davis.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you for holding this hearing and having the panel, because I think that, at least in my experience here, we have not had the opportunity nearly as much as we should. I am not sure that I can remember any when we have had key volunteers here, you have such tremendous contact with the families and also just the folks that can come in and talk about their experiences that are not necessarily serving in a top leadership position, although, Sergeant, I really applaud the work that you have done, and I am very excited that you have had a chance to be here today.

Could you share with us, a little bit, Mrs. Zimmerman, you mention in your opening remarks that you had been talking to families about the extension.

I am wondering, why was that your job to do that, and did you have immediate backup for that? You mentioned ten days later that there was a town hall meeting.

Was that your role? Perhaps people don't quite understand that you all serve as volunteers, that there is no compensation for what you do.

My understanding, in working with our key volunteer in San Diego, you are essentially on call 24 hours and have very, very little support for that. I just want to acknowledge that and perhaps you can share with it as well.

Again, was that your role, to let families know about this? Was that a tough role to have?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. It is a tough role to have. It is because I stay in contact with the wives that I am assigned. I stay in contact with them. I try to call them at least twice a month to see how they are doing, if they need anything, or just if they need to talk.

So I am available to them. Yes, I did have the backup, I had Cori, and then I also had the key volunteer coordinator. That way, if I needed anything, she would back me up.

But because we stay in contact with the wives and know them a little bit better, that is why we do that role.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. The Chair had just mentioned reenlistments. What kind of impact do you think these extensions are going to have on reenlistments, and, generally, what impact do you think the added stress is having on that? What do you hear from the families?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Nothing really yet, because I don't think any of them are to the point of reenlisting. But from a personal basis, my husband just reenlisted, so, for my family, it hasn't really affected it. And some of the families haven't started to think that far in advance yet. They are just ready for them to come home.

Mrs. SHUSTER. I would agree. I haven't heard anything from any of the wives I have spoken with about that. I would just imagine in a very practical way it might have an effect on whether someone will reenlist. Certain families might make a decision not to. I would

assume that is just a part of life and part of dealing with something difficult.

I think it is a matter of how the command deals with it. The command atmosphere has a lot to do with reenlistment, and a command atmosphere has a lot to do with how you take care of your families. That will be different in each unit, I expect. But in our unit, I have not heard, really, anything about problems with reenlistment because of this—a lot of questions about the extensions, certainly, but not about reenlistment per se.

Ms. DAVIS OF CALIFORNIA. Could you speak about the overall health as well. I asked an earlier panel about Post-Traumatic Stress syndrome and the role that families are helping to identify, helping to talk through some of those issues, being woken in the middle of the night when there is a stress factor that arises.

Can you tell us about your relationship then with other spouses and what you can—help us to understand, or what should we be doing with regard to that? Is a survey what is needed? Have you been given enough background in helping parents cope with this? What can you tell us?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. We always have the predeployment briefings, and we cover what to expect when they leave. When they come home we also have briefings to cover all those situations.

They also give you some information to counseling services, or if you are really concerned, you know, what to do, what not to ask when they do come home, because that is the biggest thing, I think, that you have to give them their space to adjust to being at home, and not overwhelm them with questions, what did you do, what did you see, or anything like that.

So, I mean, like my husband and I like to keep it, it is a need-to-know basis. So when he is ready to let me know, he will let me know.

Mrs. SHUSTER. The return and reunion briefs are really great. Again, it is only for people who choose to go. You can't make people go. But they are available, and they are a great resource because there is a lot of information about what to expect. Like Anel said, interesting things about what not to ask us, to give time, to adjust to.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hayes.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ladies, First Sergeant. Thank you so much. Let me assure you and reassure you that everybody on this committee and throughout the Congress is extremely aware of the contribution and support that our men and women in uniform get from their families. We honestly, sincerely and just with no reservation at all want to be sure that we do everything and anything we can.

I represent Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base, and I like that Airborne patch on your shoulder there, First Sergeant.

The question has been asked in several ways about what can this Congress do to further assist. I hope you all consider that an open question that you can feed to us through your individual commands or through your specific representatives, because we are here to help and to serve.

One of the things that I have found to be particularly helpful to family, someone was asking about deployment and the like when

people are deployed. I think at Fort Bragg, Fort Lewis, and now Camp Pendleton and others, the areas, the residential community initiative, new, better, improved service and military housing has been a big plus for families.

Are either you, Mrs. Shuster, or you, Mrs. Zimmerman, involved in any of the new projects, or do you have any thoughts or opinions on that?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. In Twentynine Palms, they are working on it. We are not necessarily involved with it. I know it will affect for now the housing where I live at, where they are going to turn it over, and they are going to move us into new housing that they just got done building. So they are working on it.

Mr. HAYES. Is that something you are looking forward to?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. To the move itself, not really. The house to where I don't have to share a bathroom with my nine-year-old, yes.

Mr. HAYES. Three moves is equal to a fire, right?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, exactly.

Mr. HAYES. Mrs. Shuster.

Mrs. SHUSTER. Yes. We just moved from an old house to a renovated house on Camp Pendleton. The difference was remarkable and much appreciated. We have been in the Marine Corps 18–1/2 years. Housing hasn't always been the best.

Mr. HAYES. Terrible.

Mrs. SHUSTER. Shocking, but it hasn't been very good. Now they are addressing it at several bases. It is very welcome, and it seems to be progressing smoothly. So we really appreciate the up-to-code houses.

Mr. HAYES. I am blatantly using you all as extra promotion to help those folks that don't see the experience on bases every day. I think your experience has been extremely helpful.

Sergeant, have you had any experience there?

Sergeant ALLISON. Well, sir, I lived on post at Fort Lewis, and after they did the handover to privatization. Then my base and housing allowance started showing up on my leave and earnings statement (LES), so that kind of gave me an incentive to buy my own house, so I moved off post.

But while I was on post, the maintenance was on time when I needed it, and they were always making improvements in the privatization. As far as their maintenance has gone, it has been excellent. Like I said, they are always building more houses. They are always upgrading.

Mr. HAYES. How long since you have been at Fort Bragg?

Sergeant ALLISON. 1991, sir.

Mr. HAYES. There have been some dramatic improvements there. Anyway, that has been something that we can really continue to emphasize.

Is there anything that you would like to ask the panel or any points you would like to make with us? The Chairman has been kind enough to hold this very important hearing. Anything that you would like to answer that we have not asked, put it that way?

Sergeant ALLISON. I would just like to say that even though our deployment timeline was moved forward, our training hasn't stopped. We haven't cut any corners on training to make that deadline. We have all the equipment we need, soldiers are fully trained,

they are motivated, and they are ready to get over there and get after it.

Mrs. SHUSTER. I just really appreciate Congress's interest in the health and well-being of our families, because I think we know that the Marines and soldiers are being supported, but it is nice to know that our concerns are important, and I think it is just a great opportunity, and I really appreciate it.

Mr. HAYES. Thank you. It is intensely important to us. Don't ever hesitate to call your Representative or Senator or whatever. It is good for us, but there are folks who do not have posts or other facilities in their districts that don't sit here, but I can assure you, when I speak with them, they appreciate the value and input, and anything we can do to help you.

Mr. Chairman, thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Before I call on Mrs. Gillibrand, I think, First Sergeant, I recognize a Bronze Star, am I correct? I don't have any other glasses on.

Sergeant ALLISON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. You were also in Desert Storm?

Sergeant ALLISON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. That was with the 82nd. How long was that deployment? You had both Desert Shield and Desert Storm, I take it.

Sergeant ALLISON. Yes, sir, I was over in Iraq, Saudi Arabia-Iraq for nine months that time.

The CHAIRMAN. You were deployed—how long on your first deployment during this operation?

Sergeant ALLISON. A year, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. A year. Okay.

Mrs. Gillibrand.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I thank you all of you for coming and for sharing your experiences with us. It is very important to us that we have your feedback as to how Congress is serving the military effectively.

My question goes to health services when your loved ones return home, and the availability of both mental health services and accessibility to whatever your families need. Is that currently at the level that you would like?

Mrs. SHUSTER. Yes, as far as, for when they get back and health services for them and for us, yes. In fact, it is a big focus, as I said earlier, in the return, of reunion briefs and so forth. It has been talked about a lot, and the family members and service members who need it are highly encouraged to pursue it. So it is being made available if possible as far as I can tell. I have not used it myself, but I think it seems to be adequate.

Sergeant ALLISON. At Fort Lewis, there is a program called soldier assessment program. It is a pilot program. You take your survey with counselors and stuff like that. They keep your stuff on record.

When you come back, they do another assessment. If there are any flags that come up, they will, like, push you into the counselors you need. Because one of the hardest parts of any post-traumatic stuff is actually, number one, identifying it and acknowledging that it exists. So getting those guys, if you can get them used to going in and talking to counselors, even before they—when they come

back, then it is second nature to them; it is part of their reprocessing back.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. So there are no undue waits that you know of.

Sergeant ALLISON. As far as I know—I had a few soldiers that transferred into my unit that I identified as having some form of Post-Traumatic Stress or some problems, and I made them go up and see counselors. Sometimes you just have—you don't give them a choice. You tell them they are going, and they go.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I read in some news articles because of the current stress on the deployment and the extensions and the fact that the rotations are not in the same levels that we wanted in terms of two to one as a ratio, now it is closer to one to one, is that having any impact in divorce rates amongst the families or any impact on domestic violence increases, or has it not changed and it is the same? Are there any things that have differed because of the extraordinary sacrifices we are asking of the troops and the families?

Sergeant ALLISON. I think if you look at the statistics, the divorce rates are going up. It would be hard to say that they weren't related.

I noticed, though, as far as the soldiers who have been married before the deployment started, are tending to stay together, because their marriages were formed previously. I think a lot of the newer soldiers who are coming into the Army, previously married, where they don't have the experience base of the Army, where the wives don't know what they are getting into; I think those are the wives that are suffering the most.

Unfortunately, they are a lot of the younger wives who really don't want to have anything to do with the Family Readiness Groups. They are the ones who don't reach out for help. You really have to take that extra step and try to pull them in and identify them before you go. Otherwise, their marriages will suffer because their marriages are still forming, and they haven't got those bonds yet.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. I have to agree, because I deal with some of the wives, that they actually just got married either in June or July, right before the guy is deployed. So they are the ones that are having the toughest time trying to deal with it and tough, because they have never experienced anything.

That is what I hear from them all the time, "I didn't think it was going to be like this. I didn't realize it was going to be this hard." So that is the biggest problem right there, that is when they get married, so close to a deployment, or even because they are so young, they don't know what to expect.

I don't think even, even if it is not your first time being in the military, your first four years, even if it is the following one, it is always hard, because it is a lifestyle.

You have to adjust. Like I said before, nothing can prepare you for it. There is not anything anyone can ever do or say that will ever get you ready. You just have to learn to adjust and be prepared for it.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mrs. Shuster, you have been in the military for a while, your family. What's your experience with increases in domestic violence in terms of the families that you work with?

Mrs. SHUSTER. I honestly wouldn't know. I haven't noticed any increase in any of the anecdotal evidence. I mean, I have no access to the statistics, so I really wouldn't know. But just what I hear, I haven't heard any different.

The CHAIRMAN. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I want to say to this panel, you don't know how helpful—I am sure it has been said many times—I have left a couple of times—how helpful it is for us to hear from you.

I represent the Third District of North Carolina, home of Camp Lejeune, Jarrett Bay Marine Air Station.

Sergeant Allison, you have one child or two?

Sergeant ALLISON. I have one child, sir.

Mr. JONES. How old is he or she?

Sergeant ALLISON. He is 11.

Mr. JONES. Mrs. Zimmerman, you have a daughter, I believe you said.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. JONES. One child. How old is she?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. She is nine as well.

Mr. JONES. Mrs. Shuster, you and the Colonel, do you have family as well?

Mrs. SHUSTER. Yes, we have two children, a daughter and a son, 17 and 14.

Mr. JONES. Many of us on this committee are strong supporters of DOD schools. We have an excellent school system at Camp Lejeune. I will go down the road; have you ever had a child in an on-base school?

First Sergeant.

Sergeant ALLISON. Yes, sir, my son went to Fort Lewis.

Mr. JONES. Now that you have moved, you are still at Fort Hood, but you are off base—you are at Fort Lewis now?

Sergeant ALLISON. Fort Lewis, sir.

Mr. JONES. When your son was attending that school, and maybe you were deployed or not deployed, do you feel that the environment at the on-base school is something very special for that child who has a mom or dad or maybe both that is in the military that has been deployed?

Sergeant ALLISON. I think because it is a military school, all the kids, usually when a unit deploys, all the kids at that school are in the same boat so they can relate and they can help each other out. I have moved off post, and now my son goes to Thurston County school. One of my concerns is that when I go, he is not going to have the same support from his friends because they really can't relate. They are not military families, really don't relate.

Our nonmilitary families don't relate to military families. So on-post schools, they really have a tendency to support each other with the kids. They are all going through the same thing.

Mr. JONES. Mrs. Zimmerman, your child?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. My daughter has not attended a DOD school in Twentynine Palms. We do have a school on base, but it is not a DOD school. The base is split in half, so the public school she does go to, the majority of the students are military kids.

Mr. JONES. Mrs. Shuster.

Mrs. SHUSTER. Yes, my daughter attended a DOD school in Quantico, Virginia. I am so glad you brought it up. That is something that is near and dear to my heart. I wish there were more of them.

I think it is a huge benefit to children. I think moving is an incredible stress on them. To be able to go into a school with other military kids, where there are no cliques, they immediately fit in, was huge for my daughter. If there is any way to get more of these schools instead of fewer, I would highly encourage it. It was wonderful for her.

Mr. JONES. I want to say, I will be very brief, Mr. Chairman, because I know the other members have questions, in the 12 years I have been in office, that as a quality of life issue—that is why I appreciate, Mrs. Shuster, what you and Sergeant Allison have said—I felt, when I meet with those kids at school, shortly after we went in Iraq, it was already prearranged, I would speak to a ninth grade or senior class.

I don't know, I got the feeling that day from the teachers that there is a special bonding, that I think you said, Sergeant Allison, as well as Mrs. Shuster, that those kids have somebody that might not be a family member that understands the pain of having a parent sent overseas for this country.

I will tell you that I, along with many of my colleagues here on this committee, as long as we have a military, I will do everything I can to work with my colleagues to make sure that part of a quality-of-life issue is never taken away.

Mrs. SHUSTER. Thank you very much.

Mr. JONES. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you.

Mr. ORTIZ [presiding]. Ms. Bordallo.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much. I thank the Chairman, and I thank the witnesses, Mrs. Shuster, Mrs. Zimmerman and Sergeant Allison. I thank the witnesses very much for being here.

It is rather unusual. It is such a privilege to have not just senior officers, generals and what have you, but those really on the front lines, our service members and their families. America has simply not heard enough from you. America can never thank you enough for your service and your sacrifice, but I know we all have limits, especially when the burden is being shared by so few.

As you all intimately understand, the year 2007 will be marked by more tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan for U.S. fighting men and women. For some it will be their second, their third or fourth tours of duty.

This is a lot to ask, even for the world's finest soldiers. So bless your hearts and their hearts. They serve proudly, and their morale remains generally very, very high.

Now, the numbers of anniversaries and birthdays and births and first days of school and so much more missed cannot be imagined, and the pain and effects of those absences of fathers and mothers cannot be quantified.

Just this past month, we buried, on Guam, Sergeant Jesse Castro, who returned home in a casket a hero but was never able to return home alive to meet his two week-old son, Jesse, Jr.

Can you each share a story of something special your spouse has had to miss because of his or her service, and what you have done to cope with it? Also, can you tell us what your sense is of the efforts the services have undertaken to assist you during some of these tragedies.

I will start with you, Mrs. Shuster.

Mrs. SHUSTER. I think he has missed a lot in the last 18–1/2 years. Probably my daughter's first birthday was very painful to me and her second and her eighth and her blah, blah, blah. That was very hard, because it was our first child, her first birthday, so that was tough.

As to the second part of your question, what has been done to help us, I think, like I said earlier, the Marine Corps provides so many resources to help people cope that I really couldn't enumerate them all. But I think there are a lot of resources available for families. That is certainly true.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you very much.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. He has missed a little bit of everything, but I think I am mostly upset because he will be missing our tenth year wedding anniversary.

Ms. BORDALLO. Which year?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. This year. So that one I think I am more upset with him about, but there is nothing he can do about it.

I agree with Mrs. Shuster, there is so much the Marine Corps does offer for the families and stuff. I know, in Twentynine Palms, they offer a lot of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) concerts and stuff for the families to go out to and do, so there is a lot of those things the Marine Corps does offer. You just have to learn to take advantage of those things they do offer.

Ms. BORDALLO. Mrs. Zimmerman, you can have a later anniversary.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Oh, yes.

Ms. BORDALLO. Delay it a little while.

The other question I have does the volunteer role that a spouse plays as a family support group leader affect the ability of a spouse to hold their own independent career? Do you all believe that there are any career repercussions to senior officers in command whose wives have a career and therefore cannot or choose not to lead a unit family readiness group?

Mrs. SHUSTER. Are you asking if it would affect my husband's career?

Ms. BORDALLO. Does it have any effect on your husband's military career if you are not active in readiness groups?

Mrs. SHUSTER. None whatever. He said I am a Marine. You are not. Do what you like to do. Say no and decline what you don't want to do because nothing you say or do should affect my career. And if it does, I should get out.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. Same thing with my husband. He said it is up to me if I want to volunteer or not, and he said the same thing also. If it does start to affect his career then he does not need to be there.

Ms. BORDALLO. Sergeant, would you give me an idea of what percentage of women have separate careers that you know of, or is there any statistics on that.

Mr. ALLISON. As it applies to them volunteering?

Ms. BORDALLO. Say the woman is a lawyer or she is a school teacher, a career, every-day career.

Mr. ALLISON. There are a lot of the wives that are professional ladies. And that is probably the hardest part for an Army wife is to have a career because I know the places we stay is longer, but every three years, I pretty much move, which means a new job every three years, dental care, child care provider. Every time she went to a new post, it starts. The longer it is in one place gives them better opportunity to develop their career. And the professional ladies who are in, like, nationwide organizations can usually transfer within that organization, so that there is a lot of wives—I couldn't give you an actual percentage—but I have known plenty of wives who have careers.

Ms. BORDALLO. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. We have three votes, Mr. Courtney. I think we can get your questions in prior to that.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will be quick.

In risking asking a question that has already been asked. One issue that has come up with some families of soldiers who have been deployed over in Iraq is sort of the inconsistent ability to communicate electronically by e-mail or other communication, and I am just sort of wondering if that is a problem that you have ever experienced.

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. No. My husband and I have an agreement to where I won't expect an e-mail or a phone call, but I think the biggest problem is too much communication and when they don't get it, then that is when they become sad and wonder why there is no communication. But it is understandable, under the conditions they are in, sometimes they have no way to communicate out. So it just needs to be understood that they are not like us where we have the capabilities to do it. And sometimes they don't.

Mr. ALLISON. I agree with Mrs. Zimmerman. I think there is a too much communication now to the point where I mean I, personally, I hate talking on the phone. So I would call my wife maybe when I had something to say which may be every three or four days when I got the opportunity. But then there is guys who are calling their wives like twice a day, and then they go to the FRG place and they talk to my wife and they say, "I talked to my wife twice a day," and next time I call her she says, "Why don't you call me," and I say I have got nothing to say.

The other side of the coin is sometimes there is information that gets back over the Internet, over the phones that should not have been released, that has to be released by the unit, specifically when you are talking about wounded or casualties. The last thing you want is that information getting back to a wife before the Marine Corps or the Army has the opportunity to inform that wife.

So a lot of times you have to shut down the communications just to stop that. And there is just too much communication, because then the wives become dependent on getting a phone call every day, which is just not possible.

Mr. COURTNEY. So it sounds like you really control the flow yourselves. I mean, it is not like there is any sort of mechanical or technology problems. I mean, there is no glitches as far as that is con-

cerned. And if there was a family emergency like the hospitalization of a child, or, I mean, you just feel like unless somebody was in a really dangerous place and couldn't communicate with anybody, that information could get communicated pretty quickly?

Mrs. ZIMMERMAN. And we also have the American Red Cross that does those communications, too, which sometimes they will get it a lot faster than an e-mail or anything else.

Mr. COURTNEY. Sergeant, real quick. The Seapower Subcommittee had a demonstration of the new body armor which was—looked very impressive. Your testimony was that you felt there wasn't any problems as far as adequate training or equipment for the troops there and I just, I mean, this is a very, I think, important issue for a lot of us to make sure that people have the absolute best equipment possible. I mean, you don't feel—again, there is any problem as far as getting that adequate state-of-the-art body armor?

Mr. ALLISON. No. Actually, yesterday my unit drew the new Enhanced Small Arms Protective Inserts (ESAPI) plates, which is the new ones, and the side plates with the deltoid protectors. So I am going to have to go back and figure how I am going to get mine.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

I have a very quick question. First Sergeant, you have 100 percent of your unit assigned equipment before you go?

Mr. ALLISON. As of this time, as far as communication and movement and vehicles, I have. The only weapons I am short are some grenade launchers. We are still short some of those. But that really doesn't affect our ability to conduct a mission, but that is some weapons that we still have to get.

The CHAIRMAN. We are going to have to run to vote. We can't thank you enough for traveling, for being with us for your service. We wish you continued success and Godspeed.

[Whereupon, at 2:05 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JANUARY 23, 2007

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 23, 2007

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

GENERAL PETER J. SCHOOMAKER
CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES ARMY

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FIRST SESSION, 110TH CONGRESS

ON THE ARMY'S PREPAREDNESS
FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE MISSIONS

JANUARY 23, 2007

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENT BY
GENERAL PETER J. SCHOOMAKER
CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, on behalf of our Secretary, Dr. Francis Harvey, and the more than one million Active, Guard, Reserve Soldiers, and civilians of the United States Army, serving around the globe, I welcome the opportunity to discuss the need to improve Army readiness, to increase strategic depth, and to decrease our overall strategic risk.

We are in a dangerous, uncertain, and unpredictable time. As we continue our mission worldwide and prepare to increase our commitment in Iraq, we face challenges that exceed the level of demand envisioned in the recent quadrennial review of defense strategy.

Strategy involves establishing a proper balance among ends, ways, and means. Policy and strategy discussions often focus on ends and ways and fail to sufficiently address means. The recent decisions by the President and the Secretary of Defense – to grow our ground forces and to assure access to all components of our force – will help to establish the balance required to meet and sustain high levels of strategic demand for Army forces by providing additional means.

We have received considerable support from this Committee and the Congress to increase the readiness of our Army. As a result, the Soldiers we have deployed into current theaters of operation are the best trained, best equipped, and best led we have ever fielded. As I explained in testimony before this committee last June, our immediate challenge lies in the readiness of our *non-deployed* forces. We will need your continued support in six key areas to restore the strategic depth of our Army necessary to respond decisively to potential strategic contingencies:

First, recent decisions to expand the Army reflect the clear recognition of the dangers we face and the strain that five years of sustained demand has placed on our All-Volunteer force. We plan to grow

six new Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) and enabling organizations in our active component, and other enabling organizations in our Army National Guard and Army Reserve. This will expand our rotational pool to 76 BCTs and more than 200 enabling organizations in the operational force of the Total Army. Our goal is to provide a continuous supply of 20-21 BCTs to meet global commitments. We remain committed to generating whole, cohesive units that are fully manned, trained, and equipped – that are fully ready for the challenges they will face. This will require a national commitment to sustain predictable resourcing over time and to build our force in a balanced, coordinated fashion, while providing adequately for the needs of our All-Volunteer Soldiers and their families.

Second, in the near term, to prosecute the long war, and to sustain the full range of our global commitments, we must have all components of the Army – Active, Guard, and Reserve – ready and able to deploy together. The changes in reserve component mobilization policies, recently announced by Secretary Gates, are essential. Our reserve components comprise 55 percent of our Army's capabilities. We must fully enable them to perform their new role as an integral part of our operationally deployable force. These new policies will provide predictability and facilitate the deployment of trained, ready, and cohesive units, while decreasing the burden on our Soldiers and their families. We are working to implement these changes rapidly and will require continued Congressional support to do so.

Third, with the support of this Committee and the Congress, we have been provided the resources needed to restore battle losses and repair worn equipment through an aggressive reset program. We are well ahead of schedule in executing these funds in fiscal year 2007. In just the first quarter, we have already obligated $10 billion of the $17.1 billion appropriated.

As I testified last year, we anticipate that our fiscal year 2008 reset requirements will be approximately $13.5 billion – a figure that will

increase as we plus up forces in current theaters of operation and increase the size of our Army. Because the replacement of equipment can take up to three years following the commitment of funds, we seek to make this funding available for use as soon as possible. To overcome the unprecedented stress being placed on our equipment today, reset funding will be required for a minimum of two to three years beyond the duration of the current conflict.

Fourth, with your support, we have made great progress in increasing Soldier and unit effectiveness through our modernization efforts. As I have said before, we have historically entered conflicts flatfooted. This current conflict is no exception. Investment accounts were under funded by approximately $100 billion during the previous decade, resulting in nearly $56 billion in equipment shortages across the Army. To meet Combatant Commanders' immediate wartime needs, we pooled equipment from across the force to equip Soldiers deploying into harm's way. This practice, which we are continuing today, increases risk for our next-to-deploy units, and limits our ability to respond to emerging strategic contingencies.

The changed conditions of warfare necessitate that we can no longer accept risk in how we equip our combat support and combat service support units. There are no front lines in today's battle space. We must equip *all* units with force protection, night vision goggles, crew served weapons, radios, and other critical items needed to operate. Your continued support is helping to fix what I call our "holes in the force." I ask you to increase your support for this effort as we work to break the historical cycle of unpreparedness. We must remain committed to investing in technologies and equipment that enable our most important asset – the Soldier - to remain ahead of our adversaries who are quickly adapting their methods, tactics, and tools of warfare. Investing sufficiently in our future readiness is a strategic necessity – which must be viewed as a matter of priority not just affordability.

Fifth, our ability to grow the force to meet rotation requirements is jeopardized by our inability to execute nearly $6 billion worth of scheduled military construction. We have developed a carefully synchronized, closely knitted stationing plan to enable us to meet our global commitments while fighting the long war. Current delays in funding military construction projects contained in the 2007 Military Quality of Life and Veterans' Affairs Appropriations Bill limit our ability to build our modular force and to deliver quality of life improvements which our Soldiers and families both need and deserve. I have addressed my concerns in two separate letters. In November, I co-authored a 16 star letter with the other service chiefs, and in December, Secretary Harvey and I reemphasized the significant impact of this delay. I recently requested to meet with Speaker Pelosi to emphasize how imperative it is to pass this legislation without delay, especially now while we are at war. To properly house, train, and prepare our Soldiers, we need Congress to pass the appropriations bill, or amend continuing resolution language, to permit execution of all military construction and BRAC projects requested in the 2007 President's Budget.

Sixth, we will require access to supplemental funding for fiscal year 2007 by April, and possibly sooner, to properly sustain the Army. We cannot repeat last year's near disastrous "cash flow" experience and meet the increased operational demands now facing us. For fiscal year 2008 and beyond, we must fully resource the Army to enable it to grow as projected. We are continuing to work with the Department of Defense to revise our equipment investment strategy and to obtain the additional resources needed to support that strategy. These requirements should be transmitted in the fiscal year 2008 President's Budget. I ask you to increase funding for these necessary requirements.

The fundamental challenge impacting Army readiness and strategic depth is the need to establish a proper balance between strategy and resources. Had we funded the Army to requested levels in recent years,

and endorsed policies to assure access to all of our capability, we would be in a better strategic posture today. I am greatly encouraged by the actions of the Congress, the President, and the Secretary of Defense which reflect clear recognition of the compelling need to rectify our current situation. I look forward to working with this Congress to enhance the readiness and strategic depth of our Army.

Not public until
Released by the HASC

STATEMENT OF

GENERAL JAMES T. CONWAY
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

BEFORE

THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

On

IMPLICATIONS OF IRAQ POLICY ON TOTAL FORCE READINESS

23 JANUARY 2007

Not public until
Released by the HASC

General James T. Conway
Commandant of the Marine Corps

General Conway was born in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas and is a graduate of Southeast Missouri State University. He was commissioned in 1970 as an infantry officer. His company grade assignments included multiple platoon and company commander billets with both the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions; Executive Officer of the Marine Detachment aboard the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63); series and company commander at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego; aide to the Commanding General, and Director, Sea School.

As a field grade officer, he commanded two companies of officer students and taught tactics at The Basic School; he also served as operations officer for the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit to include contingency operations off Beirut, Lebanon; and as Senior Aide to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, he was reassigned to the 2d Marine Division as Division G-3 Operations Officer before assuming command of 3d Battalion, 2d Marines in January 1990. He commanded Battalion Landing Team 3/2 during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Selected for colonel, he served as the Ground Colonels' Monitor, and as Commanding Officer of The Basic School. His general officer duties included Deputy Director of Operations, J-34, Combating Terrorism, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.; and President, Marine Corps University at Quantico, VA. After promotion to Major General, he assumed command of the 1st Marine Division. In November 2002, Major General Conway was promoted to Lieutenant General and assumed command of the I Marine Expeditionary Force. He commanded I Marine Expeditionary Force during two combat tours in Iraq. In 2004, he was reassigned as the Director of Operations, J-3, Joint Staff, in Washington, D.C.

General Conway graduated with honors from The Basic School, the U.S. Army Infantry Officers' Advanced Course, the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and the Air War College.

General Conway's personal decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with palm, Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with two Gold Stars, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal and the Combat Action Ribbon.

Chairman Skelton, Representative Hunter, and distinguished members of the committee; during my confirmation process and in our subsequent conversations, I have pledged to provide you forthright and honest assessments of your Corps, and I welcome this opportunity to report to you today.

Your Marine Corps has been fully engaged in the Long War—in campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as throughout the world. The challenges we face are of global scale and scope; this war is a multi-faceted, generational struggle that will not be won in one battle, in one country, or by one method. Throughout this war, your Marine Corps has been able to rapidly adapt to challenging strategic conditions and wide-ranging threats. This past year, you have seen evidence of this not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but in Lebanon—where we were partners in the largest noncombatant evacuation since Vietnam; in the southern Pacific—as part of humanitarian assistance and relief efforts in the wake of multiple natural disasters; and throughout the world in our theater security cooperation engagements.

Your Marines are a tough breed and will always do what it takes, but there is a tangible price we pay for this excellence—both in terms of personal sacrifice and in the cumulative effect on our equipment. It is our moral imperative to support our Marines in combat to the hilt—we are always mindful that our forward-deployed Marines and Sailors in combat must be our number one priority. As a Corps, we remain true to our congressionally-mandated mission *"to be most ready when the Nation is least ready;"* thus, we provide the Nation a two-fisted capability—adept at counterinsurgency as well as major contingency force operations.

I. Right-size our Corps

To meet the demands of the Long War and the inevitable contingencies that will arise, our Corps must be sufficiently manned as well as trained and properly equipped. The Corps' personnel policies, organizational construct, and training must resourced so that Marines are able to operate at the sustained rate and yet meet the occasional "surge."

Strain on our Individual Marines. Despite an unparalleled Personnel Tempo, the morale of our Marines and their families remains high. There are, however, leading indicators showing signs of strain that concern us. To avoid an adverse toll on our Marines and their families, and to prevent a decrease in readiness, a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio goal was established for all Active Component forces. The goal is for every seven months a Marine is

deployed, he or she will be back at home station for fourteen months—providing needed rest, family time, and the opportunity to train for an assortment of missions.

Strain on the Institution. Current wartime deployments dictate a singular focus to prepare units for their next rotations and the conduct of counterinsurgency operations. This focus and the current 1:1 deployment-to-dwell ratio of many units threatens the individual / unit skills needed for Marine Corps missions such as combined-arms maneuver, mountain warfare, amphibious, and jungle operations. To fulfill our mandate as the Nation's Force in Readiness, our deployment cycles must not only support training for irregular warfare, but also provide sufficient time for recovery and maintenance as well as training for other contingency missions. By increasing the dwell time for our units, we can accomplish the more comprehensive training needed for the sophisticated skill sets that have enabled Marine Air Ground Task Forces to consistently achieve success in all types of battle. Our goal is to increase dwell time and achieve a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio for our active forces.

II. Supporting the Plus-Up for Iraq

The recently proposed increase of Marine Corps Active Component end strength from approximately 180,000 to 202,000 Marines will go a long way towards reducing the strain on the individual Marines and the institution. Our first task will be to build three new infantry battalions and elements of their supporting structure—approximately 4,000 Marines. We will then systematically increase the number of Marines on a schedule of approximately 5,000 per year. This plan will gradually decrease the deployment-to-dwell ratio of some of our habitually high-operational tempo units such as light armored reconnaissance companies, amphibious assault companies, reconnaissance companies, combat engineers, military police, signals intelligence units, unmanned aerial vehicle units, helicopter squadrons, air command and control units, combat service support units, and explosive ordnance disposal units. Currently many of these units are deployed for seven months and only home for five. Detailed estimates for the cost of this growth will be available when the President's budget is released in early February.

Reserve Component End Strength. Our efforts in the Long War have been a Total Force effort, with our Reserves once again performing with grit and determination. Recent policy changes within the Department of Defense will allow us to access the Reserve forces as they were structured to be employed—to augment and reinforce our Active Component forces. To

this end, my goal is to sustain a 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio within our Reserve Component. As our active force increases in size, the reduced reliance on our reserve forces should allow us even more "buffer" as we work to maintain the proper deployment-to-dwell ratio for our Reserves.

Plus-Up Operations. Currently, the Marine Corps has approximately 4,000 Marines affected by plus-up operations in Iraq. The affected units will be extended by 45-60 days. This extension will impact our Marines and their families, but we have been emphatic about keeping our families informed of the details. We believe that unit programs and family support systems back home will help Marines and families meet the challenges associated with this extension. Furthermore, between their return and next deployment, the addition of new infantry battalions will allow these units to lengthen time at their home. Battalions moved forward in their rotational cycle will nevertheless have the opportunity to complete all required predeployment training and, after a modicum of cross-leveling of special equipment in theater, will be fully qualified for employment. There are no Marine Corps Reserve units involved in the plus-up operations.

III. Manning the Force

An important factor in sustaining a viable force is continuing to recruit and retain qualified young men and women with the right character, commitment, and drive to become Marines. With over 70 percent of the proposed Marine Corps end strength increase comprised of first-term Marines, both recruiting and retention efforts will be challenged. A major part of this effort will involve increased funding for both the Enlistment Bonus and Selective Reenlistment Bonus Programs which we intend to include in the President's budget request in February. We will need the strong support of Congress to achieve continued success.

Purposefully exceeding Department of Defense quality standards, we continue to recruit the best of America into our ranks—in Fiscal Year 2006, the Marine Corps achieved over 100 percent of our Active Component accession goal. The Marine Corps Reserve also achieved 100 percent of its recruiting goals, but reserve officer numbers remain challenging because our primary accession source is from officers that leave active duty. We appreciate the continued authorization for a Selected Reserve Officer Affiliation Bonus in the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act—it continues to contribute in this critical area.

We forecast that both active and reserve recruiting will remain challenging in Fiscal Year 2007, particularly when viewed through the lens of new accession missions to meet the increased end strength of the Marine Corps. We will need the continued support of Congress for strong enlistment bonuses and other recruiting programs, such as advertising, which will be essential for us to continue meeting these growth challenges.

Retention is the other important part of manning the force. In Fiscal Year 2006, the Marine Corps exceeded its retention goals for both First Term and Career Forces. For Fiscal Year 2007, we expect to exceed our goals again. This success can be attributed to the Marine Corps' judicious use of the Selective Reenlistment Bonus. To keep the very best of our Marines, the President's budget will increase the size of our bonus program in order to ensure that we have the right grade and MOS mix to support the growing force. Not only will we have to retain more first-term Marines, but also we will have to increase the number of Marines reenlisting at the eight and twelve-year mark. This will require us to shift more funding toward targeting key areas in the career force.

IV. Improving the Quality of Life for our Marines and their families

Our family support mechanisms remain robust and flexible and are continuously assessed to ensure sufficiency and relevancy to our wartime mission—particularly during crucial "rapid fire" operations. Though some Marine Corps families will be impacted by extended deployments, family support systems to meet this requirement are within Marine Corps capacity. We continue to provide emphasis on Combat / Operational Stress Control (COSC), Casualty Assistance, and support to our injured Marines.

Combat/Operational Stress Control (COSC). Managing stress is vital to the Marine Corps as a fighting force and the long-term health and well-being of Marines and their families. The culture and climate of the Marine Corps must facilitate Marines and families seeking necessary help when their lives are not returning to normal. Unit leaders have the greatest potential to influence Marines and their families and ensure they feel comfortable asking for help. COSC, therefore, is the responsibility of Marine leadership and includes support from medical personnel and chaplains.

Casualty Assistance. Each Marine fatality is a tragic loss to his or her family and the Corps. We endeavor to honor their sacrifices with sincerity and commitment. Our Casualty

Assistance Calls Officers are trained to treat next of kin and other family members as they would their own family. Each case is distinct, and assistance to surviving families must be carefully segmented and specifically adjusted to facilitate their transition through grief stages and completion of the casualty-notification process.

Wounded Marines and Sailors. The Marine For Life Injured Support program was developed to assist seriously and very seriously injured Marines, Sailors who have served or are serving with Marines, and their families. Among other components, the program seeks to bridge the gap between military and the Department of Veterans Affairs medical care by providing individual support through the transition period. Additionally, I have directed creation of a Wounded Warrior Regiment to provide centralized oversight of care for our wounded Marines and assist in the integration of their support with military, government, charitable, and civilian systems.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Recent measures to mitigate the impact of traumatic brain injuries to individual Marines and their units include release of a medical guidance letter from the Medical Officer of the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps has also implemented an improved helmet suspension system to decrease impact of injury from a blast or blow to the head.

The science of diagnosing and treating PTSD continues to evolve. Screening is taking place in theater and at home stations. Research and training are underway to identify risk and protective factors for PTSD, increase resilience to stress, and improve individual / leadership awareness, early identification, and psychological first aid for those who are stress-injured.

V. Equipment Requirements for Iraq Plus-Up and for Increased 202K Marine Corps

The conflict in Iraq and the greater Long War on Terror have increased our equipment maintenance and replacement costs far beyond what is available in our baseline budget. The challenge of restoring and maintaining traditional capabilities while fielding new capabilities to ensure success in the Global War on Terror has come to be known as "resetting the force." With your help over the last two years, we have begun to make progress in restoring our equipment readiness, but there is much work to be done if we are to win the current fight and still be able to respond to other challenges that face our country.

Slow deliveries of needed equipment have forced us to cross-level and redistribute equipment to ensure that our OIF-bound units have their full complement of equipment. This has resulted in home station shortfalls and hindered some stateside units' ability to train for other missions and contingencies. Personnel and equipment needed for mobile training teams and other non-traditional employment in theater has had a similar impact. While the readiness of deployed and deploying units has remained high, we have experienced a decrease in non-deployed units' readiness.

To remedy the near term decline in readiness, we have requested and received $10.6 billion in funding to reset the force. Deliveries of equipment procured with reset funding are proceeding. However, increases in deployment and operating tempo will slow our efforts to reset the force. Equipment originally planned to replace home station shortfalls and prepositioning programs will now be used to address unit equipment requirements associated with the Iraq plus-up.

Personal Protective Equipment. The Marine Corps currently has sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on-hand, as required by the Combatant Commander, to outfit two additional infantry battalions. For plus-up operations in Iraq, the two additional battalions will receive protective equipment from home station Consolidated Issue Facilities (CIFs), prior to deploying to Iraq. This emerging requirement may require some cross-leveling between CIFs, but sufficient quantities are available for prescribed PPE. We also continue to field additional quantities of PPE and can redirect vendor shipments to meet additional requirements if needed. The Side Small Arms Protective Insert (Side SAPI) is currently an in-theater issued asset and one that Marines are not provided prior to deployment. Sufficient Side SAPIs are available in-theater to provide for issue to the two additional infantry battalions for the Iraq plus-up.

Equipment in Support of Additional Troops in Iraq. Equipment in support of additional troops in Iraq is acquired through a variety of sources. These include cross-leveling of equipment from within the Marine Force Component Command (MARFORs), cross-leveling within theater, pending procurement deliveries, Maritime Prepositioning Stores, Depot Maintenance Master Work Schedule, Forward In Stores stocks, and a variety of other smaller sources.

Impact on Home Station. Once equipment shortfalls are identified, Marine Forces Command (MARFORCOM) and Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) will identify those

items that have an adverse impact on pre-deployment training of units in subsequent rotations. Supporting establishments in concert with Marine Corps Logistics Command (MCLC) and Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) will mitigate these shortages to the Marine Forces Component Commands (MARFORs) through redirecting pending contract deliveries and depot maintenance cycles.

High Demand Equipment. Equipment in high demand continues to be monitored closely and critical shortfalls are filled though the process outlined above. In addition, new advances in technology have allowed for improved survivability. An example of this has been our progression in the armored vehicle from the basic HMMWV to the Marine Armor Kit (MAK), to the fully fielded M1114, to the new Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) family of vehicles. Within the next 3-5 years, we expect the fielding of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV), which will have the latest protection that science and technology can provide. This one example shows how modern advances in technology along with the military partnering with industry have enhanced survivability on the battlefield.

To extend the life of high demand equipment, we have numerous programs in place. One is using Army Materiel Command's forward maintenance capabilities. Another is the aggressive use of contracted logistics support capabilities. Additionally, we have a Principle End Item (PEI) rotation plan that allows critical assets to be systematically removed from the battlefield, sent back to the States, and inducted into depot level maintenance cycles. Currently, 56 separate equipment categories have been identified for induction into the PEI rotation plan. Our Fiscal Year 2008 PEI induction plan is an enhanced plan that identifies 128 separate equipment categories. This process allows for essential rebuild of those assets and an extension of their service life. While this depot level maintenance is being done, the latest technology available is being applied to ensure the best equipment available is returned to theater.

Equipping a 202K Marine Corps. In order to best equip proposed end strength increases, the Marine Corps has a phased approach across Fiscal Year 2008-11 that is synchronized with increases in personnel. We will conduct the necessary analysis in order to procure high demand and long lead time items early in the process. While the vast majority of required equipment will be the procurement of additional existing weapon systems, when it makes sense, we will procure next generation equipment to keep pace with technological improvements.

Impact on Marine Corps Aviation Equipment. The Long War on Terror has resulted in aircraft use rates far greater than designed or programmed on Marine Corps aircraft. All USMC aircraft are operating at two to four times their programmed rates; our unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) squadrons are flying at ten times their programmed rate. In order to meet demands of the current fight and posture ourselves for success in the Long War, we must husband these low density, high demand assets. The Marine Aviation Plan (MAvPlan) mitigation strategy sustains our legacy inventory while we simultaneously transition to new platforms to source the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and joint force in the future.

The timely support and execution of the MAvPlan will determine USMC aviation force readiness today and tomorrow. KC-130J, H-1, and MV-22 production lines are now active but funded below maximum capacity. Additionally, F/A-18D and CH-53E aircraft will reach the end of their service lives before replacement aircraft become available. These shortfalls underscore the urgency for the F-35B and CH-53K programs to remain on schedule. Turn Around Ratio (TAR) for all USMC helicopter and UAV squadrons as well as our air traffic control detachments falls short of directed 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratios. Over the past year, many of these units have a dwell time less than 1:1 with most for seven months and only home for five. The combination of this deployment-to-dwell ration and increased usage rates creates a cumulative effect that exacerbates the stress on some components of Marine aviation.

VI. Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to report to you on behalf of the valiant men and women of your Corps. They remain committed to their mission and know that the American people and its government support them in their endeavor. Your Corps stands ready to serve in any clime and place, but your continued support remains a vital and appreciated foundation to this Service.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 23, 2007

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Sources say case workers for wounded laid off

By Karen Jowers - Staff writer
Posted : Saturday Jan 20, 2007 8:33:08 EST

Defense Department officials have laid off most of their case workers who help severely injured service members, sources said.

The case workers for the Military Severely Injured Center serve as advocates for wounded service members who have questions or issues related to benefits, financial resources and their successful return to duty or reintegration into civilian life — all forms of support other than medical care.

The center officially opened in February 2005, with its primary offices in Arlington, Va., but also hired advocates at hospitals around the country.

Four sources said the decision was made to cut back the personnel because officials with the Army's Wounded Warrior program felt the Defense Department program was a duplication of efforts.

Defense officials did not comment on the actions as of Jan. 19. Wounded Warrior officials also could not be reached.

Reports indicate that Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Lewis, Wash.; and Fort Campbell, Ky., were among the locations that had case workers cut. It is not clear what will happen to case workers at the Arlington center.

The only case workers that have not been laid off are at three hospitals: Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas; Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii; and Naval Medical Center San Diego, sources said. But those case workers will not be allowed to work with soldiers and must refer them to the Army Wounded Warrior program.

The laid-off workers were told Wednesday to finish up their case work with severely injured troops, and that Friday would be their last day.

"I'm just livid about this," said Janice Buckley, Washington state chapter president for Operation Homefront.

She was notified that the two case workers at Fort Lewis were given short notice that their jobs were ending, but she has no further information.

"They did a fabulous job for these families," Buckley said. "The kind of work they do for these families who are hanging by a thread ... no other organization helped service members and their families like they did."

The MSIC case workers provided the wounded service members with contacts and referrals to other organizations and agencies, ranging from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the Social Security Administration, depending on their individual needs. Operation Homefront often helps with the families' emergency financial needs.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JANUARY 23, 2007

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SKELTON

Mr. SKELTON. General Conway, you were speaking about head injuries. There is an ongoing study at Bethesda headed by Dr. DeGraba regarding head injuries. Are you familiar with that? Would you be kind enough to furnish this committee with an update and see what, if anything, Congress needs to be doing to further that head injury study that Dr. DeGraba is heading up?

General CONWAY. Yes, we are familiar with Dr. DeGraba's research. The Bureau of Medicine and Surgery can provide an update on his current progress. The Marine Corps is willing to help in this research. We will ontact Dr. DeGraba to see if he needs any further support from the Marine Corps.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. TAYLOR

Mr. TAYLOR. I was really impressed with the Marine Corps general in charge of this program that not only gave us a target figure and target date for delivery—what is your target figure and what is your number of vehicles and what is your target date of delivery so that, hopefully, Congress can work with you to make this happen?

General SCHOOMAKER. Jointly with the Marine Corps, we are in the process of rapidly acquiring Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles. The Services have documented a combined requirement for 6,738 MRAP vehicles; of which the Army plans to procure 2,500. On November 9, 2006, the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps released a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) The Services are awarding contracts to those with the greatest likelihood of meeting requirements. Testing is expected to take place from February through May 2007. The Army and Marines will place production orders with those contractors whose MRAP vehicles best meet survivability and other performance requirements in testing and have the capability to meet an aggressive production and delivery schedule. Army delivery from the contractor is projected to begin in fourth quarter of fiscal year 2007; this timeline is dependent on the receipt of funding by April 2007. The first fielding of Army procured MRAP, placed in the hands of Soldiers, is estimated to occur by October 1, 2007. Concurrently, the Army will continue to work with the Marines to develop a long-term solution to the requirement through the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) program.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MCHUGH

Mr. MCHUGH. Some media reports allege that U.S. forces will be pulled or diverted from Afghanistan in order to sustain the increased troop levels in Iraq that have been proposed by the President. Are these reports accurate? How will U.S. force levels in Afghanistan now, as well as future U.S. force levels in Afghanistan, be changed as a result of increased U.S. force levels in Iraq?

General SCHOOMAKER. Force levels in Afghanistan will increase from the levels seen in November of 2006. This increase provides capability levels in Afghanistan that support the combatant commander's current and anticipated needs and does not affect the force requirements in Iraq.

Mr. MCHUGH. Some media reports allege that U.S. forces will be pulled or diverted from Afghanistan in order to sustain the increased troop levels in Iraq that have been proposed by the President. Are these reports accurate? How will U.S. force levels in Afghanistan now, as well as future U.S. force levels in Afghanistan, be changed as a result of increased U.S. force levels in Iraq?

General CONWAY. The Marine Corps does not have units in Afghanistan that will be affected by an proposed increase in troop levels in Iraq.

Mr. MCHUGH. With regard to Afghanistan, I understand that the commander there believes additional forces are necessary and that the need will continue beyond the end of the four-month extension recently directed for a brigade of the 10th Mountain Division. Given the increased heavy demands on U.S. forces to meet expanded troop levels in Iraq, how does the U.S. plan to meet the continuing require-

ment for more forces in Iraq at the end of the extension of the brigade from the 10th Mountain Division? If this spring and summer's expected increase in al Qaeda and Taliban operations demand a more robust response than currently projected, how will any additional troop requirements be met?

General SCHOOMAKER. The Secretary of Defense approved the extension of the 10th Mountain Division Brigade Combat Team currently in Afghanistan. This extension will provide the Army time to properly man, train, and equip the next-to-deploy units to support ongoing operations. The objective is to source this increased Operation Enduring Freedom requirement from the Army's rotational force pool and has been incorporated into future force rotation planning.

Mr. MCHUGH. With regard to Afghanistan, I understand that the commander there believes additional forces are necessary and that the need will continue beyond the end of the four-month extension recently directed for a brigade of the 10th Mountain Division. Given the increased heavy demands on U.S. forces to meet expanded troop levels in Iraq, how does the U.S. plan to meet the continuing requirement for more forces in Iraq at the end of the extension of the brigade from the 10th Mountain Division? If this spring and summer's expected increase in al Qaeda and Taliban operations demand a more robust response than currently projected, how will any additional troop requirements be met?

General SCHOOMAKER. The Marine Corps does not have units in Afghanistan that will be affected by an increase in troop levels in Iraq.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WILSON

Mr. WILSON. I am indeed, concerned for guard and reserve members as there is greater mobilization. Could both of you, particularly General Schoomaker, indicate are there any programs, are there any legislative initiatives being proposed to assist guard and reserve members? Their families, in terms of any benefits that are being proposed, or greater consideration for disruption of their employment? Obviously, an issue that always is near and dear to me and others is to provide for the retirement age to be reduced, not to apply to me, from 60 to 55. Are any of these going to be potentially enhanced this year?

General SCHOOMAKER. Currently, title 38 of the United States Code and the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Acts of 1994 provide protection for guard and reserve members when absent from a position of civilian employment because of uniformed service. The National Committee for Employer Support of the guard and reserve assists Reserve Component (RC) members with reemployment problems that emerge as a result of their active military service. The Army does not have any proposed legislative initiative to amend or change the current laws on employment or reemployment rights for guard and reserve members.

The Department of Defense (DOD) supports additional benefits for members who are bearing the burden of mobilization and deployments. DOD is establishing a comprehensive compensation plan for National Guard and reserve members required to deploy before their optimum respite has been completed and for frequency and duration of mobilizations.

With regard to reducing the age for Ready Reserve members to become eligible to receive retired pay, the Department of Defense is deferring any changes to the guard and reserve member retirement system until completion of two reviews: The 10th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation which is reviewing the military retirement system and the Commission on the guard and reserve which is reviewing pay and benefits provided to RC members.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. JOHNSON

Mr. JOHNSON. I would like to know whether or not that figure is correct. Did you fail to achieve your goal for new recruit contracts by 20,128 in 2006 fiscal year. Is that true or false?

General SCHOOMAKER. In FY 2006, the Active Component exceeded their recruiting mission at 100.1 percent while the Army National Guard (ARNG) and U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) fell short but achieved 99.5 percent and 98.6 percent, respectively. The Army establishes a recruiting contract mission primarily as a forecasting gauge to ensure we attain the current year accessions necessary to execute our Military Manpower programs; second, this mission serves as a planning factor for building the following year's Future Soldier Entry pool. While we do monitor the contract mission achievement, we base success on having the requisite recruits in the force at the required time. The Army has achieved the annual recruiting accession mission five of the past six years (missed FY05), despite achieving our contract mission

only two of those six years (FY02 & 03). In FY06, the Army had a contract shortfall of 19,571. Missing our annual contract mission is not necessarily indicative of pending accession mission failure. However, it is an indicator of the degree of difficulty our recruiters face in the current market.

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