DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met at 10:56 a.m., in room SD–192, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Inouye (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Inouye, Leahy, Dorgan, Feinstein, Murray, Stevens, Cochran, Specter, Domenici, and Bond.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT M. GATES, SECRETARY

ACCOMPANIED BY TINA JONAS, UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, COMPTROLLER

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUYE

Senator INOUYE. I should point out that this subcommittee will not tolerate any demonstrations. We expect all of us here to conduct ourselves like ladies and gentlemen.

I have been advised that the Secretary has an important meeting at the White House. So we will have to set some time limitations. May I suggest 10 minutes?

Today the subcommittee is pleased to welcome the Honorable Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, and Admiral Mike Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to testify on the administration's budget request for fiscal year 2009.

Gentlemen, the budget before this subcommittee requests $492 billion for the coming year. Of course, this amount includes neither funding for military construction nor an additional amount for the cost of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In total, funding for the Department of Defense is at historically high levels, unmatched since World War II.

Mr. Secretary, we have all been impressed with your passion and commitment to ensure that our military men and women are receiving the best equipment, medical treatment, housing, and support. Over the past several months, we have also noted your statements in favor of enhancing diplomatic efforts in the fight on the war on terror and calling for improvements in ISR and innovation in military planning. It has been the most impressive performance.

On this subcommittee, I believe we have followed your lead. Congress provided an unprecedented $17 billion budget increase in response to your call for MRAPs. In the fiscal year 2008 supplemental, which is now pending before the Senate, the subcommittee has increased resources for healthcare by more than $900 million, added $500 million to repair barracks. We have recommended increases for ISR capabilities, and done so by allowing for the lease of existing assets which can be deployed almost immediately to the theater rather than in 14 or 28 months as traditional procurement would require.

But, Mr. Secretary, with all due respect, when we review your budget request, we find that it is filled with maintaining the status quo. As this subcommittee has noted in recent years, again this year we find that in the administration's budget request, stable production programs are being curtailed or even terminated in favor of advancing new technology such as in our space systems and shipbuilding, even in Army ground equipment, all to encounter some notional future conventional threat which is difficult to see looming on the horizon.

Your healthcare budget assumes $1.2 billion in savings, which it is clear will not materialize, leaving a hole that the Congress would have to fill.

Your budget assumes risk in depot maintenance by only requesting funding for 75 percent of the normal requirement.

Mr. Secretary and Admiral Mullen, as we discuss these matters today, we will be seeking your candid assessments on how this budget can be improved.

Gentlemen, we commend you for your leadership in managing this enormous Department in very challenging times. And we very much appreciate your service and look forward to your testimony. However, before you proceed, I would like to defer to the vice chairman of this subcommittee for any comments he wishes to make. Senator Stevens.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR TED STEVENS

Senator STEVENS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen, we thank you for your service and for your appearance here today.

I do not disagree with anything that the chairman has said. I do believe we are totally in agreement. We have a difficult task of balancing the military's competing requirements with the amount of funds available. We do look forward to your comments today and look forward to the opportunity to work with you to meet the pressing needs of the military. It is not going to be an easy job, as we all know, and the procedural parliamentary situation here is in such disarray, God knows where we will come out.

Thank you.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much.

Senator Specter.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary and Admiral Mullen and Ms. Jonas, I join my colleagues in welcoming you here. You have a very tough job.

In the few moments that I am going to have today, I would like to focus on the future and most specifically on Iran and on the critical issue of talks with Iran and whether talking with Iran is really appeasement. We have seen our talks with North Korea bear fruition. We have seen the talks with Libya, Gaddafi, bear fruition. Gaddafi, arguably the worst terrorist in the history of the world, in very tough competition with Pan Am 103 and the bombing of the Berlin discotheque, and yet he has given up his nuclear weapons and has re-entered the family of nations.

And we have seen the President's comment about appeasement with terrorists, but if we do not have dialogue with Iran, at least in one man's opinion, we are missing a great opportunity to avoid a future conflict. These are views which I have held over a long period of time from my service on this subcommittee and chairing the Intelligence Committee and the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, extensive floor statements, and an article in the Washington Quarterly in December 2006–07.

And I think that your statements on this issue in encouraging talks have been extremely productive, and I think we really need to focus on that issue.

Very briefly, I will ask you about the situation with Yemen. I am concerned about what is happening with Yemen after the killing of 17 sailors on the *Cole*. Al Qaeda, the worst terrorist organization in the world, has been implicated in the attack. Verdicts have been handed down. Yet there are troubling reports that Yemen has let the individuals convicted in the attack go free. It is my understanding that the Department of Defense provided Yemen with $31 million in section 1206 aid in fiscal years 2006 and 2007, and that the fiscal year 2008 request will be made shortly. I would like to explore with you the reasons for that and whether we could not have some leverage to see to it that those terrorists are brought to justice or at least not to finance those who were accomplices after the fact.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INOUYE. Senator Feinstein, would you care to make a statement?

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much. I have no opening statement.

Senator INOUYE. Senator Bond.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER S. BOND

Senator BOND. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We welcome Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen, and I will have some questions for you on some TACAIR acquisition things that I think are looming large for the military.

But first, I commend you on your far-sightedness in the development not only of the counter-insurgency strategy with General Petraeus, but what is a broader concept I believe of the non-kinetic force or smart power that is necessary to win the long war against those radical terrorists who would attack us. My view is the Department of Defense, particularly the Army, is way out ahead of anybody else in knowing how to work with people in less developed countries who are subject to the appeals of terrorists and also to

get out the strategic information or the campaigns to explain what we are doing.

I believe at least your staff has had an opportunity to meet with LibForAll, the group of moderate Muslims, led by former Indonesian President Gus Dur—or Abdurrahman Wahid is his real name—that are reaching out to Muslims throughout the world, carrying the message of moderate Islam. I would like to maybe talk with you in person later on about it. But I commend you because I think this is an essential part of the long-term battle that you as Secretary of Defense have recognized better than anyone else. And I thank you for it and I want to learn more about it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you.

Senator Leahy.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY

Senator LEAHY. Yes. Mr. Chairman, I am more interested in hearing from Secretary Gates.

I would note that it is nice to see him without his arm in a sling and that he made it very clear that it did not come from arm twisting here on the Hill.

I am going to want to talk with him about a number of things when we get going, our National Guard, of course, our homeland defense, how we respond to disasters. The press was talking about the high probability of severe earthquakes out in our western part of our country. Obviously, the Guard would be called out there. We will go into that, the shortfalls in the Guard, equipment, and so on.

I do want to talk about the Secretary's speech last week in which he said we are going to have to engage Iran, including through low-level government-to-government talks. I tend to agree with him. I remember during the height of the cold war when we could have bellicose statements from the head of the Soviet Union and the head of the United States, and at the same time, we had people going back and forth having discussions and how well that worked. We even did, as the Secretary knows, even during the height of the Cuban missile crisis. So there are a lot of distasteful people we have to talk with around the world, but it is realpolitik.

Mostly, I am pleased that Secretary Gates was willing, at what was both personal and financial sacrifice, to come and take the position that he has, giving up a dream position when he did. I applaud him for it.

That is all, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you.

Senator Dorgan.

Senator DORGAN. Mr. Chairman, I will defer. I do have some questions for the Secretary and for Admiral Mullen, but let me defer an opening statement so that we can hear the witnesses.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much.

And now may I call upon the Honorable Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SECRETARY GATES

Secretary GATES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, it is a pleasure to be here for my

second and last budget testimony before this subcommittee. First, let me thank you for your continued support of our military these many years, and I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the President's fiscal year 2009 budget request.

Before getting into the components of the request, I thought it might be useful briefly to consider it in the light of the current strategic landscape, a landscape still being shaped by forces unleashed by the end of the cold war two decades ago.

In recent years, old hatreds and conflicts have combined with new threats and forces of instability, challenges made more dangerous and prolific by modern technology, among them terrorism, extremism, and violent jihadism, ethnic, tribal and sectarian conflict, proliferation of dangerous weapons and materials, failed and failing states, nations discontented with their role in the international order, and rising and resurgent powers whose future paths are uncertain.

In light of this strategic environment, we must make the choices and investments necessary to protect the security, prosperity, and freedom of the American people. The investment being presented today in the base defense budget is $515.4 billion, or about 4 percent of our gross domestic product (GDP) when combined with war costs. This compares to spending levels of about 14 percent of GDP during the Korean War and 9 percent during Vietnam. Our fiscal year 2009 request is a 7.5 percent increase, or $35.9 billion, over last year's enacted level. When accounting for inflation, this translates into a real increase of about 5.5 percent.

The difference consists of four main categories which are outlined in more detail in my submitted statement. Overall, the budget includes $183.8 billion for overall strategic modernization, including $104 billion for procurement to sustain our Nation's technological advantage over current and future adversaries; $158.3 billion for operations, readiness, and support to maintain a skilled and agile fighting force; $149.4 billion to enhance quality of life by providing pay, benefits, healthcare, and other services earned by our all-volunteer force; and $20.5 billion to increase ground capabilities by growing the Army and Marine Corps.

This budget includes new funding for critical ongoing initiatives such as global train and equip to build the security capacity of our partner nations, security and stabilization assistance, foreign language capabilities, and the new Africa Command.

In summary, this request provides the resources needed to respond to current threats while preparing for a range of conventional and irregular challenges that our Nation may face in the years ahead.

In addition to the $515.4 billion base budget, the fiscal year 2009 request also includes $70 billion in emergency bridge funding.

There is, however, a more immediate concern. Congress has yet to pass the pending $102.5 billion global war on terror request for fiscal year 2008, and as a result, the Defense Department is currently using fourth quarter funds from the base budget to cover current war costs. Shortly, two critical accounts will run dry. First, Army military personnel. After June 15, we will run out of funds in this account to pay soldiers, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan. Second, operations and maintenance (O&M) accounts. Around

July 5, O&M funds across the services will run out, starting with the Army. This may result in civilian furloughs, limits on training, and curbing family support activities.

If war funds are not available, the Defense Department can transfer funds from Navy and Air Force military personnel accounts to pay soldiers, but that would get us only to late July. Using the limited transfer authority granted by Congress would also help get us to late July. Doing so, however, is a shell game, which will disrupt existing programs and push the services' O&M accounts to the edge of fiscal viability.

Beyond the Army personnel account and O&M account, other programs will be adversely impacted if the pending fiscal year 2008 supplemental is not passed soon. Among them critically is the commander's emergency response program, or CERP, the single most effective program to enable commanders to address local populations' needs and get potential insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan off the streets and into jobs. Congress has provided $500 million of our total CERP request of $1.7 billion. Without the balance of $1.2 billion, this vital program will come to a standstill. The Department does not have the authority to extend the funding beyond the $977 million in authority provided in the fiscal year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

While I understand that the Congress may pass the fiscal year 2008 war funding bill before the Memorial Day recess, I am obligated to plan for the possibility that this may not occur. I will keep Congress informed of these plans in an effort to ensure transparency and to minimize possible misunderstandings.

Delaying the supplemental makes it difficult to manage the Department in a way that is fiscally sound and prudent. To illustrate this point, I have compared the Department of Defense to the world's largest supertanker. It cannot turn on a dime and it cannot be steered like a skiff. And I would add, it cannot operate without paying its people. And so I urge approval of the fiscal year 2008 war funds as quickly as possible.

PREPARED STATEMENT

Finally, I would like to thank the subcommittee for all you have done to support our troops, as well as their families. In visits to the combat theaters and military hospitals and at bases and posts at home and around the world, I continue to be amazed by their decency, their resilience, and their courage. Through the support of the Congress and our Nation, these young men and women will prevail in the current conflicts and be prepared to confront the threats that they, their children, and our Nation may face in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT M. GATES

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee: Thank you for your continued support of our military these many years. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the President's fiscal year 2009 Defense budget request.

Before getting into the components of this request, I thought it useful to consider it in light of the current strategic landscape—a landscape still being shaped by

forces unleashed by the end of the Cold War nearly two decades ago. In recent years old hatreds and conflicts have combined with new threats and forces of instability—challenges made more dangerous and prolific by modern technology. Among them: Terrorism, extremism, and violent jihadism; ethnic, tribal, and sectarian conflict; proliferation of dangerous weapons and materials; failed and failing states; nations discontented with their role in the international order; and rising and resurgent powers whose future paths are uncertain.

In light of this strategic environment, we must make the choices and investments necessary to protect the security, prosperity, and freedom of the American people.

The investment being presented today in the defense base budget is $515.4 billion, or about 3.4 percent of our Gross Domestic Product. This request is a 7.5 percent increase—or $35.9 billion—over last year's enacted level. When accounting for inflation, this translates into a real increase of about five and a half percent.

I also strongly support Secretary Rice's request for the international affairs funding. This request is vital to the Department of Defense; in the current strategic landscape, we need civilian expertise and robust engagement around the world to build goodwill, represent United States values and commitment to our partners, complement the contributions of our military, and set the long-term conditions for peace, prosperity, and an environment inhospitable to extremism.

STRATEGIC MODERNIZATION—FUTURE COMBAT CAPABILITIES

The fiscal year 2009 budget request provides $183.8 billion in strategic modernization to meet future threats, a 4.7 percent increase over the previously enacted level. This category includes more than $104 billion for procurement.

Joint Combat Capabilities

The base budget provides $9.2 billion for ground capabilities, including more than 5,000 Humvees and 4,000 tactical vehicles. This request provides $3.6 billion to continue development of the Future Combat System, the Army's major modernization program, a portion of which I saw first-hand at Fort Bliss, Texas about two and a half weeks ago. I was impressed by what I saw.

A total of $16.9 billion is allotted for maritime capabilities, with $14.2 billion for shipbuilding, including: The DDG–1000, the next generation surface combatant; two littoral combat ships; two joint high speed vessels; two logistics ships; and one Virginia-class submarine.

The ships being built today must provide the capability and capacity to maintain the Navy's global presence and influence in the future. A fleet sized at 313 ships offers the agility required to meet a broadening array of operations and requirements with allies around the globe.

To improve air capabilities, the budget includes $45.6 billion, a $4.9 billion increase over last year's enacted levels.

This includes funding for: F/A 18 Hornet and E/A–18G Growler fighters; F–35 Joint Strike Fighters; F–22 Raptors; V–22 Ospreys; Unmanned Aerial Vehicles; and recapitalization of various missiles and other weapons.

The Air Force's number one acquisition and recapitalization priority is the tanker fleet, specifically the KC–135, which is an average of 48.5 years old. This aircraft is increasingly expensive to maintain and less reliable to fly every day. The Department believes a KC–135 replacement fleet of between 460–580 aircraft, combined with an additional 59 KC–10s will provide suitable aerial refueling capacity.

Retirement of aging aircraft is a vital component of recapitalizing our air assets. I urge Congress to continue to authorize aircraft retirements, lifting restrictions from previous years to help the Air Force maintain readiness and perform missions more safely.

Space

This request provides $10.7 billion to strengthen joint space-based capabilities in several categories, including: Space-based infrared systems; and communications, environmental, Global Positioning System, and Advanced Extremely High Frequency satellites.

The Department's heavy reliance on space capabilities is clear to potential adversaries, some of whom are developing anti-satellite weapons. Protecting our assets in space is, therefore, a high priority. In the past, the Department has been slow to address this vulnerability, but we are ramping up to properly address this problem.

Research and Development

As changes in this century's threat environment create strategic challenges—irregular warfare, weapons of mass destruction, disruptive technologies—this request

places greater emphasis on basic research, which in recent years has not kept pace with other parts of the budget.

This request for $11.5 billion will sustain ongoing science and technology research. Within this category, the fiscal year 2009 budget includes $1.7 billion for basic research initiatives. In total, I have directed an increase of about $1 billion over the next five years for fundamental, peer-reviewed basic research—a two percent increase in real annual growth.

Missile Defense

The 2009 base budget provides $10.4 billion to continue developing, testing, and fielding a multi-layered system to protect the United States and its allies from tactical and strategic ballistic missile attack.

The Missile Defense Agency has successfully fielded elements of the ballistic missile defense system since 2004. Today, for the first time in history, our nation has an initial missile defense capability. In coming years, the Department seeks to grow this capability by testing against more complex and realistic scenarios, and by negotiating with like-minded nations. Since becoming the Secretary of Defense, I have been personally involved in ongoing discussions with Poland and the Czech Republic on hosting U.S. missile defense assets. I will continue to press for increased cooperation with our partners.

READINESS, OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT

The fiscal year 2009 request provides $158.3 billion, a 10.4 percent increase over last year's enacted level, for operations and training, as well as facilities and base support. $68 billion of the request will maintain combat readiness, focused on next-to-deploy units. The budget invests in readiness measured in terms of tank miles driven per month, ship steaming days underway per quarter, and flying hours per month. Additionally, this request includes:

—$33.1 billion for logistical, intelligence, and service-wide support;
—$32.6 billion for facility and base support;
—$11.8 billion for equipment maintenance to accommodate increased requirements, expanded scopes of work for repair and refurbishment of equipment, and the transition of systems from development to sustainment in the field;
—$10.7 billion for training, recruiting, and retention to ensure that the all-volunteer force has the right people with the right skills; and
—$2.2 billion for sealift efforts and commissary support.

The Department will continue investing in a number of critical initiatives that will have long-term implications for the readiness of our forces and the nation's ability to meet future threats.

Global Train and Equip

The global train and equip authority provides commanders a means to fill long-standing gaps in our ability to build the capacity and capabilities of partner nations. It allows the State and Defense Departments to act in months, rather than years, to help other countries build and sustain capable security forces. The program focuses on places where we are not at war, but where there are emerging threats and opportunities. It creates the opportunity to reduce stress on U.S. forces by decreasing the likelihood that troops will be used in the future. Combatant Commanders consider this a vital tool in the war on terror beyond Afghanistan and Iraq. It has become a model of interagency cooperation between State and Defense—both in the field and in Washington, D.C. Secretary Rice and I both fully support this authority. We discussed its importance to long-term national security during joint testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on April 15th, and noted that its benefits would accrue to our successors in future administrations. The fiscal year 2009 base budget requests $500 million, along with a request for $750 million in authority. I urge Congress to provide this funding and permanent authority to meet enduring requirements.

Security and Stabilization Assistance

The fiscal year 2009 budget invests $200 million in security and stabilization assistance along with a corresponding request to increase the authority. This authority will allow the Department to transfer up to $200 million to the State Department to facilitate whole-of-government responses to stability and security missions—bringing civilian expertise to bear alongside our military. This would give Secretary Rice additional resources to address security challenges and defuse potential crises that might otherwise require the U.S. military to intervene.

Africa Command

This request includes $389 million, or $246 million above previously enacted funds, to launch the new Africa Command, allowing the Department to have a more integrated approach than the existing arrangement dividing the continent up among three different regional commands. This new command will help: Strengthen U.S. security cooperation with African countries; train and equip our partners; improve health, education, and economic development; and promote peace and stability.

Foreign Languages

The fiscal year 2009 budget includes $586 million for the Defense Language Program, a $52.3 million increase from last year. Thus far, our approach to improving language skills is having an impact. Proficiency in Arabic has increased 82 percent since September 2001. Although the value of foreign languages and cultural proficiency is recognized by our Special Forces, these capabilities are essential for all forces preparing for irregular warfare, training and advising missions, humanitarian efforts, and security and stabilization operations.

QUALITY OF LIFE

The fiscal year 2009 request includes $149.4 billion in military pay, health care, housing, and quality of life for service personnel, Department employees, and their families.

The request provides for $107.8 billion in pay and benefits, an increase of 9.8 percent over the fiscal year 2008 enacted level. This translates into pay raises of 3.4 percent for the military and 2.9 percent for civilian employees. Since 2001, basic military pay has increased by an average of 37 percent. For example, in fiscal year 2009, the average enlisted E–6 (Army Staff Sergeant) will see a pay increase of $1,289. The pay of the average O–3 (Army Captain or Navy Lieutenant) increases by $1,943 in fiscal year 2009.

Family Housing

The budget request includes $3.2 billion that will construct new family housing, improve existing housing, eliminate inadequate housing overseas, operate and maintain government-owned housing, and fund the privatization of 12,324 additional homes. The Basic Allowance for Housing increases by 5 percent and the Basic Allowance for Subsistence increases by 3.8 percent.

Wounded Warriors

We have a moral obligation to see that the superb life-saving care that the wounded receive initially is matched by quality out-patient treatment. To provide world-class health care to all who are wounded, ill, or injured serving the nation, the Department is taking action on the recommendations made by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. To do so, we have formed a senior oversight committee—chaired by the Deputy Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs—to examine several key areas:

—Case Management—integrate care management throughout the life of the wounded, ill, or injured service member to ensure they receive, as the President made clear, the "right care and benefits at the right time in the right place from the right person";

—Disability and Compensation Systems—streamline the disability evaluation system making it a single, supportive, and transparent process;

—DOD and VA Data Sharing—ensure appropriate information is accessible and understandable between departments; and

—Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)/Psychological Health Issues—improve access and quality of care by reducing the stigma associated with mental health care and establishing new programs, such as a TBI registry.

Over the past eight months, we have made a concerted effort to ensure that counseling for post-traumatic stress does not adversely impact a Service member's security clearance. On May 1st, we changed the question on the government application for security clearance so that, as a general matter, it excludes counseling related to service in combat—post-traumatic stress in particular. We hope this will encourage more men and women in uniform to seek help.

In addition, the Department has also approved new standards for all facilities housing the wounded. We have already inspected nearly 500 buildings against these new standards to ensure our people have a place to heal that is clean and decent.

The budget requests $466 million to accelerate and enhance construction of health care facilities at Bethesda and Fort Belvoir, as well as establishing more Warrior Transition Units. To date, the Army has created 35 new Warrior Transition Units, which have helped 10,000 injured soldiers either return to their units or transition

to veteran status. I have visited several Warrior Transition Units, and I hope Congress will fund these extra-ordinary facilities, along with our other health care requests. America's all-volunteer force must know that we will do everything possible to care for and heal the men and women injured in the line of duty.

Future Health Care Issues

In fiscal year 2009, DOD military healthcare costs are projected to be $42.8 billion in order to maintain benefits for 9.2 million eligible military members and their families, as well as retirees—more than double the level in 2001. By 2015, the Department's health care costs are projected to reach $64 billion, or 11.3 percent of the budget.

Because of these concerns, the Department is also seeking legislation to align out-of-pocket health care expenses for retirees under age 65 with general health insurance plans. The Department continues to believe that modest increases to TRICARE out-of-pocket costs for working-age military retirees are essential to make military health benefits affordable and sustainable for current and future retired service members.

Global Posture

The base budget requests $9.5 billion to continue U.S. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) efforts. For the approved fiscal year 2005 BRAC recommendations, the budget fully funds 24 major realignments, 25 base closures, and 765 lesser actions. The Department is continuing to reposition U.S. forces at home and abroad in keeping with post-Cold War realities. Consequently, several units stationed overseas will be brought home. Accommodations for them are underway. For example, there is a tremendous amount of construction at Fort Bliss, which will receive an additional 30,000 soldiers and some 40,000 family members. The commander of European Command has requested that the Army activate two heavy brigade combat teams in Germany in 2008 and 2010 to support near-term security needs and allow time for construction in the United States.

INCREASE GROUND FORCES

Increasing the size of the Army and Marine Corps will relieve stress on the force and enable the nation to meet its commitments at home and abroad. This growth in end strength is a continuation of growth that began last year and is expected to continue through fiscal year 2013.

U.S. Army

The fiscal year 2009 base budget provides $15.5 billion to continue to grow the Army. These funds will pay for 7,000 additional soldiers, enabling us to reach the goal of 532,400-person army in the next fiscal year. Approximately $7 billion of this amount will be applied to the cumulative cost for recruiting, training, and paying the force, and $8.5 billion will be applied to equipment, infrastructure, and military construction. The Army request includes the cumulative cost of personnel added as part of a temporary increase in end strength after September 11, 2001—an increase which had previously been paid for in supplemental appropriations.

I am concerned that the percentage of new Army recruits with high school diplomas has declined in recent years, and that the number of waivers has increased. While still within the minimum standards established by Congress, we are watching these numbers closely, and are determined to grow the Army in a way that does not sacrifice the quality we have come to expect in the all-volunteer force.

U.S. Marine Corps

The base budget seeks $5 billion to grow the Marine Corps' end strength to 194,000 in fiscal year 2009. As with the Army, the Marine Corps' request includes the cumulative cost of personnel added after September 11, 2001. The Marine Corps' plans to increase end strength to 202,000, and they are on track to achieve this goal by the end of fiscal year 2009—two years earlier than planned. Such growth will enable the Corps to build three Marine Expeditionary Force units and to increase time at home station between deployments. Thus the Marines will continue to be, as it has been historically, a "two-fisted" expeditionary force that excels at conventional warfare and counter-insurgency.

WAR FUNDING

In addition to the $515.4 billion base budget, the fiscal year 2009 request also includes $70 billion in emergency bridge funding. There is, however, a more immediate concern: Congress has yet to pass the pending $102.5 billion Global War on Terrorism request for fiscal year 2008 and, as a result, the Defense Department is

currently using fourth quarter funds from the base budget to cover current war costs. Shortly, two critical accounts will run dry:

—First, Army military personnel account. After June 15th, we will run out of funds in this account to pay Soldiers—including those currently serving in Afghanistan and Iraq; and

—Second, Operations and Maintenance account. Around July 5th, O&M funds across the Services will run out, starting with the Army. This may result in civilian furloughs, limits on training, and curbing family support activities.

If war funds are not available, the Defense Department can transfer funds from Navy and Air Force military personnel accounts to pay soldiers, but that would get us only to late July. Using the limited Transfer Authority granted by Congress would also help us get to late July. Doing so, however, is a shell game—a temporary one at that—which will disrupt existing programs and push the Services O&M accounts to the edge of fiscal viability.

Beyond the Army personnel account and O&M account, other programs will be adversely impacted if the pending fiscal year 2008 supplemental is not passed soon. Among them, critically, is the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) which, as you may recall, I mentioned during my testimony to you last May. It is the single most effective program to enable commanders to address local populations' needs and get potential insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan off the streets and into jobs. Congress has provided $0.5 billion of our total CERP request of $1.7 billion. Without the balance of $1.2 billion, this vital program will come to a standstill—the Department does not have the authority to extend funding beyond the $977 million in authority provided in the fiscal year 2008 NDAA.

While I understand that you may pass the fiscal year 2008 war funding bill before the Memorial Day recess, I am obligated to plan for the possibility that this may not occur. As I mentioned in a recent letter to Senator Byrd and Senator Cochran, as well as other Congressional leaders, I will keep you informed of these plans in an effort to ensure transparency and minimize possible misunderstandings.

To that end, if the war funding bill is not passed by Memorial Day, the Defense Department will submit reprogramming requests to Congress for their approval on May 27th to prevent the depletion of the Army Military Personnel Account and the Army Operations and Maintenance account. On June 9th, the Deputy Secretary of Defense will issue guidance on furlough planning and Service Secretaries will issue guidance to their commands and workforce.

Delaying the supplemental makes it difficult to manage this Department in a way that is fiscally sound and prudent. To illustrate this point, I have compared the Department of Defense to the world's biggest supertanker. It cannot turn on a dime and cannot be steered like a skiff—and, I would add, it cannot operate without paying its people.

I urge approval of the fiscal year 2008 war funds as quickly as possible.

CONCLUSION

At this, my second and also last opportunity to present a budget before this committee, I thank the members of this Committee for all you have done to support our troops as well as their families. In visits to the combat theaters, in military hospitals, and in bases and posts at home and around the world, I continue to be amazed by their decency, resiliency, and courage. Through the support of the Congress and our nation, these young men and women will prevail in the current conflicts and be prepared to confront the threats that they, their children, and our nation may face in the future.

Senator INOUYE. Admiral Mullen.

STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL MICHAEL G. MULLEN, UNITED STATES NAVY, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Admiral MULLEN. Mr. Chairman, Senator Stevens, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

We are here, as you know, to discuss with you the President's fiscal year 2009 budget submission and more broadly the state of our armed forces. Let me speak for a moment about the latter.

The United States armed forces remain the most powerful, capable military forces on the face of the Earth. No other nation has or can field and put to sea the superb combat capabilities resident

in our Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. This stands as a testament, of course, to the brave and talented men and women who serve, Active, Reserve, Guard, and civilian, as well as their families. They are, as I have said many times before, the finest I have ever seen, and I am privileged and proud to serve alongside them. Each trip to the field, each visit to a base, each bedside I stand beside only reaffirms that fact for me. I know you have also made such visits and can attest to the same, and I thank you for that.

And so I also believe our strength speaks well of the hard work of this subcommittee and the Congress as a whole as it does of the American people who, through you, their elected representatives, continue to invest wisely in their national defense. We are grateful. We will continue to need that support, for however powerful we are today, that power is not assured tomorrow.

That is why the budget the President submitted raises over last year's request an additional $5.7 billion for the readiness accounts, increasing tank miles for the Army, maintaining 45 steaming days for the Navy, and fully funding flying hours for the Air Force. That is why it calls for more than $180 billion for strategic modernization, fully 35 percent of the total request, a figure that includes some $45 billion to upgrade an aging air fleet, nearly $10 billion to field new ground combat vehicles like MRAP, and $14.5 billion to continue to grow the Navy's fleet, as well as a $700 million increase for research and development, the total of which is $11.5 billion.

And that is why it includes funding to complete the stand-up of Africa Command to grow the end strength of the Army and the Marine Corps, to continue development of a robust ballistic missile defense system for Europe, and to improve our cyber security and our ISR capabilities.

I am convinced this budget reveals balance in our vision for the future, a realization that while we must continue to develop irregular warfare skills needed to effectively wage irregular warfare, both today and tomorrow, we must also prepare for, build for, and train for a broad spectrum of warfighting capabilities.

The war in Iraq remains our number one strategic priority, as it should be. We cannot afford, the world cannot afford to have an Iraq unable to govern, defend, or sustain itself in effect and in practice as a failed state. If we get it wrong there, we place an unacceptable risk on our national interests throughout the Middle East. We get it wrong there, and Iran's growing and negative influence, Hezbollah's growing extremism, or al Qaeda's ability to reconstitute itself only intensify and imperil the region that much more.

That is why we have worked so hard to improve our counter-insurgency skills and to adapt, when necessary, to changing conditions. We have attained far too much experience in this type of warfare to ignore the lessons learned or the practicalities of application elsewhere. But even in Iraq, the counter-insurgency fight is not all of a classic small-war flavor. We hit the enemy with precision raids on the ground, with precision strikes from the air, and even in his lairs in cyberspace. We help protect Iraqi oil flow with our ships at sea. We bolster diplomatic efforts with a strong and vibrant military presence.

We are doing well in Iraq as a result of such choices including, I might add, the choices of the Iraqi leadership who are now taking a much more assertive role in both military and civil affairs. We saw that in Basra recently. We are seeing it today in Sadr City and Iraqi security forces are leading in many areas in our current fight in Mosul. I am encouraged, but we are far from done.

And we are trying, in concert with our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, to achieve similar progress in Afghanistan where fresh violence in the south, the burgeoning poppy trade, and an increasingly unstable and ungoverned border with Pakistan all tear at the very fragile seams of security. It is hard work and it is tenuous at best, all the more reason we so desperately need the supplemental finding still being considered by the Congress.

I am especially concerned about the availability of funds under the commander's emergency response program (CERP), authority for which expires next month. CERP has proven in most cases more valuable and perhaps more rapid than bullets or bombs in the fight against extremism delivering, as it does, to local officials the money they need to deliver in turn the civil improvements their citizens need. As one young American in Afghanistan put it—and I quote—"CERP is small scale, but quick impact." Without these funds, without the supplemental, our ability to have this sort of impact will suffer, and in fact, we are beginning to suffer now. Again, our progress is tenuous.

But tenuous too are the long-term risks we take to our security commitments elsewhere if we focus too heavily on one discipline at the expense of all others if we prove unable to free up more ground forces or if we fail to properly address the toll being taken by current operations on our equipment, our people, and their families.

The President's decision to reduce to 12 months all active Army tour lengths to the Central Command region is both welcome and necessary. But we must create even longer dwell times at home as soon as possible and pursue the various family support and employment initiatives that have been outlined in the President's State of the Union address. I was with families of deployed soldiers in Germany last week. They are trusting.

And allow me to add here just how gratified I am to see the debate and discussion in these halls over a revised GI bill which will increase educational benefits for our troops and grant transferability of those benefits to military dependents. It is wanted and it is needed. It will go a long way to improve the quality of life for our people and their families as did, quite frankly, the Wounded Warrior legislation Congress passed last year.

I am pleased that this budget too allocates more than $41 billion for world-class care and quality of life, but too many of our returning warriors still suffer in silence and in fear of the stigma attached to their mental health issues. We must now turn our attention to better identifying the wounds of war we do not see and to treating the trauma and stress we do not fully understand.

Finally, the growth of the Army and Marine Corps will, over coming years, provide much needed flexibility in engagement and in crisis response, and we must set about the task of restoring some of the more conventional and expeditionary capabilities these services will require in the dangerous and uncertain years ahead.

There are young marines who have never deployed aboard a Navy ship, and there are Army officers who have not spent any time on their specialty of providing artillery fire support. These sort of gaps in professional expertise cannot persist particularly at a time when we are being called upon to stay better engaged around the globe, building our partner's capacity for such work, improving international and interagency cooperation, and fostering both security and stability.

The State Department and the Defense Department have asked for such authorities in the Building Global Partnerships Act, which I strongly urge the Congress to enact. At its core, this act will help us solve problems before they become crises and help us contain crises before they become conflicts.

And as I said, the business of war is all about choices. Military leaders must make hard decisions every day, choices that affect the outcome of major battles, whole nations, and the lives of potentially millions of people, choices which ensure the instruments of American military power are adequate to their purpose and responsibility.

PREPARED STATEMENT

As we head into the latter one-half of this year with better and more continuous assessments of our progress in Iraq, a new push in Afghanistan, and a continued fight against violent extremists, as we consider the depth and the breadth of combat capabilities we must improve, please know that I and the Joint Chiefs remain committed to making informed choices, careful choices, and choices which preserve at all times and in all ways our ability to defend the American people.

Thank you, Chairman. I look forward to your questions.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL MICHAEL G. MULLEN

Chairman Inouye, Senator Stevens, distinguished members of the committee, I am privileged to appear before you and report to you on the posture of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Let me begin by recognizing and thanking our Service members and their families. The brave men and women who answer the noble call to defend our Nation and the spouses, children and parents who support them are our most valuable national asset.

Your Armed Forces, and their families, have faced the challenges of continuous combat for more than six years. Our men and women in uniform serve our Nation, accepting unwelcome separation from their loved ones, long hard work under difficult circumstances, and in some cases making the ultimate sacrifice.

Military families are equally deserving of our gratitude. They bear the brunt of the loneliness, the uncertainty, and the grief that too often comes home when our Armed Forces are at war. Acknowledging the importance of their support, we must consider new initiatives such as transferring GI bill benefits to military spouses and children, military spouse employment support, expanded childcare and youth programs, and long-term comprehensive support of Wounded Warrior families.

We must provide our Service members and their families with the leadership, the resources and the support required to defend the homeland, win the Long War, promote security, deter conflict, and win our Nation's wars.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past year your Armed Forces have done much to improve the security environment. Operating globally alongside allies and partners, often in concert with the interagency and non-governmental organizations, they have successfully protected our Nation's vital interests: a homeland secure from catastrophic attack, as-

sured access to strategic resources, a strong national and global economy, sustained military superiority and strategic endurance, and sustained global influence, leadership, and freedom of action.

A diverse set of perils threaten those interests and demand sustained action. Those threats include the proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology, transnational terrorism and rising regional instability. Today, these challenges manifest themselves most clearly in the Middle East.

We face additional challenges in other areas: a number of state actors who appear intent on undermining U.S. interests and regional stability, a growing global competition for scarce natural resources, the constant threat of natural disasters and pandemics, as well as increasing cyber and Space threats. Our military is capable of responding to all threats to our vital national interests, but is significantly stressed while conducting combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and other operations worldwide as part of this multigenerational conflict against violent extremism. A decline in our strength or a gap in readiness will undermine the U.S. Armed Forces capability to complete its range of missions from combat overseas to providing civil support at home. That is why I believe we must reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our Armed Forces while balancing global risk.

We do not—and should not—face these challenges alone. Today, more nations are free, peaceful, and prosperous than at almost any point in history. While each has its own heritage and interests, most share our desire for security and stability. Increasing free trade, regional security partnerships, treaties, international institutions, and military-to-military engagements and capacity building strengthen the bonds between us and other nations. Our engagement with allies and friends demonstrates our leadership and resolve to fulfill security commitments, and works toward the common good. Most often, it is by taking collective action—and not going it alone—that we increase our ability to protect our vital interests.

With this context in mind, and in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, I have set three strategic priorities for our military. First, we need to increase stability and defend our vital national interests in the broader Middle East. Second, we must reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our Armed Forces. Third, we need to deter conflict and be prepared to defeat foes globally by rebalancing our strategic risk. Finally, to achieve our objectives in each of these areas we need to place increased emphasis not only on development of our own capabilities and the capacity of other agencies (State, USAID, Agriculture, Treasury, and Commerce and so forth), but also on building the capacity of our foreign partners to counter threats including terrorism and to promote regional stability.

DEFEND OUR VITAL NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE BROADER MIDDLE EAST

Although our vital national interests are clearly global in nature, the broader Middle East is the epicenter of violent extremism. Too many countries suffer from burgeoning populations and stagnant economies, which have increased radicalization. State and non-state actors alike foment instability. Terrorists and insurgents are at war with governments in the region. The confrontational posture of Iranian leaders with respect to nuclear proliferation, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Sunni-Shia rivalries, the threat of terrorism, tensions in Pakistan, Hezbollah in Lebanon, political instability in the Maghreb, and the existence of Al-Qaeda and like-minded groups, all threaten regional stability and, ultimately, our vital national interests.

My near-term focus remains combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The surge of U.S. forces to Iraq, a well executed counter-insurgency strategy and an Iraqi population increasingly weary of violence, and willing to do something about it, have all combined to improve security conditions throughout much of the country. Violent activities against our forces and against the Iraqi people have substantially decreased. These reductions have come about because of the hard work of Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces and the decisions of the Iraqi people and their leaders. Insurgent activity is down and Al Qaeda in Iraq is on the run—although both remain dangerous. Much hard fighting remains for Iraqi and Coalition forces before the job is done. Increased security has promoted reconciliation in some key provinces and the beginnings of national level reconciliation. We are working to secure a long-term security relationship with Iraq that will serve the mutual interests of both countries. As we continue to progress forward, Congressional support of future war funding will remain critical to success. An important component of that funding will go to building the capacity of increasingly capable Iraqi security forces.

Security is a necessary condition but is not sufficient for achieving our strategic end-state in Iraq. Political, diplomatic and economic development together with expanded governance and the rule of law form the foundations that will underpin long

term stability and security in Iraq. We are making solid progress, but we still have a long way to go. I ask that Congress continue its support for increased interagency participation in Provincial Reconstruction Teams, stability and reconstruction initiatives, U.S. business investment, DOD business transformation efforts, and good governance initiatives. I encourage your continued emphasis on the importance of achieving political and economic goals. Your visits with the Iraqi government and other Iraqi political leaders support the efforts of American, Coalition, and Iraqi forces.

In Afghanistan we are seeing a growing insurgency, increasing violence, and a burgeoning drug trade fueled by widespread poppy cultivation. In response, more U.S. forces will deploy to Afghanistan. At the same time, the Afghan National Army and Police have increased in numbers and capability. The Afghan Provincial Reconstruction Teams continue to aid the local populations, and President Hamid Karzai is reaching out to support the provinces. In the U.S. section of RC East, access to basic health care has more than doubled and provincial councils have become functioning entities active in development. NATO forces provide a credible fighting force, but the alliance still faces difficulty meeting its force level commitments and some nations' forces in theater must be more operationally flexible. These challenges emphasize the importance of retaining U.S. freedom of action on a global scale. Just as in Iraq, your continued support for funding U.S. operations and efforts there, including PRTs, Afghanistan National Security Force development, and infrastructure development, is needed.

In short, a stable Iraq and Afghanistan that are long-term partners and share our commitment to peace will be critical to achieving regional stability and security. This will require years, not months, and will require the support of the American people, our regional allies, and concerted action by the Iraqi and Afghan people and their leaders.

I see daily reminders of other challenges in this part of the world. Continued irresponsible actions by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps directly jeopardize Iraqi and Coalition forces and undermine the Iraqi people's desire for peace. Restraint in our response does not signal lack of resolve or capability to defend ourselves against threats. Much more worrisome in the long term, however, is Iran's hegemonic intent, their continued refusal to verifiably suspend uranium enrichment, their continued support of terrorism and the resultant instability these actions foster throughout the region.

Al Qaeda safe havens in the under-governed regions of Pakistan also contribute to regional instability. In my judgment, the most likely near term attack on the United States will come from Al Qaeda via these safe havens. Continued Congressional support for the legitimate government of Pakistan braces this bulwark in the long war against violent extremism.

Despite—or maybe because of—these diverse challenges, we are fortunate to enjoy the cooperation of many courageous partner nations in the region. A recent regional commitment to work toward an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord is one example. We should not inadvertently signal ingratitude toward any of these nations. Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) are programs that have the potential to have significant strategic repercussions. I therefore seek Congressional support to ensure the Department of State's FMF and IMET programs remain fully funded.

After three visits to the Middle East since becoming Chairman, I am more convinced than ever that we will not achieve regional security and stability unless we strengthen all instruments of international cooperation, regional partnerships, and national power. We need to ensure our plans sustain current gains and chart a course that both capitalize on lessons learned while focusing on future demands and dynamic conditions on the ground. Our forces must remain in theater as long as necessary to secure our vital interests and those of our partner nations, and they must operate with the full confidence and support of the American people and the Congress.

RESET, RECONSTITUTE, AND REVITALIZE OUR FORCES

To be successful in defeating our enemies and deterring potential foes, U.S. Armed Forces require talented people who are fully trained in their specialties and well equipped with warfighting systems. The pace of ongoing operations has prevented our forces from fully training for the full-spectrum of operations and impacts our ability to be ready to counter future threats. This lack of balance is unsustainable in the long-term. We must restore the balance and strategic depth required for national security. Continued operations without the requisite increase in national resources will further degrade our equipment, platforms and people.

Our Nation's servicemen and women—and their families—are the primary focus of my efforts to reset, reconstitute, and revitalize our forces. Caring for them is a critical consideration in every decision I make. Our All-Volunteer Force continues to meet the requirements and demands of national security, but with great sacrifice. This is the longest time that our All-Volunteer Force has been at war. Our Service members, in particular our ground forces and their families, are under significant strain. However, they remain dedicated, they are resilient and combat hardened, and they are taking the fight to our enemies. I do not take their service for granted and recognize that their resilience has limits. I am extremely concerned about the toll the current pace of operations is taking on them and on their families, on our equipment, and on our ability to respond to crises and contingencies beyond ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

On April 10, 2008, the President directed the Secretary of Defense to reduce deployment lengths from fifteen months to twelve months for Army units deployed to the Central Command area of operations beginning on August 1, 2008. Upon implementation, deployment cycles will go to twelve months deployed/twelve months home for the Army while remaining at seven months deployed/seven months home for the Marines and one year mobilization with five years back for the National Guard and Reserves. To preserve personal, operational, and family readiness, we must shift the Army's deployment cycle as quickly as possible to twelve months deployed followed by twenty-four months at home. We must do the same for the Marine Corps by moving to fourteen months at home for each seven month deployment. Therefore, the most important investment in the President's fiscal year 2009 budget is the commitment to expand our Army, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces. This continuation of the "Grow the Force" initiative is a long-term plan to restore the broad range of capabilities necessary to meet future challenges and restore a capacity for sustained action. This commitment encompasses nearly 33 percent of the total real growth of the DOD budget from fiscal year 2008 to 2009.

Recruiters have a tough job during peacetime and it is made even more difficult now given the expansion of both the Army and the Marine Corps and the decrease in the propensity of key influencers to encourage potential recruits to enlist during this period of war. In spite of these challenges, our recruiters are doing exceptional work. The military departments met their recruiting goals for fiscal year 2007 and remain on track for fiscal year 2008. We are also making sure we retain the people and the skills we need. The Services are using the full range of authorities given to them by Congress in the form of retention incentives, and I ask your continued support for these programs to sustain our combat-experienced force. Last year, the Army and Navy employed the Critical Skills Retention Bonus to retain mid-career active duty officers who fill key positions. Likewise, the Services have offered bonuses to senior enlisted members of our Special Operations Forces. Investment in our people as our most important resource is vital. The cost of people continues to grow and we need to recognize this as we debate the right level of investment in defense.

Retention challenges impact more than just our active duty forces. Though they met their recruiting and retention goals this last year, the Army Reserve and National Guard have experienced some shortages in company grade officers and mid-grade non-commissioned officers who lead our troops. We are overcoming these personnel shortfalls through enhanced incentives for Reserve and National Guard service, flexibility in terms of service requirements, competitive pay, and enhanced retirement benefits. These initiatives are important steps towards transitioning the Reserve Components from a "strategic reserve" role to part of the "operational reserve," creating the depth and staying power to respond to multiple global requirements, and maintaining our professional Guard and Reserve force.

Maintaining our professional Armed Forces, however, takes more than talented recruiters, attractive incentives, and competitive pay. We must understand our next generation of Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen. Their affinity for technology and collaboration may revolutionize the way we fight. The willingness of future generations of Americans to serve is directly related to how they, and their role models, perceive the veterans of today are treated and appreciated. The All-Volunteer Force depends upon the trust and confidence of the American people in our institution; it depends on trust and confidence in our leaders; and, it depends upon trust and confidence that America's sons and daughters will be well-trained, well-equipped, and well-cared for in peace and in war.

While all our service members and their families have done their duty with great discipline and honor, one group in particular stands out: our returning Wounded Warriors and the parents, spouses and family members who care for them when they come home. As a Nation, we have an obligation to care for those who have borne the battle and who bear both the seen and unseen scars of war. Their sac-

rifices will not end following completion of their initial treatment. We should strive to provide only the finest medical and rehabilitative care for them and their families for the remainder of their lives.

As leaders, we must ensure all our Wounded Warriors and their families receive the appropriate level of care, training, and financial support they need to become as self-sufficient and lead as normal a life as possible. Our support can mean the difference not just between life and death, but between a life of severe disability and one of manageable limitations. To the degree that we fail to care for them and their families, and enable their return to as normal a life as possible, we undermine the trust and confidence of the American people and ultimately put at risk the preservation of our professional All-Volunteer Force.

It is also imperative that we retain the experience of our combat hardened leaders. We live in a dangerous and unpredictable world and in a time of incredible change. I believe this change will accelerate, not slow down. Today's combat veterans are the ones that will take our military into the future. Their experience in fighting terrorists and insurgents as well as caring for those wounded on the fields of battle will enable us to better prepare for the challenges of tomorrow, but we cannot afford to lose their hard earned experience today.

In addition to taking care of our people, we must repair, rebuild, and replace the equipment that has been destroyed, damaged, stressed, and worn out beyond economic repair after years of combat operations. As you are well aware, Service equipment has been used at higher rates and in harsher conditions than anticipated. In addition to the wear and tear experienced by our ground vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan, our airframes and ships are aging beyond their intended service lives. Indeed since Desert Storm, seventeen years ago, the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy have flown near continuous combat missions over the Middle East and the Balkans. The impact of this usage is illustrated in the groundings of the oldest F–15 Eagle fighters, our repeated request to retire some of our C–130 Hercules and KC–135 Stratotankers, and the strains placed on our twenty-nine year old P–3 Orion reconnaissance aircraft.

Despite usage levels sometimes five to six times above peacetime rates, and in the midst of extremely demanding environments, equipment readiness in theater remains high, well above the peacetime goals. Your support has been helpful in accomplishing this mark. However, this high in-theater equipment readiness comes with a price—namely the impact on the remainder of the Service equipment. For example, our ground forces borrow equipment from non-deploying units in order to equip deploying units. While our deploying units are fully resourced to meet the challenges of the fight that they are in, we must get ahead of this challenge.

Our forces are relying upon the balance of funds requested in the fiscal year 2008 Global War on Terror request to accomplish equipment reset and to address readiness shortfalls. I urge the Congress to quickly appropriate the remaining GWOT request for fiscal year 2008, as it is essential to have continued, predictable, and adequate funding for the repair and replacement of both operational and training equipment. I also ask for your continued support for our upcoming fiscal year 2009 Global War on Terror funding request.

Revitalization includes force recapitalization, modernization, transformation, restationing, and repositioning, along with personnel and family support programs. A revitalized force creates a vital deterrent effect. Preventing future wars is as important as winning wars. Such prevention requires global presence and persistent engagement. A revitalized force provides the means to expand cooperative relationships with other nations and contribute to a global capacity to promote security and stability for the benefit of all. A revitalized force will also ensure that we remain prepared to meet our global responsibilities.

Finally, a revitalized force is central to balancing global strategic risk. A revitalized force is a balanced total joint force, capable of operating across the spectrum of conflict. A balanced force possesses the capability and capacity to successfully conduct multiple simultaneous missions, in all domains, and at the required levels of organization, across the full range of military operations. A modernized, balanced total joint force is necessary if we are to successfully answer enduring and emerging challenges, and win our Nation's wars.

PROPERLY BALANCED GLOBAL STRATEGIC RISK

Beyond the Middle East, and in addition to revitalizing our forces, we must take a worldwide and long term view of our posture and its implications for global strategic risk. We have global security responsibilities across the range of military operations. The challenges in Asia to the vital interests of the United States and our allies are an example.

We must be sized, shaped, and postured globally to leverage the opportunities for international cooperation and build the capacity of partners for stability, while at the same time, deterring, confronting and preparing for profound dangers of the future. I am concerned, as are the Combatant Commanders, that we do not have sufficient resources to meet all the needs. By working with other growing powers, and by helping emerging powers become constructive actors, we can ensure today's dynamic environment does not devolve into a prolonged state of conflict and disorder.

The imbalance between our readiness for future global missions and the wars we are fighting today limits our capacity to respond to future contingencies, and offers potential adversaries, both state and non-state, incentives to act. We must not allow the challenges of today to keep us from being prepared for the realities of tomorrow. There is risk that we will be unable to rapidly respond to future threats to our vital national interests.

Funding by the Congress is critical to restoring balance in the long term. But resources alone are not enough. We must think more creatively, more deeply, and more systematically about how to best use our resources. We have learned a great deal about how to leverage modern technology and interagency participation to counter terrorism—those lessons can be shared with our partner nations, and applied to other security threats such as our Nation's counter narcotics efforts. Similarly, our new maritime strategy emphasizes the importance of leveraging other nation's capabilities. The growing interdependency of the community of nations will continue to offer similar opportunities. I support the United States' accession to the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention, and I believe that joining the Convention will strengthen our military's ability to conduct operations.

Our enduring alliances and partnerships promote stability and security. The twenty-six nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization leads the effort to help extend security and stability inside Afghanistan. Australia and Japan have also made key contributions to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Another key ally, the Republic of Korea, has supported Operation Iraqi Freedom for the past three years—and continues to maintain a robust national commitment to security in Northeast Asia. Singapore and the Philippines work with us to counter international terrorist threats in Southeast Asia. Colombia's highly successful counterinsurgency struggle promotes stability in a critical region of South America. Our military to military relationships with Mexico and Canada are laying the ground work for greater Homeland Security. Enhancing our teamwork with our allies and partners is essential if we are to protect our shared interests.

Persistent engagement and capacity building with allies and international partners is a key means of properly balancing global strategic risk. Persistent engagement consists of those cooperative activities that build partner capacity, provide humanitarian assistance, counter common threats, and safeguard the global commons. As I noted earlier, we need to fully fund our Foreign Military Finance and International Military Education and Training programs and streamline the process for executing these and similar funds. Fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships with friends around the world contributes significantly to our shared security and global prosperity. Relationships take time to grow—and they require investment to stay strong.

In many cases, other countries have significant competencies, relationships, and resources that can promote security and stability. One way to build relationships with other nations is to help them accomplish the goals they cannot achieve alone. Helping other nations overcome security problems within their borders by increasing stability and eliminating terrorist safe havens bolsters our security as it boosts theirs. Our Theater Security Cooperation programs also form a foundation for shared and interoperable response to contingencies. Regional Combatant Commands—such as U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Southern Command, and U.S. Africa Command—are being structured with interagency and international relationships in mind to boost our security and humanitarian assistance capabilities, and to foster long-term U.S. military relationships with regional nations and security institutions.

Legislation that increases the expeditionary capacity of civilian U.S. government agencies is critical to rebalancing global strategic risk. Increasing the ability of the U.S. government, as a whole, to deal with crises reduces the strain on our military forces. We need to empower the State Department to help other countries prevent and recover from conflict. I also fully endorse increased support for our intelligence agencies' global activities—upon which our Armed Forces depend. We additionally need to look at increasing the capacity of other U.S. government agencies—such as the Justice and Agriculture Departments, which are otherwise oriented on domestic missions—to help contribute civil expertise that the military lacks in stabilization and capacity building missions overseas.

Rebalancing strategic risk also means addressing capability gaps. The technology advantage that we have long enjoyed has eroded, with significant ramifications. Interruption of our access to cyberspace could substantively damage our national defense and civil society. Addressing this threat, the President's budget for fiscal year 2009 includes funds to reduce our cyber vulnerabilities. Likewise, freedom of action in Space is vital to our economic, civil, and military well being. We need to increase our capacity to defend our access to that domain. We must also address shortfalls identified by our Combatant Commanders in our Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance sensors and processing infrastructure.

Fighting and winning wars is the main mission, but deterring them is always preferable. This is even more the case in deterring nuclear threats. We now face the prospect that nuclear weapons will be employed against us and our allies by non-state actors and rogue states. To defend our Nation and assure our allies, we must enhance our capability to rapidly locate and destroy targets globally. We seek to improve conventional prompt global strike capability, further develop global missile defense systems, and modernize our strategic weapons systems and infrastructure, to include developing a Reliable Replacement Warhead and a conventional ballistic missile. These components of our "New Triad," together with improved intelligence and planning systems, will help to ensure credible deterrence across a range of threats in the twenty-first century strategic environment.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY

Building partnership capacity underpins all three of my strategic objectives and is an area that requires additional Congressional support. Unfortunately, there are serious shortfalls in the U.S. Government's ability to build the capacity of foreign partners—both within and outside DOD. The Department of Defense conducted a systematic review of gaps in authority and developed an omnibus bill called the Building Global Partnerships Act which was personally brokered by the Secretary of Defense with the support of the Secretary of State. I strongly urge Congress to enact all of these authorities.

Foremost, DOD requires extension and expansion of its Global Train and Equip authority. Every single combatant commander cites this as DOD's most important authority to counter terrorism and to promote regional stability by building the capacity of partner military forces. These programs will not get funded or executed properly unless DOD funds them and collaborates with State on implementation. Over the past three years, all Combatant Commanders, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commandant of the Coast Guard, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of State have requested extension, expansion, and funding for these programs. Now is the time to make Global Train and Equip authority permanent, to increase the ceiling, and to provide annual baseline funding.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program has been enormously successful in Iraq and Afghanistan, and other Combatant Commanders have requested this same authority to enhance prospects for mission success in other regions of the world. Our commanders in the field view this as a critical force protection tool that allows them to shape the operational environment so force is not required.

Building the security capacity of our partners is important, but partners often need additional assistance to promote stability. Stabilization and reconstruction assistance authority allows DOD to transfer funds to the Department of State to provide assistance to aid foreign police forces, to improve governance, rule of law, economic development or essential services, and for humanitarian assistance. Stabilization and reconstruction assistance authority recently allowed DOD and State to enhance stability in Haiti, Somalia, Nepal, Trans- Saharan Africa, Yemen, and Southeast Asia.

We are in a new national security era that requires building new institutional capacity that does not currently exist. Most authorities to provide other broader forms of assistance reside at the Department of State, where patriotic foreign service officers and development professionals are doing everything they can with the force they have. But that force is woefully small relative to need. I support Secretary Rice's request for the Civilian Stabilization Initiative and ask Congress to enact quickly legislation authorizing its creation. I also strongly support the significant plus-up in people that the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development are seeking in the President's 2009 budget as well as its request for increased foreign assistance funding. The increases that Secretary Rice is seeking in 2009 are crucial to supporting our foreign policy goals; under-funding these activities undermines our national security. Personally, I would also support the reconstitution of the U.S. Information Agency or an equivalent functional entity to more effectively counter extremist ideology. Finally, I appreciate the Congress' direction

to study the national security interagency system, and will strongly support that effort.

CONCLUSION

The past year saw America's men and women in uniform continue to engage in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, while they also provided humanitarian assistance, worked with partner nations, and stood guard around the globe. Our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and our Nation's Coast Guardsmen are making a positive difference. They do so willingly and unflinchingly. Their valor and dedication are inspiring and they serve this nation superbly. It is an honor to serve alongside them and my most solemn responsibility to represent them.

The American Armed Forces have evolved throughout our Nation's history. During the nineteenth century, while our country was an emerging power, the norm for our military included service at either small army posts on the Nation's Western frontier or single ship patrols off whaling stations in the Pacific. Throughout the twentieth century, our military fought—and deterred—large scale conflicts against powerful competitor nation-states, or their proxies, around the world. Today and for the foreseeable future, we are embarked on something new.

Our military challenge is to protect and preserve the American way of life by promoting greater global security, stability, and trust—building up the strength of our friends, defeating violent extremists, and deterring regional conflicts. Our strategic environment requires that we have a force that is ready for operations across the range of military missions.

We have yet to fully institutionalize the lessons learned particularly as it applies to building the capacity of partners and reforming the interagency. America has undertaken a staggering array of tasks in the past six years: securing the homeland, fighting global terrorism, applying a new counterinsurgency doctrine, expanding governance and rebuilding armed forces in shattered countries, and increasing our capability and capacity to assist other nations through a variety of material aid programs and expeditionary teams. All of these efforts have seen successes and setbacks. They have come at considerable cost to our Nation's sons and daughters, and to the treasure of the American people. We must do more than just document our lessons learned. We must accept that the future will likely require sustained engagement and continued operations that will focus on interagency and international participation. We must go beyond pondering and push to embed these lessons into a truly reformed interagency. We need continued Congressional support to make this imperative a reality.

As for your Armed Forces, we need a total, joint, expeditionary force that is suited to irregular warfare against asymmetric threats as well as supporting civil authorities at home and abroad. We also need a large-scale total force capable of major combat operations against traditional nation-state foes. We cannot do it alone; our forces must be part of a more encompassing team that includes other federal departments and partner nations. We must also recognize building international and interagency capability will take time. In the interim, our superb military men and women, and their families, will fill the leadership role demanded of them.

All this takes sustained, robust investment and partnership. With your continuing help, our military will be ready for the challenges and opportunities ahead. Thank you for your unwavering support in time of war.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to advise the subcommittee that because of time limitations, all members will have 8 minutes for questioning.

Senator Stevens.

Senator STEVENS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Mullen, the Secretary has mentioned that the CERP funding, if my memory is correct, it was this subcommittee that started that with a very small amount for each commander. Now it is over $1 billion. Can you give us some idea what the scope of the projects is now in terms of how this money is handled? We thought it would be just a local commander, a platoon leader, et cetera. Now it looks like it is a fairly large concept.

Admiral MULLEN. Senator Stevens, I think the growth in the request is tied directly to the improvements in security, and so in the counter-insurgency strategy, when an area is provided more secu-

rity with a joint security station—in fact, young captains are given certain amounts of cash to then essentially build projects, restart markets, build schools, and do it very, very rapidly. What CERP really provides—and in fact, I now see requests coming in from other combatant commanders—it provides very rapid response not just on top of the improved security, but in order to improve and, in fact, create projects that help a village or a town or a city improve, as well as provide salaries to local—what we call them in Iraq—Sons of Iraq, some 100,000 to 105,000 who are now providing their local security. And we have seen it grow from very small amounts and distributed over very wide areas. So the more security that is established, this has become essentially, as I indicated, the ammunition for success throughout Iraq where security has improved.

Senator STEVENS. Well, I think at another time, perhaps you ought to go into this because it does seem these projects have gotten larger and are really rebuilding damage in the war zone. Are there any guidelines regarding how much a commander can spend? Are there any guidelines as to how much he has to go to a senior officer before he spends over a certain amount?

Admiral MULLEN. Yes, sir. My experience in the field is it is allocated down again to the 2003 level and that captain in a certain area has a certain amount of cash to spend during a given quarter. And it is very carefully monitored. And I would differentiate where it goes in terms of projects versus reconstruction projects, which it is not allocated to.

Senator STEVENS. It boggles my mind a little bit to have it trickling down, $1.3 billion down to captains who are getting maybe $200 or $300. I do not follow that. This fund is building up and up and up. I think we ought to have a special hearing on it one of these days.

Admiral MULLEN. Sir, I would be more than happy to go through it in detail with you.

TROOP DEPLOYMENT AND DWELL TIMES

Senator STEVENS. Secretary Gates, I want to be short here because I want everyone to have a chance today. The concept of limiting deployments and dwell times—both of you have mentioned those now. When are we going to have certainty that they will not be changed for the next period? How many years will the current practice that has been announced of 1 year deployments and then what is it? 18 months at home? Whatever that time is, is this guaranteed for our troops or can it be changed?

Secretary GATES. Senator Stevens, beginning with the units that deploy on the 1st of August, the deployment period will be 12 months maximum, initially at least, for most units probably 12 months at home. With the growth in the Army, particularly with the size of the Army and the Marine Corps, our objective is to get to 1 year deployed, 2 years at home. I think the statistics work out this way—that we will begin to get beyond 1 year at home sometime during the course of calendar year 2009. Our hope with the guard is 1 year deployed 4 or 5 years at home. And we hope to begin moving in that direction in fiscal year 2009 as well.

I think that one of the surest guarantees that we will be able to hold to this trend of longer periods at home and shorter periods deployed, the 12 months deployed, is in fact the growth of the Army and the Marine Corps. I would say also that I would expect that further reductions in the presence in Iraq during the course of 2009 and perhaps later this year will also contribute significantly to meeting those goals.

Senator STEVENS. Just one clarification. When you say 12 months deployment and then 12 months at home, does home mean leaving the United States? We have people from Alaska who are sent maybe to Louisiana and join up in a unit there. Is it 12 months from the time they are deployed as the larger unit from Louisiana?

Secretary GATES. For a Guard unit, it would be from the day they are mobilized they will have 1 year on active duty. For the active service, it is a year back at home, a year deployed overseas.

Senator STEVENS. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Appreciate it.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you.

Senator Specter.

DIALOGUE WITH IRAN

Senator SPECTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Gates, we have seen that President Reagan identified the Soviet Union as the evil empire and shortly thereafter engaged in direct bilateral negotiations and very, very successfully. As noted before, we have seen President Bush authorize bilateral talks with North Korea as well as multilateral talks which have produced results. It is noted with Libya and Gaddafi the talks have produced very positive results. I note that there have been three rounds of bilateral talks where United States Ambassador Crocker has had direct contact with Iranian Ambassador Kazemi-Qomi. So we are not really saying in practice that we will not talk to them. The question is to what extent will we talk.

I am very much encouraged, Mr. Secretary, by the statement you made on May 14 of this year that we need to figure out a way to develop some leverage and then sit down and talk with them. If there is to be a discussion, then they need something too. We cannot go to a discussion and be completely the demander with them not feeling that they need anything from us.

Now, the position taken by the Secretary of State has been we will not talk to Iran unless, as a precondition, they stop enriching uranium. It seems to me that it is unrealistic to try to have discussions, but to say to the opposite party, as a precondition to discussions, we want the principal concession that we are after. Do you think it makes sense to insist on a concession like stopping enriching uranium, which is what our ultimate objective is, before we even sit down and talk to them on a broader range of issues?

Secretary GATES. Well, Senator, I am not going to disagree with the Secretary of State.

I would say this, though. In all three of the examples that you used, the United States either developed or had significant leverage when the talks began. President Reagan did not sit down with the Soviet leadership almost entirely through his first term, and

his first meeting with Gorbachev was in November 1985 after the United States had embarked on a major arms buildup and strengthening of the United States' position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

In the case of Libya, Gaddafi wanted to get the sanctions lifted that were a result of Pan Am 103 and the international sanctions that were applied after that.

And the financial sanctions against North Korea created significant leverage that helped prompt them to come to the negotiating table.

So, as I said in the statement that you read, I think the key here is developing leverage either through economic or diplomatic or military pressures on the Iranian Government so that they believe they must have talks with the United States because there is something they want from us, and that is the relief of the pressure.

Senator SPECTER. Mr. Secretary, we had leverage in 2003 when we were successful in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and the record is pretty clear that we wasted an opportunity to respond to their initiatives.

So the question is, how do we find the leverage? How do we find economic, political, or military leverage?

Well, is it not sensible to engage in discussions with somebody to try to find out what it is they are after? We sit apart from them and we speculate and we have all these learned op-ed pieces and speeches made, and we are searching for leverage. But would it not make sense to talk to the Iranians and try to find out what it is that they need as at least one step in the process?

Secretary GATES. Well, Senator, I was involved in the very first contacts between the United States and the Islamic Revolutionary government of Iran in October 1979. And what has happened in Iran since then is—most revolutions tend to lose their sharp edge over time. It is one of the reasons that Mao launched the cultural revolution in the 1960's because he saw that happening in China. We saw that beginning to happen with the Khatami government when Khatami was president of Iran, and I think it was one of the things that created perhaps an opportunity that may or may not have been lost in 2003–2004.

But what we have now is a resurgence of the original hard-line views of the Islamic revolutionaries with the accession to power of President Ahmadinejad who was one of the students who occupied our embassy in November 1979. And I might add that happened 2 weeks after the first talks between the United States and the Iranian Government in Algiers where I was a participant.

So the question is, do you have the kind of government in Iran now with whom there can be productive discussions on substantive issues? And I think that is an open question because this is a different kind of government.

Senator SPECTER. So what is the answer? We only have one government to deal with.

Let me put it to you very bluntly, Mr. Secretary. Is President Bush correct when he says that it is appeasement to talk to Iran?

Secretary GATES. Well, I do not know exactly what the President said. I believe he said that it was appeasement to talk to terrorists, to negotiate with terrorists.

Senator SPECTER. Well, he said on April 24—in a May 15 address to the members of the Knesset said, "Some seem to believe that we should negotiate with terrorists and radicals." He does not say specifically Iran, but I think the inference is unmistakable in light of the entire policy of the administration.

I have 12 seconds left, Mr. Secretary, and let me thank you for your service. Let me note our personal relationship. We went to the same grade school, College Hill in Wichita, Kansas.

And let me commend you for what I think is a very forthright statement you made, really gutsy. And I know you do not want to disagree with the Secretary of State, and I know you do not want to even more disagree with the President. And I have had an opportunity to talk to the President about it directly. And I believe he needs to hear more from people like you than from people like me, but from both of us, and that is it not appeasement and that the analogy to Neville Chamberlain is wrong.

We have only got one government to deal with there. They were receptive in 2003. I have had a chance to talk to the last three Iranian ambassadors to the United Nations, and I think there is an opportunity for dialogue. But I think we have to be a little courageous about it and take a chance because the alternatives are very, very, very bleak. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INOUYE. Senator Bond.

TACAIR AND JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

Senator BOND. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Mullen, I was most interested in your discussion about CERP and its successes. We would like to know more about the fiscal accountability, but from what I have seen, it has made some tremendous successes. I think certainly in my mind there is no question about the viability of it.

I would also call to your attention again and my colleagues' the fact that in Afghanistan we have National Guard units serving as agriculture redevelopment teams and helping bring what has been sometimes referred to as 18th century agriculture up almost to modern day and training the trainers. These ag units have 10 extension specialists and about 25 guardsmen, who are their military protectors, who also happen to be very skilled agriculturalists. We call them "farm boys" back home. But I note that a number of States are pursuing it, and I commend you. I think this is a tremendous way to help Afghan farmers and, thus, Afghanistan get back on track.

Now for the tougher questions. Mr. Secretary and Mr. Chairman, I am very much concerned about the Air Force's TACAIR program. Their fifth generation acquisition strategy is going to lead to tremendous gaps in the force structure, and it fails to address the impact on the industrial base. The Air Force has testified that there will be an 800 aircraft shortfall. We are falling way behind.

TACAIR

I could not believe that when the bids were taken for the Joint Strike Fighter, it was not a split bid. I told everybody that it made no sense to give the entire TACAIR production to one company. It

has been demonstrated that that warning, unfortunately, was correct, and right now the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has reported that the F–35 costs are to hit $1 trillion. That is trillion with a T. We also will see the only competing TAC airline shut down in 2013. If we do not do something about developing a plan B for the Air Force, such as the Navy has adopted, we are going to see not enough aircraft for fully equipping the active or the Air National Guard. They are not going to have the aircraft. And it seems to me that it is time for the Defense Department and the Air Force to come up with a plan to keep upgraded legacy aircraft in production so that our fine pilots will have something to fly.

What is being done about this gap? The Air Force has not been able to tell us.

Admiral MULLEN. I certainly, Senator Bond, share your concern about the tactical air community at large. Clearly, the new airplane that is planned on to relieve that is going to be the Joint Strike Fighter. It is a brand new program. It is actually done fairly well on schedule. As with all new programs, there have been challenges and will continue to be. Clearly, the investment on the Navy side, in terms of what has happened with respect to the F–18's, the investment there and the adaptation to the electronic warfare airplane, the Growler, was also I think absolutely on target.

I have had concern for some time about how far we go with the F–22 program. It is a very expensive airplane. The overall concern was increased—at least I felt an increased level of concern—because of what happened with the F–15s. I mean, we had an F–15 literally destroy itself in flight. Old airplanes upwards of 25 to 30 years, which is a long time for a tactical jet, which certainly increased the risk about this whole TACAIR plan.

That said, I think it is very important to get to the Joint Strike Fighter as soon as we can. The President's budget does not shut the line down. I have got enough background in programs to know that clearly there is not just a principal vendor piece of this that we need to be concerned about, but there is a supply side, lower-tier vendors that also need to be able to anticipate whether they are going to be in business or not. So the concern is there.

There are also huge challenges just from an expense standpoint and from an applicability point of view. So I am comfortable that we at least will have the F–22 line open and that it is open to be determined whether that should continue in 2010.

Senator BOND. Are both of you comfortable with having only one TACAIR source? We have seen the military time and time again say we need two sources, we need competing sources to make sure if one falls back, the other can pick it up. And competition does work even in military acquisition. Are you comfortable seeing us cut down to one source for TACAIR?

Admiral MULLEN. I would like to see as much competition as possible, Senator Bond. It is a decision made, as you know, some time ago.

Senator BOND. And it was a bad one.

Admiral MULLEN. And it is not unique to TACAIR because we have made it across the entire industrial base in many, many areas. And that consolidation and getting us down to single vendors or single lines may seem wise initially, but can cost us down

the road. So it is a decision that I am not sure I would call it fait accompli, but it is one that was made some time ago and I think we have to make the best of it—best of what we have to produce quality aircraft for the future.

Senator BOND. Secretary Gates, are you comfortable with one TACAIR supplier?

Secretary GATES. I think as long as we end up with aircraft companies that, as we go forward, you have competing companies so that you actually do have competition for subsequent fighters, for subsequent programs, I think that is where the competition is important, is in ensuring that we have several of these companies that are in a position to bid for these big programs.

JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

Senator BOND. Right now we are on a path not to have any, and you do not need to shut them down. You can solve some of the shortfall problems buying upgraded versions of the F–15 and the F–16 and maintain that.

I would point out the Navy is looking at upgrading 350 old F/A–18s, the As and Ds, to 10,000 hours. You just talked about, Admiral, the possibility that they are starting to fall apart. That would cost $4 billion to $5 billion. For $4 billion to $5 billion, with a multiyear, you could get 200 F/A–18E and Fs and keep the line alive. To me that makes sense. What am I missing?

Admiral MULLEN. I think it is a matter of choices. We actually do not have a very good history of upgrading airplanes.

Senator BOND. That has been a disaster.

Admiral MULLEN. I mean, it has been difficult in budgets putting modernization money into tactical aircraft. So clearly, there is a plan to do that. And 10,000 hours is a long time on a jet. I think you know that, and at the same time, there has been a plan for some time to shut down the F/A–18 line and essentially transition into the Joint Strike Fighter. That has been the plan of record. It remains that. And I think if the Joint Strike Fighter gets there in some kind of timely way, that transition will work.

Senator BOND. If.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you, Senator Bond.

Senator Feinstein.

WILDFIRE PROTECTION

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I want to begin by thanking you for your service. I am very glad you are where you are.

I want to begin with an easy one. There are parts of my State that are under threat of catastrophic fire. The Forest Service has committed to us that by May we would have two C–130Js and the *MATH–2 units. We have learned we are not going to be getting them.

This is a problem. We have lost 4,200 homes in the last 5 years in the San Diego area. The nearest ones are 1,000 miles away, which take 24 hours to get to California. I would just like to ask that you look into that and that I can contact you and see what we might be able to do about that.

Secretary GATES. Yes, ma'am.

GWOT DETAINEES/GUANTANAMO

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much.

I very much agree with what Senator Specter said. I happen to serve on the Intelligence Committee. I have checked. To date, there is no contrary intelligence to the fact that Iran has not halted its nuclear weapons program. I believe that is a window of opportunity. I thought yes when I heard you make that speech 1 week ago.

To the best of my knowledge, it is not the president of Iran that counts in these matters. It is the Supreme Leader. And it seems to me that we ought to find ways to develop back-channel or front-channel discussions with this individual. I really think the fate of the area depends on it, and I think sabre rattling and talking about exercises for military intrusions do nothing but escalate the situation. I wanted an opportunity to say that.

At this hearing last year, you said that you were looking at ways to close the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay and that you had tasked a group inside the Pentagon to review options. Since then, the number of detainees has dropped to 270. Exactly one person has been convicted. It is my understanding that 68 to 70 detainees can be sent back to their own country, about the same number charged, and about the same number would have to be detained for some time.

The military commissions process has undergone numerous setbacks and most recently included an order by Navy Captain Judge Allred to remove Brigadier General Hartmann from the *Hamdan* case and the dropping of charges which Al-Khatami, the so-called 20th hijacker, because the evidence against him was coerced by torture. I was surprised to read in the New York Times that he is virtually senseless and the belief is it is a product of the interrogation he has gone through.

My question to you is, what is the status of your Pentagon review and what is the status of the interagency review to close Guantanamo?

Secretary GATES. Senator, I think the brutally frank answer is that we are stuck and we are stuck in several ways. One, as you suggest, there are about 70 or so detainees that we are now prepared to return home. The problem is that either their home government will not accept them or we are concerned that the home government will let them loose once we return them home. And we just had a suicide bomber outside of Mosul, I believe, who killed a number of people, who was a released detainee who had been sent home and then let go. So that is one problem we have.

A second problem we have is that we just have a hard time figuring out—and I have talked to Members of Congress and I have talked to the Attorney General and I have talked to various people in the administration—what do you do with that irreducible 70 or 80 or whatever the number is who you cannot let loose, but will not be charged and will not be sent home.

And that leads to the third area where we are stuck, and that is we have a serious not-in-my-backyard problem. I have not found

anybody who wants these terrorists to be placed in a prison in their home State.

So those three problems I think really have brought us to a standstill in trying to work this problem.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Well, I mean, on the last thing you said, the fact of the matter is that the Bureau of Prisons has maximum security facilities in isolated areas, and they are very maximum. It seems to me that nothing that you have said absolves the enormous loss of credibility we have in the eyes of the world being called hypocrites, that we have double laws, laws for some, and no laws for others. I think that is a real problem. It would seem to me that if there are changes in law that need to be made to accept some form of administrative detention with specific findings, that might be the case. But I think for the United States to have this facility—and you felt the same way. I have heard you say it——

Secretary GATES. I still do.

Senator FEINSTEIN.—in this very chair——

Secretary GATES. And still do.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL

Senator FEINSTEIN.—that you were opposed to Guantanamo, that you wanted it shut down. And it is going to take, I think, some innovation to do it, but there are many of us in this Congress that would like to work with you on it.

Now, if I might just move on. I am puzzled by this emergency supplemental. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) apparently says that if you request and Congress approves additional transfers of funds to the Army to meet its personnel and operational expenses, the Army could finance those needs with current funding through July. Also, if DOD receives the 2009 bridge funds, I am told that DOD could finance war costs until June or July 2009. So it is less clear to me why the passage of a $70 billion 2009 bridge fund is urgent at this time, particularly given that funding for next year is less clear.

If Congress approves the monies requested in its regular budget for military personnel and O&M and uses the $5 billion in transfer authority requested for 2009, my question is this. How long could the Army and Marine Corps, the services most taxed by war needs, finance war costs without passage of a supplemental, assuming that the five additional brigade combat teams brought in for the surge are brought home by the end of 2008?

Secretary GATES. Well, first of all, your statements about the fiscal year 2008 supplemental, in terms of when we run out and how long we could run, both of them being until late July, are both correct. And that is what we will do if the supplemental does not pass this week. We will begin to draw down the Navy and Air Force military pay accounts for transferring to the Army. So that will turn out as you just described.

For fiscal year 2009, the problem that I have, Senator, is that the combination of delays in the supplementals and continuing resolutions has really thrown managing the Department out of whack. It is costing the taxpayers money. It disrupts programs. It creates enormous problems just from a management standpoint because

we are always kind of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul, and it is very difficult to do a lot of things in terms of long-range planning.

So the notion of having to borrow from the base budget in 2009 to pay war costs—I mean, we probably could make it work for a number of months. But the question is what kind of a disruption does that do to all the procurement programs, to military expectations because various things get wrapped into these supplementals. We have money for barracks. We have money for day care centers. We have money for training and equipping, for reconstituting the force. And all that money has to come from some place. And so the absence of a supplemental to help pay for those is just enormously disruptive and creates real problems for our troops.

So can we technically get through some part of fiscal year 2009 without a supplemental? Probably so. But the question is at what cost.

Senator FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator INOUYE. Senator Leahy.

Senator LEAHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

DIALOGUE WITH IRAN

Secretary Gates, when Senator Specter spoke to you about 2003 and the Iranians, there has been a lot in the press about their inquiries to us shortly after we went into Iraq. Did we make a mistake in not negotiating with them then?

Secretary GATES. I think this was something that sort of tangentially the Iraq Study Group looked at a bit, and I must say as did the Council on Foreign Relations task force on U.S. relations with Iran that Dr. Brzezinski and I co-chaired in 2004.

As I said in the comments last week that Senator Specter quoted, at a time when we had overthrown the Taliban and when we had overthrown Saddam Hussein, the Iranians clearly were very concerned about what we might do next in 2003–2004. And you did have a different government there. There was evidence that the Iranian Government was doing some things that were helpful in Iraq at the same time they were doing some things that were not helpful. And what I said last week was it was a matter for the historians to look at whether there was a missed opportunity around——

Senator LEAHY. Well, that is your view? What is your view? You were not here at the time, but you have looked at this.

Secretary GATES. I was in a happier place.

Senator LEAHY. I understand. I complimented you on being willing to leave that.

You looked at it more than probably anybody else in this room. Was an opportunity lost?

Secretary GATES. You know, the honest answer is I really do not know. I mentioned earlier about being in that meeting in 1979 with Brzezinski, the first meeting with the Iranian Government, the prime minister, the defense minister, and foreign minister. And I tell people that since October 1979, I have been on a quest for the illusive Iranian moderate, and I have not found one yet. So the question of whether there was a real opportunity, whether it was a strategic opportunity or a tactical opportunity, I just do not know.

I know that the administration was, in fact, having talks with the Iranians at that time on a wide range of issues, and I have forgotten why those talks were called off. But that may have been an opportunity.

Senator LEAHY. Our Government also for years worked directly and indirectly with Saddam Hussein, no leading moderate he, with the idea that this was a counterbalance to Iran. Am I overstating that?

Secretary GATES. As I recall, particularly the first years of the 1980's, the reality is that at one time or another, we worked with both Iran and Iraq to make sure that neither one of them won the war.

Senator LEAHY. Well, it will be interesting if Iran would be anywhere near this influential if oil was still $40 a barrel and if the American dollar had not tanked as much as it has.

HOMELAND DEFENSE SPENDING

Secretary Gates, you gave some remarks about your priorities in the remaining time in your position. I would submit there is a realm of the defense bureaucracy that needs a lot of attention. That's the realm of military support to civilian authorities in domestic emergencies. We need to make sure the military promptly responds to disasters at home. Senator Feinstein, of course, represents the largest State in population in the Senate and has raised that very clearly. We know if a major emergency occurs, whether it is something as terrible as the earthquakes that California has faced or God forbid, another terrorist attack, the military is going to have to be there to support civilian authorities.

I think we have to have clear budget requests about what the Department of Defense is doing to purchase homeland defense-oriented equipment. I do not see it in the budget request. The Nation's Governors need concrete procedures in place to assure that active military personnel that arrive will not try to somehow usurp the authority, the Governors' authorities. They have not received that. We know back here a couple years ago it was slipped into the defense bill a provision, which was then repealed, that would have overridden Governors' authorities in an unprecedented way.

We would like to know the Department has plans to implement the recently enacted provisions from the National Guard Empowerment Act. We have not seen that.

I would hope you would have time to personally engage in this area, Mr. Secretary, before you leave. I mean, we have given you enough things to personally engage in to take care of the next 12 years of your few months left. But please personally engage in that because whether it is coming from a little State like mine or a large State of California, we have a concern.

Secretary GATES. Senator, first of all, I am very positively inclined toward many of the recommendations of the Punaro Commission. I think that was indicated by the fact that in their interim report last year, they made 23 recommendations. We implemented 20 of those 23 recommendations. We are in the midst of looking at the 95 recommendations that are made in the final report. But I think the fact that we leaned forward on the interim report, in

terms of implementing the recommendations, is indicative of an open attitude toward trying to do the right thing.

Senator LEAHY. Well, I should note at this point Admiral Mullen spent a great deal of time in my office. He was very direct, very forthcoming. And Admiral, I do appreciate that meeting. It meant a great deal to me. It was very helpful in looking at this. I know it is being looked at.

I am concerned we see a $10 billion shortfall in the Army's long-range budget. The Air National Guard listed $8 billion of critically needed upgrades. The Department of Defense metric has equipment stocks, the nationwide average, of 60 percent of required stocks.

And I realize a great amount of attention goes to Iraq and Afghanistan. I am concerned that we have an equal amount of attention here inside the United States because of the things that we can face here.

Secretary GATES. I will tell you, Senator Leahy, I have been paying attention to it. We had a 40 percent equipment fill for the guard in 2006. It was 49 percent at the end of 2007. It will be, as you suggest, by the end of this fiscal year, about 60 to 65 percent. Over the next 24 months, we will put more than $17 billion into National Guard equipment, 16,000 trucks, helicopters, the full range of equipment.

Senator LEAHY. But a lot of these things have been gone. I mean, I look at my own State where our Mountain Brigade has just been alerted for 2010 to go to Afghanistan, joining with the military there. And we have a lot of friends in Afghanistan, but I see a resurgent Taliban. And I wonder how much we are going to have to divert to go there. Do we see any light at the end of the tunnel in Afghanistan?

Are you as concerned about the resurgent Taliban as I am?

Secretary GATES. Yes, sir, I am. I do not see a diversion of National Guard equipment to Afghanistan, though. And I would tell you——

Senator LEAHY. But National Guard members are going there.

Secretary GATES. National Guard members.

But one of the things that helps us a lot and that we saw in the tornadoes in Kansas that destroyed Greensburg was most States have agreements with the Guard—with the States that are their neighbors in terms of being able to pool equipment when units are deployed overseas or are not available. And it is that pooling that has a multiplying effect in terms of being able to meet the domestic need.

Senator LEAHY. I realize, but we saw, as in Katrina, sometimes it could take a long time to get that equipment there.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

But again, I join in the praise of Secretary Gates. We have known each other for 25 years at least and have worked together on a number of issues.

And Admiral Mullen, I thank you again. You took a great deal of your time to meet with me and Daniel Ginsberg and others the other day, and that meant a lot to me.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you.

Senator Dorgan.

CONTRACTORS

Senator DORGAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I have five questions I wanted to ask and we will see if we can get them done.

First, I was embarrassed and I assume the Defense Department was by the Boston Globe article that said Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR) had 10,500 Americans working in Iraq for KBR, but they were not listed as employees for the Houston-based company. They were employed by a Cayman subsidiary that is listed at post office box 847 on Shedded Road in the Grand Cayman Islands. They pay $1,000 a year for the post office. No one is there and there is no telephone.

In addition, AIP, which is a contractor, MPRI, which is a contractor—all three of these folks are hiring United States workers and running their employment through Cayman Island subsidiaries to avoid paying United States taxes. The Kellogg, Brown & Root spokesperson said they were set up "in order to allow us to reduce certain tax obligations of the company and its employees."

And the Defense Department says it has known since 2004 that KBR was avoiding taxes by declaring its American workers as employees to the Cayman Islands. Officials from the Defense Department said the move allowed KBR to perform the work more cheaply.

Frankly, I think this sort of thing is embarrassing, and I put something in the supplemental that would shut this down, but I would hope, Mr. Secretary, you would tomorrow just describe a rule in DOD that if you are not going to pay your taxes, do not bother contracting with us. If you are going to run your employees through sham companies in the Cayman Islands and you want to do business with the Federal Government but do not want to pay your obligation to the Federal Government, do not bother coming around.

Secretary GATES. Senator, first of all, I would tell you that I was embarrassed to learn in preparing for this hearing that you had written me about this and particularly the KBR issue on the 1st of April and I have not responded to you yet. I will within the next 48 hours.

My understanding very briefly of a fairly complicated matter is that our regulations are derived from the tax code, and one of the reasons, I am told, that I have not gotten a letter to sign back to you is that our auditors have been trying to work with the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) in terms of figuring out the right answer to your question. So they are working on that, and I will get you an answer.

Senator DORGAN. Well, all right. I mean, I think Congress will eventually find an answer to this, to say this is disgraceful and it is has got to stop. I would hope that you could do that by regulation instantly. But——

Secretary GATES. My understanding is when we think somebody is inappropriately using the tax code to benefit themselves, we have our Defense Contract Audit Agency taking a look at it, and my understanding is they are looking at this at this point.

IRAQ SECURITY FORCE FUNDING

Senator DORGAN. There are $2.5 billion in the supplemental for Iraq security forces fund training. That is the training and equipping of Iraq's security forces. Iraq has earned one-third more money than was expected 2004 to 2007 from oil revenues. They will earn $70 billion this year. At some point, after we have spent close to $20 billion of American taxpayers' money training over 400,000 Iraqis for security police, soldiers, is it not time that the Iraqis perhaps would spend their money for training their troops and equipping their troops?

Secretary GATES. Well, Senator, they are. In 2008, in fiscal year 2008, they will spend $9 billion compared to our $3 billion. The trend line I think is in a direction that you would like. We were at $5.5 billion and helping them on training and equipping in 2007, down to $3 billion in 2008, and it will be $2 billion in 2009. So I think we are headed in the right direction.

I would say that we need to scale this down gradually, though, so we can keep an oar in in terms of the quality and in terms of making sure that the training is of the kind that we want to make sure that they have. And they are beginning to move from our giving them equipment to making use of foreign military sales.

Senator DORGAN. I understand the trend line. I appreciate that. It is the case that on this $2.5 billion we are going to borrow that from somebody and ante up when, in fact, the Iraqis are producing a great deal of oil money they did not previously expect. I would hope that we would ask them to do even more rather than just deal with trend lines.

UAVS

I want to mention—and I will not ask you about this, but the executive agency responsibility for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). One of my great concerns—the fact is there is waste in the Pentagon. We all know that. A lot of waste in some cases. The services want to do exactly the same thing. The Air Force has UAVs. The Army has UAVs. The Air Force is producing their planes. The Army is producing their planes. The Army wants to control their airplanes at 12,000 and 15,000 feet as opposed to just tactical control over the battlefield, and it seems to me that probably ought to be the Air Force.

And I understand from an executive agency matter, you have described a task force here. I further understand that one of my colleagues has put a little piece in a bill last year that prevents you from doing anything on this.

But should we not try to avoid this kind of duplication of effort by the services? It has gone on forever and continues to go on, especially now with respect to UAVs.

Secretary GATES. Well, I think that, first of all, this is an area where I have spent quite a bit of time over the last few months principally in an effort to try and get more intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance into Iraq and Afghanistan to help the commanders.

The reality is I think that there are a number of bureaucratic problems inside the Department of Defense having to do with ISR.

And one of my hopes is that after the task force has finished its work, we can sit back and look at the whole range of UAVs and other ISR capabilities and see the best way to organize this thing.

Senator DORGAN. Well, I appreciate your work on that. We have got to avoid this kind of duplication. Each service wants to do it. It does not matter what is right for the taxpayer. They want to do what the other service does.

OSAMA BIN LADEN

I want to ask you about bin Laden. Admiral Mullen talked about the most likely near-term attack on the United States will come from al Qaeda via these safe havens. You know, I have asked these questions before, but we are talking about 140,000 soldiers in Iraq now beyond the surge. We are talking about borrowing a lot of money, another $102 billion in the supplemental, and then $500 billion plus in—and the fact is Osama bin Laden is reconstituting his training camps. Apparently he is in northern Pakistan or somewhere. And we are busy in Iraq when in fact the greatest threat of an attack against our country comes from al Qaeda. Is there a disconnect here?

ATTACK AFTER 7 YEARS

Tell me what we are doing. I have asked this question repeatedly. What are we doing 7 years after our country was attacked by those who boasted about the attack to bring them to justice because they, in fact, are reconstituting their training camps and reorganizing. It seems to me that is a failure. And I do not lay that just at your feet. I am just saying my observation is here we are spending a lot of money and engaged in an area that is apart from what Admiral Mullen has described as the greatest threat to our homeland.

Admiral MULLEN. And I would just reiterate it is still my belief that if another attack comes, that it will emanate from the planning there because that is where the al Qaeda leadership is. It is a very difficult problem because this is sovereign territory. It is my belief—and we talk often, as we should, about Afghanistan, but we need to talk about Afghanistan and Pakistan because there is an overlap there. There is a border across which, obviously, Taliban come. And I think we need a strategy that essentially addresses both those countries together, particularly the overlap.

We have got a new government in Pakistan. It is my belief we have got to deal with that government. My individual I deal with in Pakistan is the head of the army there, General Kiani, who I think has got a strategic view, but it is going to take him a while. He is in charge of an army that has not been fighting counter-insurgency.

I think it is a long-term effort clearly and that there are some near-term things that we need to do and some things we are doing to address it. But it is a very, very difficult problem.

Senator DORGAN. I would just observe—my time has ended—if the greatest threat to this country—an attack against this country is shielded by the sovereignty of some other place on this globe, there is something wrong with that. There ought not be one acre

of ground that is safe to walk for Osama bin Laden, not an acre anywhere.

Finally, if I might just in 10 seconds say, Mr. Secretary, I am going to send you some information in a letter about the issue of privatizing housing on bases. They are fixing to do that in two North Dakota bases and turn over brand new housing to a private contractor who will then guarantee for 50 years to maintain. I have great difficulty with that, and I am going to ask a series of questions.

Having said all that, let me thank you for your service, both of you. I was asking questions that were on my mind, but I think this subcommittee appreciates the service that both of you provide this country. Thank you very much.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you.

Senator Murray.

Senator MURRAY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, all of you, thank you so much for appearing today.

FUTURE OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS AND ACQUISITION COSTS

Mr. Secretary, there are a lot of important issues before us, but I want to focus first on the future of our military and the weapons platforms that they use. As you are aware, I have been particularly concerned about the KC–135 recapitalization effort, how the RFP and the evaluation of those proposals were handled. I have had meetings and asked questions of the Air Force, the National Guard, the Air Force Reserve, and members of your staff regarding cost and process. And I have to tell you I am still not satisfied.

Last Tuesday, Mr. Secretary, you did speak to the Heritage Foundation, and I want to quote back to you what you said. You said, "The perennial procurement cycle, going back many decades, of adding layer upon layer of cost and complexity onto fewer and fewer platforms that take longer and longer to build must come to an end. Without a fundamental change in this dynamic, it will be difficult to sustain support for these kinds of weapons programs in the future."

Now, I think you and I share a similar perspective on that issue. However, I would like you today to comment on concerns that were raised by the GAO in a couple of their reports. The first one was from March 6 of last year, titled "Air Force Decision to Include a Passenger and Cargo Capability in its Replacement Fueling Aircraft was Made Without Required Analysis." The second from January of this year is titled "KC–135 Recapitalization Analysis of Alternatives Does Not Inform Decision-Makers Regarding Cost, Effectiveness, and Suitability."

So it seems to me from the beginning the Air Force and DOD are part of the problem that you have identified by adding requirements to a refueling tanker without the mandatory analysis. Do you have a comment on that?

Secretary GATES. The only comment that I would make, because I am far from expert on this subject, is that I look forward to the completion of the GAO response to the protest that was filed to see how they come out on it.

Senator MURRAY. Well, it is a problem for me that the Air Force did not complete the mandatory analysis and the JROC determined that that was okay. So I hope you take a look at that.

And one of the reasons that that analysis is mandatory is to prevent purchasing a platform with capability that may not be needed. Now, we are talking about a $35 billion platform, and although I am being told that it was the most transparent, I remain unconvinced because that process was flawed on thorough evaluation of military construction, necessary maintenance staff, and fuel costs.

How am I supposed to believe that this program is going to be on time and on cost if we do not have a fundamental sense and justification for what we are buying?

Secretary GATES. Well, again, Senator, I am just not familiar enough with the details. At this point I think I just have to wait for the GAO report—investigation to see what their conclusions are on it.

Senator MURRAY. Can you give me any sense that this program, unlike others, is not going to go over budget and miss deadlines because we have not fully evaluated all the costs?

Secretary GATES. I think a Secretary of Defense who would give you an assurance like that prospectively would be on very thin ice. I think that happens to so many programs. I mean, it is one of the problems in acquisition that we have and that we are trying to deal with, frankly.

Senator MURRAY. Well, I am worried that the acquisition process in general is not serving our needs. I have heard again and again that only cost, technology, and capability can be considered in an acquisition. You know, perhaps that is not enough.

At the same Heritage Foundation event, you were quoted in the Washington Post, I think it was, as saying, "I believe that any major weapons program, in order to remain viable, will have to show some utility and relevance to the kind of irregular campaigns that I mentioned are most likely to engage America's military in coming decades."

Now, I have to say I am deeply concerned that the EADS platform has a lower score on survivability than the Boeing 767. Should we not be buying the most survivable tanker? I mean, should that not be a higher consideration?

Secretary GATES. Well, again, I am no expert on this, but I would say that just based on our experience, after 5 years of war in Iraq, that survivability of our tankers has not been a particular problem.

Senator MURRAY. Well, let me ask you, do you think we need to make changes in the way we do acquisitions to take into account everything that is important?

Secretary GATES. You know, you have quoted the three criteria that limit us by law in terms of what we can look at: technology, cost, and capability. And the law is very explicit, as I understand, that we cannot look at anything else. So the only way to correct that would be to change the law.

But my only caution in changing the law is that all of our companies sell a lot of equipment to other countries, and so I think we need to be very careful about how we limit access in bidding and the criteria we take into account because what we gain over here we may lose over there.

Senator MURRAY. Well, is it possible—I mean, should we as Congress be thinking about the fact that in trying to give our warfighters the lowest price possible that we could, in fact, be undercutting our own ability to protect our country in the future? Should we ever take that into account?

Secretary GATES. Well, my personal view would be anything that affects our long-term national security should be taken into account, but as I say, in this particular case, that would require a change in the law.

Senator MURRAY. Well, as you said, you can only take into account cost, capability, and technology, but in Congress, we have to take a lot wider purview. We have a duty to do what DOD cannot do. We have to look at unfair competition. We have to look at the impact of companies who are using illegal means to break into the U.S. defense and commercial markets. We have to look at the long-term security of the United States. We have to look at our industrial base. We have to look at the industrial capability of our country far into the future. We have to make sure we have a level playing field. In regard to subsidies, Barry amendment compliance, all of that. We have to ask if that is coming at a cost to our domestic companies.

So when DOD is limited to just three narrow things, I fear that we are handicapping the U.S. industrial base in the future. Is that a concern that Congress should be looking at from your point of view?

Secretary GATES. Well, I think I have had a concern about our industrial base, particularly for defense and intelligence, for about 20 years now, and I think that the consolidation of industry and the fewer and fewer companies that are able to bid on and produce what we need is a concern.

Senator MURRAY. Well, I share that concern, and I know you have a close association with higher education. Attracting workers into a dynamic field is critically important. In our aerospace industry, we need engineers and mechanics and a whole range of people thinking into the future. We have to have an aerospace industry here that is strong if we want to attract people into that field. I would assume you would agree with that as well.

Secretary GATES. Yes.

Senator MURRAY. Well, I have a lot of questions about this, Mr. Secretary, and some deep concerns, and I hope at some time you and I can have a more private conversation about that and the acquisition process and what we as Congress have to be thinking about and looking at into the future.

And I only have a second left. I did want to thank you for following up last year. We talked about traumatic brain injury and making sure that we are tracking our soldiers better. I do want you to know we did have a hearing recently with the National Guard and there was a young soldier in the audience who I asked if he had been tracked. He was in the vicinity of two major explosions. And no one had ever asked him. And I just want to make sure that we follow up and are doing what you are trying to do in the National Guard and Reserve as well to make sure that we do not lose those folks when they come home.

Secretary GATES. Absolutely.

Senator MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much.

Senator Cochran.

DOD FINANCIAL STATUS

Senator COCHRAN. Mr. Chairman. Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen, thank you very much for your cooperation with our committee being here to testify in support of the request for supplemental funding.

In preparation for the hearing, my very able staff provided me with information about your dealings with the House Appropriations Committee and other committees here in the Congress on the subject of adequacy of funding for critical programs and challenges that we face in Iraq and elsewhere, our overall needs to protect the security interests of our country. And I am alarmed by some of the conclusions that I drew from this information. I am asking this in the form of a question for you to confirm or explain these conclusions that I have reached in looking through my briefing papers.

The Army will run out of personnel funds by mid-June. Reprogramming actions will be initiated next week to borrow from the other services, but all services will run out of military personnel funds by late July. The Army will run out of operation and maintenance funds by early July, including funds for civilian personnel. Reprogramming will allow operations to continue until late July.

The critical commander's emergency response program is used to fund local projects in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it will run out of funds in June. And reprogramming actions cannot be taken to extend this account.

Added to this is an observation that we drew from comments that have been made by leaders of the subcommittee over on the House side that there is a likelihood that consideration of the fiscal year 2009 defense appropriations bill may be deferred. I wonder what your conclusions would be about the impact that would have on the Defense Department in terms of its fiscal year 2009 appropriations bill not being passed.

Secretary Gates, would you like the first crack at that?

Secretary GATES. Yes, let me start and then turn it over to Admiral Mullen.

First of all, on all of the information with respect to what happens in the absence of the fiscal year 2008 supplemental, war on terror supplemental, what you said is exactly right. All of those things will happen just as you described them.

With respect to fiscal year 2009, I must say I was very concerned when I read that there may not be a fiscal year 2009 base budget because—let me just give you a few examples of the consequences of a continuing resolution for fiscal year 2009 for us.

First of all, we would lose nearly $9 billion, $8.7 billion, for growing the Army and the Marine Corps. So since we can only spend under a continuing resolution in 2009 what we spent in 2008, the $8.7 billion additional dollars we need for growing the Army and the Marine Corps we would lose.

We would lose $246 million additional we need to stand up the Africa Command.

We would lose $1.8 billion for base realignment and closure (BRAC) which includes barracks, day care centers, family facilities, and so on.

We would lose $1 billion on search and rescue and mobility. We have 14 UAVs, Predators, that represent new money in the 2009 budget, and that we would not have access to as a result of a continuing resolution.

And the list goes on and on. Anything in which there is more money in the budget for reconstitution, for rebuilding our forces, for improving readiness, any increment between the 2008 and 2009 budget would be lost under a continuing resolution. So a continuing resolution of some length of time would be a real problem for you.

And I will give you an example of the result of this. In fiscal year 2007, we did not get the supplemental until May. That supplemental had significant dollars in it for BRAC, and we then had 4 months to contract and obligate that money out of an entire fiscal year. So we lost about $500 million, not to mention 8 months in terms of meeting the BRAC statutory deadline. So the consequences of these continuing resolutions are real for us in the way we manage the Department.

Senator COCHRAN. Thank you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR THAD COCHRAN

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to join the members of the committee in welcoming Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen to this hearing.

The witnesses represent over 3 million active duty, National Guard and Reserve forces, and civilian employees with a presence in over 160 countries around the world many of whom have been deployed in the Global War on Terrorism since October, 2001.

Our Armed Forces have also been engaged in humanitarian operations in places like Central America, Bangladesh, the Horn of Africa, and more recently, the storm ravaged areas of Burma and earthquake stricken region of China. I remain proud of our men and women who serve in the Armed Forces and the impact they have as a force for democracy around the world.

Secretary Gates, in your written testimony, you mention the immediate need for Supplemental Appropriations funding to support our men and women in uniform as they perform their missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Global War on Terrorism. As you know, last week the full Appropriations Committee approved Supplemental Appropriations funding for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, and we are currently considering this legislation on the Senate floor—I hope for quick passage.

Thank you for your leadership and continued service to our country and our men and women in uniform.

IRAQ TRIPS

Senator INOUYE. Admiral Mullen.

Admiral MULLEN. Doable as the Secretary has previously indicated, but consequences of great significance. I will speak to two examples.

In my last two trips to Iraq, I am at a joint security station in Baghdad with a young captain who is—and this is February timeframe—who has provided the security and has essentially allocated all of his CERP money, his emergency response money, for the quarter, by the end of March. Now, that is as a result of the needle valve that the commanders in Iraq were applying because of both authority as well as the funds which were due to run out. So the extension of the security environment into the area to put Iraqi civilians to work in terms of security and to fund local projects,

which would improve the future of Iraqi citizens, was essentially on hold as early as February in this one place.

Not too long after that, I was with the 3rd Division commander who has done extraordinary work, General Rick Lynch, and the only thing he asked me about, given what he has done from a security standpoint, is he needs that money because he has got to fund the security forces, the Iraqi civilians, as well as the projects. He had had great success with it. So that is real impact on the ground to get where we need to go.

And then back here, only to re-emphasize what the Secretary said, as a former service chief, who has had to go through multiple reprogrammings, deadlines like this, it brings the organization almost to a halt, and then when you get to execute, you execute very inefficient, very late contracts which, in fact, is a significant waste of money. Everybody in DOD, and particularly the services, start to anticipate not having the money. Even knowing it may come, if it comes late, it has a devastating impact on the ability to execute, not even to speak to new programs similar to what the Secretary has spoken to in terms of what would happen in 2009 on a continuing resolution.

Senator COCHRAN. Well, thank you very much. It grieves me to have to acknowledge that we have met the enemy and he is us, the old line from Pogo, I think. And I worry that the Congress is becoming an impediment to the efficiency and to the capability of our Government and our Department of Defense particularly and our challenge to protect the security of our troops who are put in harm's way and sent on dangerous missions and others we are trying to train and get them prepared to take over other responsibilities for national security. And all of us are going to be at risk in some way because of the slowdown and slow-walking of the appropriations process by the United States Congress. I think it is unfortunate, but I am afraid it is real.

So your being here and your helping to explain the practicalities of our delays is appreciated very much and your leadership is deeply appreciated as well. Thank you.

Senator INOUYE. I thank you very much.

DRAFT REINSTITUTION

I realize the time constraints, so I will ask one question, the question that no one wants to ask, and I will submit the rest to you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Secretary, between 2000 and 2006, military personnel compensation costs increased by 32 percent for active duty and 47 percent for Reserve personnel. We are now spending about $180 billion a year on pay, benefits, and healthcare for our armed forces. And according to the GAO, this equates to $126,000 per service member.

And my question is, is the cost of maintaining an all-volunteer force becoming unsustainable, and second, do we need to consider reinstituting the draft?

Secretary GATES. Let me answer and then invite Admiral Mullen to answer.

I think that your commanders would tell you that this is the finest Army the United States has ever fielded, particularly the Army,

but all of the services in terms of quality, in terms of resilience, in terms of dedication, and in terms of skill.

VOLUNTEER FORCE

I think that there is no question that it is expensive. When I was in Ukraine a few months ago, they told me they were thinking about going to a volunteer force, and I said, well, you better think carefully about it because it will be very expensive. And one of the huge differences between a volunteer force and a conscription force is the attention that must be paid to families and taking care of families of soldiers, whether they are deployed or not, and making sure that the families have access to the kind of services and so on. So it is not just the soldiers.

I would tell you that I personally believe that it is worth the cost, and I think that in some ways the burden—I do not know the demographics specifically, but just as an example, I know that there are a number of Members of Congress who have sons and daughters in the military. There are sons and daughters of well-to-do families from across the country who are in our military. So I think that it does encompass a socioeconomic range in the country so that we do not have just one slice of the society that is serving.

I think that it would be a real problem to try and go back to the draft.

Admiral MULLEN. The military with whom I serve now is the finest military by orders of magnitude that I believe we have ever had and certainly by direct comparison of when I was commissioned in 1968. And I believe the single biggest reason for that has been the fact that we have gone to an all-volunteer force, and they emanate excellence in everything that they do. This is the most critical investment that we make in terms of the Department of Defense in our people.

That said, your citing of those statistics is of great concern to me because a future that argues for or, in fact, results in the continuous escalation of those costs does not bode well for a military of this size. Eventually—I mean, there are limits which we will hit and the constraints that exist will force us to a smaller military or force us away from any kind of modernization or programs that we need for the future or curtail operations. And I think this issue, which is such a challenging one, is the top issue with which we need to come to grips not just in the near term but in the long term. This was cited as well by Arnold Punaro in his report.

And our military and our families have been incredibly well supported. The overall compensation package since the mid-90's has gone up dramatically and rightfully so, and nobody knows that better than you. We must continue to take care of them and at the same time look at how we address this issue long term because we cannot—I do not see us as a country being able to afford the kind of cost increase at the rate they have occurred over the last several years, as you have quoted. That said, we have got to have this right for our people or essentially we will not have a military to support our national security efforts.

Secretary GATES. Mr. Chairman, let me go back to an issue that you raised in your opening statement because it is one area that not only concerns us but where we believe we have to get it under

control, and that is the cost of healthcare. Healthcare costs in the military for the Department of Defense have gone from about $19.5 billion in 2001 to $42.8 billion for fiscal year 2009. By fiscal year 2011, 65 percent of the people being served by that budget item will be retirees. Now, the problem is many of those are still working retirees. They are retired from the military, but they are in reasonably good health or very good health and they are working another job.

And we have not had an increase in the premium, in what the service member pays for TRICARE, since the program was initiated. It has been a real issue here on the Hill, but it is one of those areas where, as you mentioned, we have over a $1 billion hole in the budget because we keep hoping, as the Commission on Military Medicine recommended, that we can get agreement to make some modest increase in the TRICARE premium for those who are not yet at retirement age, 65 or 62 or whatever it is. And so this is an area where we may be able to have some kind of impact on those dramatically rising costs without impinging on those who are in the service today.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much.

Senator Domenici.

REDUCING DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL

Senator DOMENICI. Thank you very much. First of all, Mr. Chairman, I apologize for being late. I had three hearings and I was very insistent that I make this hearing, as I have tried.

Let me talk about a subject that I have asked my staff about and it has not been broached today, so I will not duplicate. Two of my other issues have already been addressed and I will not ask about them.

But let me ask both the Secretary and the Chairman if they could talk a minute about the fact that our country is so dependent upon foreign oil or foreign energy for our very existence, including the existence of our military. We now import over 65 percent of what we use. At the same time, we are trying very hard to develop alternative sources of energy. Of those alternatives, some have to do with the development of new technologies and new innovations like—I will just give you an example—converting oil shale up in Colorado and Utah to diesel fuel at the minimum and then to perfect it even further.

We are interested now in the new technology of converting coal to liquid. That liquid would be of various kinds, but at first it would be at least diesel that could be used in all of the military equipment of the country.

So I wonder if anything is going on that you can recall that has the military involved in trying to put together this kind of package that is going to be required to move this kind of technology and development along. Is there anything going on like considering purchase agreements for companies that develop new sources of alternative energy? That would be one way where you could be of great help. Is there anything going on there in that field, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary GATES. Senator Warner raised this with me at a breakfast that I had with the Senate Armed Services Committee leader-

ship last week, and I promised to get back to him. And we will get back to you.

I think we do have research dollars involved in alternative energy programs. I would tell you also that we have some very interesting recovery projects. I just visited the Red River Army Depot a week or so ago. When they bring back the HMMWV's and Strykers and tanks, everything from the theater, they still have the fluids in them, the gasoline and oil and so on. And they have a contract with a private company that takes all of that stuff, re-refines it, and sells it. So they make several million dollars back for the taxpayers simply by not throwing away this used fuel and petroleum products.

FUEL CREATION

But we can get back to you with the specifics on the energy programs that we have underway in alternative energy.

Admiral, do you have anything?

Admiral MULLEN. The only thing I would add, Senator, I think clearly this crisis needs to be addressed and investments in those kinds of technologies would be very important.

I also would praise in particular the Air Force who has taken a lead on flying on synthetic fuels and, in fact, has flown an awful lot of their aircraft, including a B–52 and I believe——

Senator DOMENICI. That is correct.

Admiral MULLEN [continuing]. A B–2—a B–1 or B–2. I cannot remember. And their initiative and their efforts are significant. You know what we invest in each year for fuels, and we have got to look for more diversity.

Senator DOMENICI. It was a B–1.

Let me say that I would like to know what kind of money and projects you have in alternative fuel creation, but I want to stress another point and then I will be through. It is late.

In order to get some of this technology perfected, we are going to reach a point where they are going to want to sell their product to Wall Street to finance a $5 billion plant for something. In order for that to happen, somebody has to be the purchaser of the product, and what seems to me inevitable and quite appropriate is that the military could agree to contract to purchase the product for 10 years because you are going to need that much. You could just document that you need 10 times that much, but you would be the assurance to this investment in this new technology, that if it proves up, you will buy it for a given length of time.

Now, would you check and see if you have such authority? Because if you do not, we ought to give it to you because they are going to be knocking on your door in two or three areas within the next couple years. One clearly coal to liquid where they are going to be building very big facilities and they are going to have to have a buyer or two, and they are going to go to the military. And that is very appropriate in my opinion. You are going to get it at market value anyway. It does not matter where you buy it, buy American made or buy it overseas. And they will be producing it.

Believe it or not, Shell Oil, S-h-e-l-l, is only a few years away from shale oil conversion right out of the field. In situ they call it, as you have heard. And they are just going to boil it in the ground

and take it out, you know, just take it out like you would suck out from a can of Coke. What they will be taking out will be a fuel of certain sorts. And clearly, they are going to need a purchaser or two so that they will have that backed when they finance their bigger projects. I just want to get you all involved in thinking about it because it is certainly going to be in the ball game, and you will be important players.

And I thank you for listening, and whatever you can give me on that, it would help me so we would only bother to add on to such authorities if it is needed. Thank you.

Senator INOUYE. Thank you very much, Senator.

Senator DOMENICI. Thank you.

CONCLUSION

Senator INOUYE. Mr. Secretary and Admiral, we very much appreciate your appearance today and your testimony. With this hearing, the subcommittee concludes its overview of the defense budget. Our final hearing will be with members of the public. And I can assure you that this subcommittee will act expeditiously as we have in the past.

As you have heard today, Secretary Gates, the subcommittee has many questions regarding your Department and your budget requirements, and as we have pointed out, you have offered many candid views over the past several months regarding shortcomings in the equipping and management of our forces. In the next week, the subcommittee will meet to consider your defense needs and formulate a set of recommendations for funding.

So, Mr. Secretary, in advance of this review, allow me to make this offer. If there are items in the fiscal year 2009 budget request which you no longer wish to prioritize or items which you would like to increase, please feel free to inform us officially or unofficially and we will take them under consideration.

Secretary GATES. Thank you, sir.

Senator INOUYE. And, gentlemen, we thank you for your testimony and look forward to working with you as we refine our views on the fiscal year 2009 defense appropriation requirements.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Mr. Secretary, I gather this is your last appearance before this subcommittee. I am certain every member of this subcommittee appreciates your leadership and your contributions to our country.

Secretary GATES. Thank you.

Senator INOUYE. We thank you very much, sir.

Secretary GATES. Thank you.

[The following questions were not asked at the hearing, but were submitted to the Department for response subsequent to the hearing:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO ROBERT M. GATES

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUYE

Question. Mr. Secretary, I am concerned that the Missile Defense Agency has decided to cancel the next ground-based flight test instead of delaying it a few months until the problem with the ground-based interceptor is resolved. This means that no ground-based intercept test will be done in fiscal year 2008, even though nearly

$300 million for two intercept tests was appropriated in the 2008 budget. Why was this decision made, and were you consulted about the cancellation of this test?

Answer. A critical test component failed on the test interceptor during pre-test operations. Specifically, the Flight Test Ground-Based Interceptor (FTG)–04 Exo-atmospheric Kill Vehicle's (EKV) Pulse Code Modulation Encoder (PCME) within the flight test telemetry system failed during the final interceptor readiness test in the Vandenberg Missile Assembly Building. While the PCME is on all EKVs, the PCME is only used during flight tests and has no role or impact on an operational interceptor. However, because interceptor telemetry is crucial in the conduct of a flight test to verify EKV performance post flight, the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) decided to not conduct any flight test of the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense (GMD) Interceptor (GBI) until the cause of the PCME failure was determined and action taken to correct the problem. The failure analysis, completed in May 2008, determined that the EKV had to be returned to the manufacturer for disassembly, PCME replacement, and reassembly. Interceptor reintegration, emplacement, and post-emplacement operations and testing at Vandenberg Air Force Base results in an early December 2008 flight test mission.

The Agency considered several test options to demonstrate multi-sensor integration and intercept of a target with countermeasures this calendar year. The Director MDA, after assessing all flight test options, decided to proceed with a non-intercept (simulated GBI fly-out), multi-sensor integration flight test in the July-August timeframe, namely FTX–03. Test objectives relating specifically to the FTG–04 intercept will be deferred to FTG–05, the next GMD intercept mission is currently scheduled early December 2008. FTX–03 has been identified to replace FTG–04. FTX–03 will be a multi-sensor, integrated test designed much closer to the FTG–05 test configuration and serves as enhanced risk reduction. This approach allows the Agency to demonstrate multi-sensor integration and an intercept of a target with countermeasure this calendar year. The end result is that all objectives of the original FTG–04 and FTG–05 will still be accomplished with the conduct of FTX–03 and FTG–05.

MDA reports directly to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (USD(AT&L)) on missile defense matters. The Director, MDA made the technical decision to change FTG–04 to a sensor integration test, FTX–03, in consultation with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics and notifications were made immediately to the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E); USSTRATCOM through the Commander, Joint Functional Component Command—Integrated Missile Defense (JFCC–IMD); Missile Defense Executive Board (MDEB) members, congressional staff, and the Warfighters.

Additionally, AT&L, Operational Test Agencies (OTAs), and USSTRATCOM (JFCC–IMD) participate in MDA's Program Change Board (PCB). As changes were made to the test program, these stakeholders have been fully informed on the course of action and adjustments will be reflected in the Warfighter Operational Readiness and Acceptance Program.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

SUICIDE

Question. Over the past year, Congress has provided hundreds of millions in funding to the military to improve mental health care for our troops. Over the past 6 years, the suicide rate for active-duty soldiers has grown from 9.8 per 100,000 in 2001 to 17.5 per 100,000 in 2006.

What specific actions is the DOD taking to reduce suicide?

Answer. We deplore the loss of any life to suicide and are saddened by the traumatic impact on families and coworkers who are burdened with the grief of losing their loved ones and fellow professionals.

Partnering with civilian institutions, our military departments have initiated aggressive suicide prevention programs. They employ a myriad of preventive and supportive programs to improve awareness of signs of distress; address and resolve contributing factors; and provide professional consultants and care givers through referral programs. We emphasize suicide awareness and prevention; train frontline supervisors to look out for subordinates and intervene when subordinates and family members may be at risk; assess and manage suicide risk, and increase availability of professional military family life consultants to care for service members and their families. Also, we use lessons learned from previous suicides to develop suicide prevention videos written and directed by military members; and use web-based dis-

tance learning courses on suicide prevention for refresher training and at geographically separated units. Additionally, we benefit greatly from our association with, and use of, resources from professional civilian organizations like American Association of Suicidology and Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences.

While there are several reasons for suicides, one fact we do know is that multiple and lengthy deployments have placed a great stress on our families. In an attempt to mitigate some of this stress, the services continue to provide aggressive suicide prevention programs. We will continue to monitor progress toward our objective of preventing as many suicides as possible.

TBI/PTSD

Question. According to a recent RAND study, one in five Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from PTSD. 19 percent report a possible traumatic brain injury during their deployment. Only half have sought treatment because of the stigma attached with seeking treatment and because of concerns about the quality of care. According to RAND, half of those who request treatment receive only "minimally adequate" support.

What steps is DOD taking to encourage servicemen and servicewomen to pursue help and to address the reasons why treatment is not sought?

Answer. The RAND study defined Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as the presence of symptoms and did not involve a clinical assessment. Symptoms of traumatic stress are to be expected among those who have been in combat or had other traumatic exposures. For many, these symptoms do not lead to significant distress or impairment and for most, these symptoms will resolve with little or no clinical intervention. For individuals who do not meet full criteria for PTSD there is no universal recommended number of visits.

Additionally, the RAND study used an arbitrary number of visits as its criterion for "adequate" treatment. Many Service members improve with fewer treatment sessions of treatment and no longer require additional visits.

All of the Services have programs that teach deploying Service members the symptoms of deployment-related stress, how to manage the stress of deployment, and how to recognize symptoms in others that might lead to a clinical concern. These programs stress the importance of seeking care if their symptoms cause significant distress or impairment in any aspect of daily functioning. These programs are provided before deployment and upon return from deployment. They also include components of education to family members so that they can encourage an evaluation if they observe persisting or troubling symptoms.

Each Service member also receives a post deployment health assessment with a clinician at the time of return and a repeat assessment three to six months after return. A clinical decision is made at that time whether a mental health referral would be beneficial to the member. The Army is also piloting programs to better educate primary care managers to screen for mental health problems and refer to a mental health specialist when appropriate.

Finally, there is a significant push within the Department of Defense for line leadership responsibility for psychological health- and resilience-based initiatives within operational units. This is consistent with findings that unit morale, unit cohesion, and faith in leadership are protective factors in keeping warriors psychologically fit. The Defense Centers of Excellence's anti-stigma program, "Real Warriors. Real Battles. Real Strength." reinforces this critical message of line leadership support.

Question. Why are military members receiving subpar support? What is your response to the finding that half of the treatment received is only "minimally adequate?"

Answer. A number of initiatives have begun to address increased support. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) have launched a joint federal care coordination system to address the needs of polytrauma patients. Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center/Defense Centers of Excellence has launched a care coordination system focusing on Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) patients with persistent needs. These programs are assisting by linking Service members with state and local resources in addition to the federal resources available to them.

The Department screens all recently deployed Service members for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and TBI via the Post Deployment Health Assessment and Post Deployment Health Re-Assessment. In addition, the VA screens for possible PTSD and TBI among all OEF/OIF veterans seen for medical care.

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who have been in combat or had other traumatic exposures. For many, these symptoms do not lead to significant distress or impairment and for most, these symptoms will resolve with little or no clinical intervention. For individuals who do not meet full criteria for PTSD there is no universal recommended number of visits.

The RAND study used an arbitrary number of visits as its criterion for "adequate" treatment. Many Service members improve with fewer treatment sessions of treatment and no longer require additional visits.

Question. The truth is that mental health treatment remains a stigma in our armed forces. Junior enlisted and officers play an important role in furthering a frank discussion about the benefits of mental health treatment.

What efforts have been made to have junior leaders, both enlisted and officer, trained to identify the symptoms of PTSD?

Answer. In addition to DOD efforts to reduce barriers preventing Service members from seeking help, the Services remain committed to training all leaders to identify subordinates, coworkers or friends who may require care.

The Air Force perspective is, most importantly, leaders should be proficient in recognizing Airmen in distress and referring them for assistance. Prevention education programs (suicide prevention training, Landing Gear, Frontline Supervisors Training) all clearly articulate the varied symptoms of distress and how to link Airmen with mental health care. In particular the pre- and post-deployment prevention education program, Landing Gear, does describe the symptoms of PTSD in detail.

Marine Corps Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) classes are currently held in some career schools. The Training and Education Command is further developing and standardizing curriculum and including standards and tasks in Marine Corps Training and Readiness Manuals. Training in established courses and career schools is being implemented at all levels, including Command and Staff College Symposium (ongoing), Senior Enlisted Symposium (ongoing), enlisted professional military education courses (in process), career officer schools (in process) and Command and Staff College Distance learning (ongoing). The Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) program embeds mental health practitioners and technicians into ground operating forces at the regimental level, to aid prevention and early identification of combat stress problems through increased trust and familiarity between Marines and the mental health professionals. A Leaders Guide for Managing Marines in Distress website and pocket guide provide quick access to information and tools for solving high-risk problems. Manpower and Reserve Affairs maintains a COSC page on its website for junior leader reference and use. Downloadable workshops to assist audiences in recognizing and identifying combat stress problems are available for senior leaders, marines, sailors and family members for pre-deployment, return from deployment, and post-deployment (60–120 days). The annual USMC COSC Conference provides concurrent workshop tracks for leaders, providers, families and other topics. The focus is on attendance by Marine leaders at all levels to learn more about combat operational stress and leadership responsibilities in prevention, identification and treatment.

The Navy's Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) for Caregivers course has trained over 900 chaplains, nurses, corpsmen, religious programs specialists, Fleet and Family Service Center personnel and line leaders in early recognition and response to stress injuries. OSCAR embeds mental health practitioners and technicians into ground operating forces at the regimental level, to aid prevention and early identification of combat stress problems through increased trust and familiarity between Marines and the mental health professionals. COSC, including the stress injury continuum, leader expectations, combat operational stress first aid, and peer assessment is incorporated into Navy Individual Augmentee training at Fort Jackson, GA. In addition, the Navy COSC website and Navy Individual Augmentee Guides for sailors, families and commands were published in March 2007.

In the Army, over 900,000 solders participated in chain teaching last year, including the identification of symptoms of PTSD. This education on the signs and symptoms of PTSD is continuing as part of pre-deployment, deployment and post-deployment cycle of resilience training for soldiers and families. Multiple training sites are available on various Army web sites to help officer and enlisted personnel become more aware of PTSD. Physicians, nurses and medics also receive specialized training in the identification of signs and symptoms of PTSD as part of clinical training and refresher training programs.

Although Service-specific, the Army's Mental Health Advisory Team V study results linked to efforts to train junior leaders appears positive, and can most likely be extrapolated to other Service's efforts. 85 percent of soldiers who answered the survey about the training found the training useful. Soldiers reported significant increase in training adequacy for managing the stress of deployments and for identifying soldiers at risk for suicide. The number of clinical visits for PTSD has gone

up; this is probably a combined result of increased screening, increased demand, and the chain teaching and other related teachings called Battlemind. Soldiers' perceptions of the stigma associated with mental health care were significantly lower in 2007 compared with 2006. Although the numbers of soldiers screening positive for mental health problems in 2007 was similar to 2006 and other years, they reported significantly lower levels of impaired work performance as a result of stress or emotional problems than in 2006. MHAT study results indicate Behavioral Health personnel conducted significantly more command consultations in 2007 compared with 2006. Soldiers reported receiving more mental health care, and 17 percent had received medications for their symptoms. Primary Care personnel report significant increase in the number of medications prescribed for sleep, depression, and anxiety relative to 2006. Military Health System-wide metrics also indicate an overall increase in numbers of in-theater mental health encounters. It remains unclear whether these findings are a result of increased mental health distress, increased numbers of medical personnel or increased awareness on the part of healthcare personnel, but in light of other decreased measurements of stress/emotional impairment of work performance, it would suggest that increased awareness on the part of leaders and medical personnel is having a positive effect.

At the DOD level, the Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury were established to assist in this endeavor by providing leadership, facilitating culture change and advocating a consistent, evidence-based approach across the Services, tailored to DOD/Service member needs. As of August 27, 2008, 52 DCoE staff are on board, and staffing numbers are projected to reach 155 by October 31, 2008. Eight directorates are now at initial operating capability: (1) Resilience and Prevention, (2) Training and Education, (3) Clearinghouse, Outreach and Advocacy, (4) Psychological Health Clinical Standards of Care, (5) TBI Clinical Standards of Care, (6) Research, QA Program Evaluation & Surveillance, (7) Telehealth and Technology, and (8) Strategy, Plans and Programming. Among many other actions, DCoE has already established a public website and a wide-reaching newsletter for Service members, family members and clinicians—all in an effort to educate, facilitate treatment and decrease stigma. The Center is actively at work standardizing Service curricula. Completion of DCoE CONOPS and internal assessment metrics is projected for September 1, 2008. Standardization and centralization of DOD data collection and analysis should begin to yield initial objective data for DOD-wide assessment of our programs by year's end.

To encourage Service members to pursue help and to address potential reasons why treatment is not sought, the DCoE endorses the Resilience Continuum Model which represents a cultural shift from treatment of illness to psychological health. The model promotes psychological health activities as a readiness issue and combat multiplier (seeking care when needed is considered a psychological health activity). The model will also be used to teach and train commanders and leaders at all levels to encourage their peers and subordinates to seek care when needed. There are several reasons why Warriors may not seek care. One reason (which is perhaps an under-recognized reason) is the lack of self awareness. It is common for Warriors to be unaware that they are in need of help. The Resilience Continuum Model can teach/train Warriors to recognize symptoms of distress, including PTSD, and to apply proven tools that build resilience to mitigate risk, maximize performance, and prevent dysfunction. The Resilience Continuum Model will roll out on November 18, 2008 as part of the DOD Resilience Conference.

Question. Should such training be mandatory for leaders before he or she assume responsibility for other military members in combat?

Answer. Marines: Yes, this training should be mandatory. The Marine Corps continues to stress the importance of recognizing and combating PTSD and other related stress problems incurred during combat operations, deployed situations, and demanding garrison support of these missions. The Marine Corps will maintain and further develop and incorporate standardized COSC training in career schools while continuing to stress the importance of utilizing the Leaders Guide for Managing Marines in Distress.

The Air Force believes requiring such training is reasonable and it is already incorporated into existing AF practices. All AF leaders are required to attend annual suicide prevention training, which provides excellent training on recognizing Airmen in distress and referring them for help. All professional military education and commander's courses include formal suicide prevention training as well, which further emphasizes the recognition of and intervention with Airmen in distress. In addition, all deploying Airmen, including leaders, will attend the Landing Gear training before deploying and receive additional detailed information on deployment-related mental health problems (including PTSD).

The Navy's position is yes, this training should be mandatory. The Navy continues to stress the importance of recognizing and combating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other related stress problems incurred during combat operations, deployed situations, and demanding homeport support of these missions. The Navy will maintain and further develop and incorporate standardized Combat Operational Stress Control training in career schools while continuing to stress the importance of incorporating stress mitigation skills as a core leadership competency.

Army: Yes, all Soldiers should receive training in recognizing the signs and symptoms of PTSD. The resilience training now being taught to Soldiers emphasizes how to recognize the signs and symptoms of PTSD, how to take action when these signs are identified, and how to use coping mechanisms to diminish the impact of the trauma that Soldiers might experience. We are implementing resiliency training throughout the career life cycle of Soldiers so that these lessons are regularly refreshed.

STOP LOSS

Question. You issued an order in January 2007 to minimize "stop loss" for the active and reserve forces. The Army now says it will continue this practice well into 2009. At this time last year, 8,540 soldiers were serving involuntarily. Today, that number has surged by 43 percent. We need to respect the decision to step down from service, when a service member decides he or she is ready to move on to the next phase of their lives. Today, the Pentagon prevents some from leaving the service even if their tour of duty is soon to be completed. We need to end this "back door draft" approach—and let these brave men and women move on to the next phase of their lives.

Why steps are being taken by the Defense Department to eliminate the usage of "stop loss?"

Answer. The Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force are not using the stop loss authority. The Department and Army are reviewing the need to use the stop loss authority to meet mission requirements.

FORCE STRUCTURE NEEDS (CURRENT VERSUS FUTURE TECHNOLOGY)

Question. In a recent news article you were quoted as saying "I have noticed too much of a tendency towards what might be called next-war-itis—the propensity of much of the defense establishment to be in favor of what might be needed in a future conflict."

How do Defense Department long-term budgets balance resources between current and future conflicts?

Answer. Current operations are resourced with a combination of budgeted and supplemental funds. When developing future budgets, the Department carefully balances the needs of current and future wars according to the President's priorities, excluding any items eligible for supplemental funding. The President's budget for fiscal year 2009 achieves this balance, following a careful, deliberate decision-making process in which competing demands were considered.

SOFT POWER

Question. You and Secretary Rice have spoken publicly about the need for the United States to improve its nation-building capabilities. The President's budget request for the State Department includes plans to enhance the Office of Reconstruction & Stabilization and to develop a corps of professionals who can provide specific, technical assistance in post-conflict situations.

How do you envision the future relationship between the Defense and State Departments, particularly in post-war Afghanistan and Iraq?

Answer. The Department of Defense will continue to work closely with the Department of State, both in post-war Afghanistan and Iraq and globally. As Secretary Gates has made clear in several speeches and in testimony before Congress, the Department sees a strong need for an increase in spending on the civilian instruments of national security—diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action, and economic reconstruction and development. This includes strong support for the State Department's Civilian Stabilization Initiative to build a cadre of civilians selected and trained to provide stabilization assistance.

TROOPS TO NURSE TEACHERS

Question. Can you speak to the increasing demand for nurses in the military as a result of the ongoing war in Iraq?

Answer. The demand for Army nurses (AN's) has increased significantly as a result of the global war on terror. The mission in Iraq requires a minimum of 400–500 Army nurses per year. Military treatment facilities have experienced an increased demand of nursing services for Service members and family members in both the inpatient and outpatient settings, particularly for operating rooms, intensive care and burn care beds, rehabilitative medicine services, traumatic brain injury, and mental health care. We predict an increased demand for nurse case managers as our warrior in transition population continues to expand. We also predict an increase in demand for military nurses as the Army grows. The Army Nurse Corps has 700-plus additional positions documented for requirements.

Question. Recently, the Nurse Corps Chiefs testified on DOD medical programs and discussed many of the challenging aspects to military nurse recruitment and retention.

What is DOD doing to recruit and retain nurses?

Answer. The Department of Defense is using a variety of recruitment programs from accession bonuses, Reserve Officer Training Corps, tuition assistance and reimbursement, and enlisted to officer programs. Retention efforts include Duty Under Instruction for Nursing graduate and advanced practice degrees; tuition assistance for graduate degrees in Nursing as well as other fields, and advanced practice degrees in nursing; and expanded opportunities in assignments to influence health care as a whole, particularly in executive medicine. The 2007 Report to Congress on the "Impact of the Nursing Shortage in the Military Health System" provides exhaustive detail and specifics on recruitment and retention challenges and interventions.

Question. Last year, the Defense Appropriations subcommittee asked each branch to report on the nursing shortage and efforts in which the military is currently engaged or see potential. In the response from the Army, General Pollock discussed the faculty augmentation program—a partnership between the Army and the University of Maryland. In this partnership, General Pollock explains that DOD received no direct incentive to begin the partnership, yet the Army still benefits from the project.

Is DOD exploring an expansion or replication of this project?

Answer. The pilot program may be replicated pending the outcome of a research grant from the Tri-service Nursing Research Program. This research project will examine the recruiting benefits derived from the pilot program. Quantitative data will be collected on the students' career choices (military nursing or civilian) to determine motives for making their selections. The research program will also review the qualitative nurse faculty experience and student experience.

Question. How can the Senate be helpful?

Answer. The Department believes encouraging the retired military nurse population to pursue post-retirement employment as nursing faculty in civilian universities will expose nursing students to the benefits of the military while increasing the availability of eligible nursing faculty to address the national nursing shortage.

Question. What has DOD learned as a result of this partnership?

Answer. The partnership program with the University of Maryland has provided the opportunity for the detailed Army Nurse Corps (ANC) officers to acquire the education, training, and skills to serve as nurse educators. These skills, which are broader than those acquired in military centric training environments, include the following: curriculum development and implementation, clinical supervision of baccalaureate students, establishment of faculty-to-peer relationships with academia, development of student evaluation processes in collegiate education, development of relevant student testing instruments, incorporation of researched based findings into clinical practice, methodology for teaching and evaluating critical thinking in student populations, integration of medical simulation into the education process, evaluation of scholarly writing, and development of requisite skill as professional collegiate level faculty. Ultimately, the program has better prepared these officers to serve as educators and provided them with the skill sets to develop and implement new programs of instruction that mirror that of professional academia.

In addition, the pilot project has already been a successful ANC recruiting tool. The entire faculty continues to participate directly or indirectly with recruitment. The ANC recruiter remains in contact with all six ANC faculty. To date, nine referrals have resulted in appointments with the recruiter; four of those appointments led to ANC contracts to serve on active duty. The ANC will continue to track the recruiting benefits derived from this partnership.

Question. During the DOD medical programs hearing, the Nurse Corps Chiefs expressed support for the Troops to Nurse Teachers program the Senate included in fiscal year 2008 DOD Authorization.

If the program was authorized and funds were appropriated, how do you think it would impact the military's recruitment and retention efforts?

Answer. The Departments has a contract with the RAND Corporation to assess the proposed program, which will include an assessment of the impact on recruitment and retention. The study's projected completion date is June 2009.

Question. One of the major recruitment strategies for the Army and other Military Nurse Corps is the Reserve Officers' Training Corps or ROTC.

In recent years, how effective has this program been in recruiting and preparing nurses for a career in the military?

Answer. The Nurse Corps Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is a long established and important means of accession to military service, and has been effective in preparing nurses for a career in the military. During the four-year academic and practical nursing training, cadets and midshipmen learn the basics of general military education, leadership, and behavior. In addition, each Service provides a wide range of immersion opportunities for the student from working in military treatment facilities to shipboard cruises.

Upon commissioning the ROTC officer does not have to attend further officer training, and is available for immediate assignment as a Nurse Corps officer. In all other forms of accession, the Service member must attend some form of Service-specific officer training program that typically lasts about six weeks. There is an obvious learning curve for those who must attend Service-specific officer training, and who are unacquainted with the military culture, which typifies Direct Commission and Nurse Candidate officers. Former enlisted Service members acclimate much easier, but still must make the cultural transition from enlisted to officer.

Army Nurse Corps ROTC recruitment from fiscal year 2002-fiscal year 2006 comprised, on average 39 percent of their total Nurse Corps recruitment. During that same period the Army met, on average 66 percent of their Nurse Corps ROTC accession goals.

The Navy Nurse Corps ROTC recruitment from fiscal year 2002- fiscal year 2006 comprised, on average, 19 percent of their total Nurse Corps recruitment, and they met, on average, 93 percent of their ROTC accession goals over the same period.

The Air Force Nurse Corps ROTC recruitment from fiscal year 2002-fiscal year 2006 comprised 13 percent of their total Nurse Corps recruitment. No data is available on Air Force Nurse Corps ROTC accession goals.

Question. How well does this program recruit underrepresented populations to the military?

Answer. The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs do a good job in attracting underrepresented populations in their Nursing programs. The diversity percentage of nurse commissionees has largely been at or above the diversity percentage for Service ROTC programs' total production over the last five years.

	Total Nurses	Minority Nurses	Percent of Minority Nurses
2003			
Army	118	43	36
Navy/Marine	41	13	32
Air Force	20	5	25
DOD Total	179	61	34
2004			
Army	153	43	28
Navy/Marine	37	14	38
Air Force	36	7	19
DOD Total	226	64	28
2005			
Army	143	44	31
Navy/Marine	39	8	21
Air Force	38	8	21
DOD Total	220	60	27

	Total Nurses	Minority Nurses	Percent of Minority Nurses
2006			
Army	172	54	31
Navy/Marine	34	8	24
Air Force	40	7	18
DOD Total	246	69	28
2007			
Army	155	35	23
Navy/Marine	58	14	24
Air Force	55	11	20
DOD Total	268	60	22

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Question. Last year, the Administration requested $88.3 million for the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program in the fiscal year 2008 National Nuclear Security Administration budget and $30 million in the Department of Defense budget. Congress, on a clear bipartisan basis, eliminated all funding for this program in the NNSA budget in the fiscal year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill. It did provide $15 million for the Navy to study how to place a Reliable Replacement Warhead on a Trident missile.

Since Congress eliminated funding for the Reliable Replacement Warhead program in the NNSA budget, is the Navy still moving forward with its study? If so, why? If not, how are the funds being spent?

Answer. The Navy is conducting an adaptable and integrated arming, fuzing, and firing (AF&F) system study. The funding is required to support a working group of U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force and United Kingdom engineers and to coordinate requirements across services and countries to conduct AF&F system development with multi-platform applicability. Although this effort is identified under RRW, the work is needed to ensure the appropriate technologies are mature for the current programs of record for Navy W88 and AF W78 life extension programs and is relevant to the needed modernization of the electronic AF&F systems in all current or future weapons.

Question. The Administration requested $23 million for the Navy for RRW for fiscal year 2009. According to the Congressional Research Service, the Navy has said that these funds were requested before Congress eliminated all funding for RRW in the National Security Administration's budget for fiscal year 2008 and that these funds will not be spent on RRW. Is that true? If so, how will the funds be spent?

Answer. The funding is required to support a working group of U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force and United Kingdom engineers and to coordinate requirements across services and countries to conduct adaptable and integrated arming, fuzing, and firing (AF&F) system development with multi-platform applicability. Although this effort is identified under RRW, the work is needed to ensure the appropriate technologies are mature for the current programs of record for Navy W88 and AF W78 life extension programs. The Department of Defense (DOD) reconsidered the request for these funds in light of Congress' cut of the fiscal year 2008 budget request. The DOD determined that it was still necessary to request fiscal year 2009 funds and work on the arming, fuzing, and firing system development. The nation's existing weapons are using very old electronic systems and technologies. For the reliability and security of these weapons, the DOD must begin to work on the modernization of the AF&F systems in our nuclear weapons.

Question. The fiscal year 2008 Defense Authorization bill mandated the creation of a Congressionally appointed bipartisan commission to examine the U.S. strategic posture and nuclear weapons policy. It is due to report its findings and recommendations to Congress and the President by December 1, 2008. The Defense Authorization bill also required the next President to conduct a nuclear posture review and issue a report by December 1, 2009. In my view, Congress should not provide any funds to RRW until we have had a chance to review the findings of these two reports.

Are you aware of any problem affecting the safety and reliability of the warheads in the current U.S. nuclear stockpile that would compel us to act now to fund RRW? Is there any new military requirement to replace the existing, well tested warheads?

Answer. The U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile remains safe, secure and reliable with certain manageable exceptions. However, as current nuclear weapons age, scientists and engineers continue to observe unforeseen and unpredicted changes within the nuclear warheads and associated subsystems. Additionally, pursuing successive Life Extension Programs will inevitably accumulate small changes that take the nuclear warheads further away from their original designs that were previously certified through underground nuclear testing. As a result, our confidence in the reliability of our current nuclear weapons stockpile will degrade over time.

As reliability declines, we must be prepared to repair or replace those systems to avoid any capability gaps in our nuclear deterrent. At issue will be how to accomplish this task. Current stockpile systems, which were designed and built in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, involved manufacturing processes that are now difficult or inadvisable to replicate, and they lack modern surety features and technologies that are often difficult to incorporate during Life Extensions.

The funding requested for RRW this year will support the completion the Phase 2/2A feasibility and cost study. The information from the Phase 2/2A effort will inform subsequent decisions and the upcoming posture reviews. Future decisions would be deferred until after completion of the pending reviews.

MILITARY ENERGY/FUEL ALTERNATIVES

Question. Former Secretary of Defense William Perry has stated: "On balance, I believe that we could defer action for many years on the RRW program. And I have no doubt that this would put us in a stronger position to lead the international community in the continuing battle against nuclear proliferation, which threatens us all."

Do you agree and, if not, why not?

Answer. I respectfully disagree.

First, we should not defer action on RRW. As current nuclear weapons age, scientists and engineers continue to observe unforeseen and unpredicted changes within the nuclear warheads and associated subsystems. Additionally, pursuing successive Life Extension Programs will inevitably accumulate small changes that take the nuclear warheads further away from their original designs that were previously certified through underground nuclear testing. As a result, our confidence in the reliability of our current nuclear weapons stockpile will degrade over time. We must be prepared to replace those systems to avoid any capability gaps in our nuclear deterrent. At issue will be how to accomplish this task. Funding for the RRW feasibility and cost study will inform future decisions on the best path ahead.

Second, there is no reason to believe that atrophy of U.S. nuclear forces will help prevent nuclear proliferation and considerable reason to believe that credible U.S. nuclear forces will reduce proliferation. The sizable drawdown in U.S. nuclear forces since the end of the Cold War, the 16-year U.S. moratorium on nuclear testing, or the fact that the United States has not built a new nuclear weapon in nearly two decades, has had no impact on the effort of some countries to acquire nuclear weapons.

Despite negotiated reductions and eliminations under INF, START, and the Moscow Treaty, and without regard to U.S. unilateral reductions, India and Pakistan have become nuclear powers, North Korea has tested a nuclear device, Iran continues to pursue nuclear capability, Russia is modernizing its nuclear force and China is rapidly building up its strategic nuclear capabilities. After surveying this international security environment, both the United Kingdom and France have recently decided to embark upon modernization of their nuclear systems to ensure their strategic deterrents into the mid-century. By contrast, the United States is the only nuclear weapon state that does not have an active nuclear weapons modernization program or the capability to produce a new nuclear weapon.

Finally, robust U.S. nuclear capabilities and a strong commitment to extended deterrence have supported the NPT by allowing allies and friends, both in NATO and elsewhere, to forgo developing their own nuclear weapons. These arrangements are fully consistent with U.S. commitments to abide by the NPT.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED STEVENS

Question. The Supplemental Appropriations bill being considered by the Senate includes provisions that would limit the length of deployments to Iraq, as well as, the dwell times for units returning from Iraq. How would these provisions impact

the Department's ability to manage forces and to provide the commandant commanders with the capabilities they need?

Answer. These provisions would hurt the Department's ability to manage forces and provide commanders with the capabilities they need. As stated in the White House's May 20th Statement of Administration Policy, "The Administration strongly opposes attempts to limit the much needed flexibilities of our commanders in the field during this and future conflicts by codifying current policy regarding deployment schedules."

Question. What efforts are being made to increase the amount of funding the Iraqis, or other coalition partners, are contributing to the CERP program?

Answer. The Department is pursuing efforts on both fronts to increase support of CERP. We requested authority to accept financial contributions to CERP in Iraq and Afghanistan from any person, foreign government, or international organization. Once this authority is granted, we will be able to engage our partners to financially support the very effective CERP program, which enables military commanders to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs within their areas of responsibility by carrying out programs that provide immediate assistance to the local populace.

We have also worked with the Government of Iraq (GoI) to establish a companion program funded by the GoI. Major General Kevin Bergner, Deputy Chief of Staff, Multinational Forces Iraq (MNF–I) and Hak Al-Hakeem, GoI Advisor to the Prime Minister for Reconstruction Affairs and Representative to the Supreme Reconstruction Council, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in April 2008 to implement the GoI Commander's Emergency Response Program (I–CERP). The MOU describes the purpose of the program "to execute urgently needed reconstruction projects for the benefit of the Iraq people by using Iraqi funds . . . I–CERP seeks eventually to match 2008 coalition CF–CERP contributions." The implementation annex to the MOU specifies the types of projects the GoI will fund, such as school construction, health clinics, and water purification facilities. Thus far, the GoI has provided close to $300 million for I–CERP projects. The funds are administered according to the existing rules laid out for execution of the U.S. CERP program.

The Department believes that successful execution will lead to additional Iraq funding and, possibly, funding from Iraq's neighbors.

Question. You have made additional ISR for combat forces in Iraq and Afghanistan a top acquisition priority along with the purchase of MRAP vehicles. Could you provide a more detailed explanation of why you have made additional ISR in theater a top priority and what the greatest needs are at this time?

Answer. As operations in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to evolve, the enduring value of pervasive ISR available to the battlefield commanders has never been higher. Although over the last year the department has taken multiple steps to increase deployed capability, I remain convinced that more must and can be done to provide additional tactical ISR capability to our forces deployed in combat. Accordingly, I have established an ISR Task Force to provide me recommendation on the greatest needs.

Question. I understand you recently visited Fort Bliss, Texas to view some of the latest Future Combat System Technologies. Can you give us your impressions of what you saw during your visit?

Answer. In a speech on May 13, I provided a few observations, which address this question: "A program like FCS—whose total cost could exceed $200 billion if completely built out—must continue to demonstrate its value for the types of irregular challenges we will face, as well as for full-spectrum warfare. I believe that any major weapons program, in order to remain viable, will have to show some utility and relevance to the kind of irregular campaigns that are most likely to engage America's military in the coming decades".

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER

AID TO YEMEN

Question. According to a May 17, 2008 editorial in the Washington Post by Ali Soufan, a former FBI supervisory special agent who was directly involved in the investigation of the bombing of the U.S.S. *Cole*, "Seven years after al-Qaeda terrorists Jamal al-Badawi and Fahd al-Quso confessed to me their crucial involvement in the bombing of the U.S.S. *Cole*, and three years after they were convicted in a Yemeni court—where a judge imposed a death sentence on Badawi—they, along with many other al-Qaeda terrorists, are free."

What criteria are used when setting Section 1206 funding levels? How does the Department of Defense weigh Yemen's lack of cooperation in bringing the *Cole* bombers to justice when considering aid for Yemen?

Answer. State and DOD consider all aspects of the bilateral relationship with Yemen and the need for counterterrorism cooperation when assessing the provision of assistance. As part of that assessment, the Departments consider the net impact that any Section 1206 assistance may have to increase Yemeni capabilities to counter terrorist threats identified by Combatant Commanders and Chiefs of Mission.

Yemen faces many challenges, including trying to govern areas under tribal, not governmental control. The Department uses Section 1206 to help the Republic of Yemen Government's (ROYG) military to establish governmental control over these areas and reduce porous borders available for exploitation by Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. While the United States continues to press Yemen on issues surrounding the attack on the U.S.S. *Cole*, we must also address the continued terrorism threat to Yemen and the United States. The projects we undertake via Section 1206 funding also provide us with more leverage in dealing with Yemen on this and other issues.

In addition, Ali Soufan's statement above is not accurate. While he was free for a short time in October 2007, the ROYG quickly reversed their decision and jailed Badawi later that month. Badawi is now serving out the rest of his sentence. His sentence was reduced to 15 years in prison by a Yemen court.

Question. How much does the Department of Defense plan to request for fiscal year 2008 Section 1206 aid for Yemen? When will it make its request? What program(s) will the money fund?

Answer. Because Section 1206 is designed to be able to meet urgent and emergent needs, it is impossible to state with certainly what will ultimately be requested under Section 1206 authority for fiscal year 2008. Of programs approved and notified to Congress to date, however, none have been for Yemen, nor does the Department have any current plans to provide Section 1206 training or equipment to Yemen during this fiscal year.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR PETE V. DOMENICI

MILITARY ENERGY/FUEL ALTERNATIVES

Question. Hybrid technology, Bio-fuels and other "green friendly" technology is currently providing some near term solutions in the civilian sector. Recently, the Air Force demonstrated this technology by flying a B–1 Bomber over New Mexico and Texas at supersonic speed using a synthetic 50/50 fuel blend.

What type of fuel alternatives or green technology research and development are the services currently working on?

Answer. The Department is pursuing a variety of efforts in alternative fuels, primarily focused on testing and certification, and enabling our systems to use different fuels regardless of the feedstock or production method. Efforts include improving the combustion process of engines using alternative fuels, optimizing fuel composition, understanding the equipment and systems impacts of alternative fuel use, such as corrosion and wear, and establishing protocols for certification.

For example, the Air Force has certified the B–52 to use a 50/50 blend of synthetic fuel (synfuel). Tests are underway to certify the C–17, B–1, and F–22 in the near future, with an objective to certify the entire fleet by early 2011, and the Army is testing synfuel in tactical vehicles and generators. In December 2007, a C–17 completed the first transcontinental flight using a synfuel blend, and a B–1 flew at supersonic speeds using a synfuel blend in March 2008. The Air Force has a goal to obtain 50 percent of its fuel used in the continental United States from domestic sources by 2016.

The Department also is exploring various technologies for producing alternative jet fuels. For instance, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is soliciting research proposals to affordably create jet fuels using oil rich crops, such as algae, at energy density levels sufficient to power military systems.

Question. How do fueling alternatives affect the development and fielding of the Future Combat Systems?

Answer. The Future Combat System is designed to work with current battlefield fuels. The Army will test synthetic and other alternative fuels in the Future Combat System, as part of its larger testing and certification program.

Question. Are any current combat vehicles/systems being retrofitted to accept alternative fuel?

Answer. No. The policy is to procure fuels that are compatible with existing systems. Certification is underway in some systems, like the C–17, B–1 and F–22, to ensure these fuels can be used without causing long-term damage to engines.

Question. The Air Force is currently investigating nuclear, small reactor technology as a power plant source for some of its bases.

What is your opinion on this technology being used by the other services?

Answer. The Air Force is considering small nuclear reactors as a way to use underutilized land on its installations. The Department will evaluate the feasibility of a larger scale program after we receive an assessment from the Air Force.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL

Question. What mechanisms are in place to ensure all service members in theater have sufficient body armor?

Answer. The Department is committed to providing the best available ballistic force protection to its service members and its civilians. Each Military Service has a slightly different process, but all ensure our deployed personnel have the best protection.

For the Army, the goal is to field body armor to all deployers and next to deploy soldiers in the predeployment phases at Home Station for Active Component, Mobilization Station for Reserve Component, or at the continental United States (U.S.) (CONUS) Replacement Centers for Individual Augmentees. Soldiers or DOD civilians arriving in theater without body armor are outfitted at our fixed sites at Camp Buehring (Kuwait) and Bagram (Afghanistan) as they go through the Reception Staging Onward Movement and Integration (RSOI) process. The Army has also provided a stockage of body armor to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad for Department of State personnel serving on Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Any capability enhancements to body armor such as the Improved Outer Tactical Vest (IOTV) are handled by our fielding teams who travel to all camps and Forward Operating Bases upgrading units and soldiers based on theater commanders' priorities. Additionally, Program Evaluation Office—Soldier, the program manager for body armor, conducts a weekly teleconference with theater commanders to coordinate deployment upgrades for body armor.

For the Navy, each individual command that has personnel being deployed for the Global War on Terror (GWOT) operations are required to outfit its personnel with the complete Table of Allowance (TOA) gear that is needed for the region to which they'll be deployed. This is a pre-deployment requirement that must be met before the personnel are cleared for departure to theater.

For the Marine Corps, the Program Manager for Infantry Combat Equipment (PM ICE) is the Total Life Cycle Manager for USMC Body Armor. Fielded assets are delivered to Consolidated Issue Facilities (CIF) for follow-on issue to deploying Marines. Combatant Commanders in theater will prescribe the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with higher headquarters direction and based on the situation, to include assessment of enemy threat, environmental conditions, and the tactical missions assigned to their units. Management of fielded assets is executed through the Logistics Command (LOGCOM) Albany to ensure optimal distribution of assets is consistent with the requirements of the operating force commanders.

For the Air Force, the Directorate of Logistics Readiness is the focal point for Air Force "enterprise" purchases of Body Armor and individual protective equipment (IPE). The Directorate of Logistics Readiness develops policy for the distribution of body armor and IPE at home station and in-theater. Body Armor, and other protective gear, is prepositioned in three Expeditionary Theater Distribution Centers (ETDCs). Most deployers process through one of the three ETDCs to obtain protective gear prior to entering the theater. Body Armor, and other protective gear, is also prepositioned at nine Expeditionary Logistic Readiness Squadrons in the Area of Responsibility (AOR). This provides sustainment for lost and/or damaged body armor and IPE. Deployers who do not process through an ETDC obtain their body armor from their home station or coordinate their equipment requirements through their Major Command (MAJCOM), Air Command—Air Force (AFCENT), and/or Air Staff. Deployment Reporting Instructions provide guidance on how and where to obtain body armor and other protective gear when tasked to deploy to specific locations. These processes are in place to ensure sufficient gear is available and AF personnel are equipped prior to entering the theater.

Through various processes, reviews and system controls, United States Special Operations Command, (USSOCOM) ensures that its forces have sufficient body armor in theater. The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), be-

cause of its unique authorities under 10 USC 167, relies on a combination of Special Operations Forces (SOF) unique equipment, along with service-common body armor provided to each of the component commands. For USSOCOM, the mandate is priority fielding of body armor systems to individuals through their respective component commands. Prioritization is based on unit pre-deployment training window, rotational schedule to theater of operations, and direction provided from each service component's requirements/logistics division representatives. Individuals are sized, issued body armor systems, and trained on proper wear and use during their pre-deployment training window. Body armor system fielding requirements to SOF are reviewed and validated weekly by the Program Management Office with each service component. Adjustments to fielding schedule are executed as required based on service component changes in deployment priorities. Also, residing on the USSOCOM Special Operations Forces Sustainment Asset Visibility Information Exchange (SSAVIE) internet portal is the Special Operations Forces Personal Equipment Advanced Requirements (SPEAR) website. This website provides total asset visibility to USSOCOM and Component leaders on body armor systems issued to each individual SOF member. Body armor systems are shipped to unit supply/property managers for issue to the specific unit individuals. Once a body armor system is issued to the individual, the transaction is recorded in the SPEAR database. Replacement body armor system components are forward staged and managed in the local theater of operations to support Joint Special Operations Task Forces and expedite replacement of individual body armor systems due to damage or combat loss.

Overall, each Military Service has processes in place to ensure sufficient gear is available and DOD personnel are equipped prior to entering a theater of operations.

Question. What kind of oversight has been exercised by the Guard and Reserves to ensure that returning American heroes are lawfully reemployed by the employers for whom they worked prior to deployment?

Answer. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), covers the employment rights of Guard and Reserve members. The Department of Labor (DOL) has statutory authority to enforce the USERRA statute. The Department of Defense (DOD) has an inherent responsibility to take care of its Service members. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a DOD organization under my purview, provides information and education to Guard and Reserve members and their employers, about USERRA, and offers a mediation service to resolve workplace disputes in an informal manner. Through a Memorandum of Understanding between DOD and DOL, ESGR informs Service members about contacting DOL if the ESGR mediation is unable to resolve a labor dispute within 14 days. We believe this process offers a timely and effective mechanism for resolution while providing a means for formal investigation by the appropriate authority at DOL.

ESGR is also working with the Services to raise awareness of USERRA and to provide USERRA training to all Reserve component members. In fact, in fiscal year 2007, ESGR's 4,500 volunteers provided USERRA briefings to more than 232,000 Service members. We also continue to work with the appropriate Federal agencies such as DOL's Veterans Employment and Training Service (DOL–VETS), the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Small Business Administration, to better communicate to Service members and their employers about USERRA, transition assistance and reintegration programs. As we have mobilized National Guard Brigade Combat Teams during fiscal year 2008, we have worked proactively with those units several months before mobilization to ensure Service members' rights and responsibilities are understood.

The single biggest concern we hear from employers and Service members is about predictability of rotation schedules and duration. To that end, I issued policy guidance in January 2007 to move Reserve component use to a predictable cycle. We believe that while this guidance may take some time to become fully operational as units reset onto this cycle, greater predictability will go a long way toward ameliorating USERRA claims. Furthermore, DOD and DOL have established interagency working groups to create and execute information awareness programs aimed at Reserve component members and their employers.

All that being said, we have seen employer support remain strong. Thousands of employers go beyond the requirements of USERRA to provide compensation and benefits to their employees while they are serving their military duty. This support is not isolated to large employers, but extends to small employers as well as public sector employers.

Question. I remain concerned about the safety of our troops in military vehicles given the frequency and lethality of IED incidents. Please provide the following information regarding up-armored vehicles and mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles (MRAPs):What vehicles are currently in theatre? What is the cost comparison

between up-armored and MRAP vehicles? What is the total number of OEF and OIF deaths sustained in each different type of vehicle currently in theatre? Is this information kept by DOD and, if so, is it considered in the procurement process? Is safety of the troops the paramount consideration of fielding up-armored and MRAP vehicles? What are the other competing considerations? How are they weighted in the decision-making process? What vehicles has the Department prioritized for future procurement and why?

Answer.

What vehicles are currently in theatre?

There are several variants of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles and up-armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) which are outlined below.

MRAP Vehicles.—There are three distinct categories of the "Family of MRAP vehicles" provided to the Services, and they support the following mission profiles:

—Category I: Urban combat operations (transport no less than 6 personnel).

—Category II: Multi-mission operations such as convoy lead, troop transport, ambulance, EOD, maneuver battalions, and combat engineering (transport up to 10 personnel).

—Category III: Mine/IED clearance operations and explosive ordnance disposal (transport no less than 6 personnel, 5 with additional equipment installed).

Up-armored HMMWVs.—The M1151, also known as the Expanded Capacity Vehicles (ECVs), replaces the M1114. The up-armored HMMWVs currently in theatre are the: M1151A1: Up-armored armament carrier, M1152A1: Up-armored troop/shelter carrier, and M1165A1: Up-armored command/troop carrier.

What is the cost comparison between up-armored and MRAP vehicles?

The range of the cost comparison is considerable in accordance with quantity buys. As a result, the average cost, experienced to date, for the MRAP vehicles and up-armored HMMWVs are outlined below:

MRAP vehicles.—Category I: $500,000; Category II: $530,000; and Category III: $700,000.

Up-armored HMMWVs.—M1151A1/B1 (up-armored armament carrier): $158,000; M1152A1/B2 (up-armored troop/shelter carrier): $125,000; and M1165A1/B3 (up-armored command/troop carrier): $144,000.

What is the total number of OEF and OIF deaths sustained in each different type of vehicle currently in theatre?

The Department tracks these statistics and can provide you the specifics in a classified forum. MRAP vehicles have demonstrated increased survivability and force protection against attacks as demonstrated in a decreased casualty rate when compared to other vehicles operating in Theater.

Is this information kept by DOD and, if so, is it considered in the procurement process?

The Department makes this information available to all programs to assist in the development and procurement process. This information is utilized in the development of the System Threat Assessment Report for each program with updates provides as required for consideration in the development of their acquisition strategies.

Is safety of the troops the paramount consideration of fielding up-armored and MRAP vehicles?

Yes.

What are the other competing considerations?

As the Department continues to armor existing vehicles and buy heavily armored vehicles, such as MRAP, there is a trade off between survivability, payload and performance. By increasing protection through armoring, we risk losing some payload and/or performance, thus decreasing mobility and maneuverability.

How are they weighted in the decision-making process?

Sacrificing performance and payload for protection is a necessary concession in places like Iraq where the MRAP has proven to save lives. Much of Iraq's existing road infrastructure supports heavy vehicles like the MRAP; unfortunately, they do not perform as well in off-road situations. Further, their weight and size make them unsuitable for alleyways and many unimproved surface roads and bridges. To mitigate these tactical considerations, the military maintains an inventory of up-armored HMMWVs (UAH); however the additional armor on UAH increases their weight, degrades their service life, and increases maintenance requirements.

What vehicles has the Department prioritized for future procurement and why?

The Services are actively engaged in implementing a tactical and combat vehicle modernization and recapitalization strategy with the intent to recapitalize, modernize and eventually replace its existing light, medium and heavy tactical wheeled vehicles with either a new next generation vehicle class or more capable recapital-

ized tactical wheeled vehicles that have integrated new technologies and incorporated lessons learned from operations involving the Global War on Terrorism. Programs such as the Joint Lightweight Tactical Vehicle, Marine Personnel Carrier, Stryker, Future Combat System, and MRAP vehicles are part of this global view.

Question. What are the advantages to having so many different types of MRAPs in theatre? Would it not be beneficial to have more uniformity among the vehicles to streamline training, repair work, etc.?

Answer: The Department initiated the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle program in January 2007 and formed the MRAP Task Force, shortly thereafter, with one primary objective: Field as many MRAPs as quickly as possible. This strategy was met by establishing procurement delivery orders with all vendors who met specific requirements. This led, ultimately, to fielding vehicles from five manufacturers, and allowed us to produce and deliver over 1,600 vehicles to Theater by the end of 2007. The fact that we have multiple variants can add complexity to sustainment, but achievement of the overall goal—field as many vehicles as fast as possible—saved lives.

The Services recognize that different types of MRAPs are applicable to different missions and threats, and as such provide greater flexibility and tactical advantages depending on the situation. There are three distinct categories of the "Family of MRAP vehicles," and they support the following mission profiles:

—Category I: Urban combat operations (transport no less than six personnel).

—Category II: Multi-mission operations such as convoy lead, troop transport, ambulance, explosive ordnance disposal, maneuver battalions, and combat engineering (transport up to ten personnel).

—Category III: Mine/IED clearance operations and explosive ordnance disposal (transport no less than six personnel, five with additional equipment installed).

It is always good to maximize commonality and uniformity between military systems when possible. However, the Defense Department's responsibility is to the Warfighter's requirements. The principle and driving thrust for the MRAP program was to get the best systems meeting the survivability requirements and deliver MRAP vehicles to the Warfighter as quickly as possible, hence the acquisition of multiple variants from multiple vendors.

To counter the logistic requirements induced with this type of rapid procurement, the Defense Department has initiated evaluations of each vendor's components, and then cross referencing those major sub-systems which are common across the fleet. For example, Cummins engines are used in two models of the MRAP vehicle and the Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) used by the U.S. Army. It is also very popular in the commercial/consumer market for uses in motor homes, farm equipment and cross country line haulers.

Furthermore, the military is discovering that some of the sub-components used in the MRAPs are common with other military systems already in the inventory.

Another measure the Defense Department is developing is a sustainment strategy that will employ a "Hybrid" solution using a Joint Logistics Integrator (JLI), manufacturer Field Service Representatives (FSRs), and government civilian mechanics working in concert with an organic military supply chain. The Joint Program Office (JPO) developed and contracted for an innovative consortium among the five major Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs). The consortium provides cross-trained FSRs from each company who can service any MRAP vehicle. These FSRs are trained on all vehicle variants regardless of manufacturer. This will support a flexible and responsive theater capability for commanders across theater. The hybrid support solution also employs depot mechanics deployed into theater to supplement organic and field-level maintenance teams. These depot mechanics are also cross trained on each vehicle variant, thereby providing a unique and flexible maintenance capability for all vehicle variants. The JPO MRAP vehicle consortium guarantees that unit level commanders from all Services have a single interface for sustainment and maintenance issues with his or her MRAP fleet. This strategy will dramatically reduce the in-theater logistics support footprint and increase its effectiveness. The JLI will assist the JPO in synchronizing multiple OEM issues into one clear operations report and view.

Question. Last week, Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell made statements that the casualty rate is much higher in an up-armored humvee than in an MRAP. If true, why does the military continue to use up-armored humvees? Are there any humvee-class MRAP vehicles currently being tested for use in theatre by DOD in order to improve the safety of our troops? Are there plans to field them in the future? If so, what is the status of procurement?

Answer. Our military forces utilize up-armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles for separate missions. Up-armored HMMWVs allow for greater maneuverability

in areas where MRAP vehicles have limited transportability, payload and off-road capabilities.

DOD has no HMMWV-class MRAP vehicles currently being tested for use in theatre. All HMMWVs, in theater, that operate outside the wire are outfitted with up-armored kits. However, the Joint Lightweight Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) is a joint program that is viewed as the bridge vehicle between a M1152 up-armored HMMWV and the MRAP. JLTV is expected to provide the Army and Marine Corps with a family of more survivable vehicles and greater payload than the current HMWWV.

Question. Section 8119 of Public Law 110–116 provides in relevant part that:

"(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department of Defense shall complete work on the destruction of the United States stockpile of lethal chemical agents and munitions, including those stored at Blue Grass Army Depot, Kentucky, and Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colorado, by the deadline established by the Chemical Weapons Convention, and in no circumstances later than December 31, 2017.

"(b) REPORT.—

"(1) Not later than December 31, 2007, and every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the parties described in paragraph (2) a report on the progress of the Department of Defense toward compliance with this section.

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"(3) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the updated and projected annual funding levels necessary to achieve full compliance with this section. The projected funding levels for each report shall include a detailed accounting of the complete life-cycle costs for each of the chemical disposal projects. . . ."

The report due on June 30, 2008 will be the first opportunity the Department of Defense has had to lay out how it plans to comply with the 2017 deadline mandated by this statute. Included in these plans will be funding levels that the Department believes it needs to comply with the law. If in fact the Department decides it needs funding above the fiscal year 2009 request to comply with the law, will this need for additional funding be conveyed to Congress through a formal budget amendment? If not, by what means will the Department formally request such additional funds?

Answer. As required by Section 8119 of the fiscal year 2008 DOD Appropriations Act, the Department is currently reviewing various options (to include cost estimates) and the feasibility for completing the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile by 2012 and 2017. The assessment of these options will be reflected in the semi-annual report to Congress in late June 2008, and will be considered during the development of the fiscal year 2010 President's budget request.

Question. How could the repairing and reconditioning of equipment for members of the Guard and Reserve be improved?

Answer. Repair and reconditioning activities involve the necessary depot and intermediate level maintenance required to restore equipment returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to pre-deployment conditions. The key imperative is to provide sufficient funding in time to ensure depots can do their work without delay or interruption. Forward deployment of Guard and Reserve equipment requires quick turnaround of these assets for training. Timely reconstitution funding allows the Military Departments to provide Guard and Reserve members with replacement capability quickly and to ensure the workload at the depots is performed in the most expeditious, cost-effective manner.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO ADMIRAL MICHAEL G. MULLEN

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD J. DURBIN

SUICIDE

Question. Over the past year, Congress has provided hundreds of millions in funding to the military to improve mental health care for our troops. Over the past 6 years, the suicide rate for active-duty soldiers has grown from 9.8 per 100,000 in 2001 to 17.5 per 100,000 in 2006.

What specific actions is the DOD taking to reduce suicide?

Answer. While standardized civilian suicide rates (most recent 2005) remain significantly higher (47 percent) than equivalent age/gender-matched military suicide rates (2007), the Department is very closely monitoring suicide statistics and trends. We are committed to creating and improving programs to identify those at risk and provide preventive education and appropriate treatment.

Existing programs include:
—annual suicide prevention training of Service members and DOD civilian employees;
—leadership training in suicide prevention;
—military leadership training to manage Service and family members in distress;
—frontline supervisor training;
—dissemination of suicide prevention training materials, videos, and posters;
—monitoring and analyzing lessons learned from suicides;
—risk assessment advanced training for providers;
—executing nationally-recognized best practice suicide prevention initiatives;
—multiple initiatives to reduce stigma from seeking mental health support;
—chaplains' initiatives in suicide prevention and absolute confidentiality;
—suicide prevention week actives;
—Signs of Suicide programs in DOD school systems for children/adolescents;
—train the trainer workshops in various suicide prevention modalities as Ask your buddy, Care for your buddy, Escort your buddy, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills training, safeTALK;
—chain teaching programs for suicide prevention;
—case discussions of suicide prevention;
—improved access to care with more mental health providers and 7-day routine access standard;
—postvention support programs for unit members/families of those who commit suicide;
—confidential behavioral health surveys to monitor risk factors and substance abuse;
—relationship building programs such as the Strong Bonds Program;
—civilian services staff training (morale, welfare and recreation, gym, hobby/auto shops, etc.) as the "Are You Listening?" program;
—substance abuse education and training;
—military family life consultant program;
—family support programs;
—family advocacy programs;
—sexual abuse recovery and support programs;
—community health promotion councils;
—integration delivery systems for psychological and other support;
—community action information boards;
—family readiness units;
—financial management training programs;
—responsible drinking educational programs;
—deployment support programs—Battlemind, Landing Gear, Operational Stress Control;
—web-based distance learning programs for suicide prevention;
—suicide prevention pocket cards and brochures;
—community awareness marketing for support services;
—drug demand reduction and prevention services/education programs;
—personal readiness summits;
—standardized suicide data reporting and DOD comprehensive database to monitor suicide;
—annual DOD/Department of Veterans Affairs suicide prevention conferences with leading academics and government agencies;
—academic collaborations developing suicide nomenclature;
—DOD-produced public announcements/videos re: suicide prevention; and
—active DOD Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee coordinating dissemination and coordination of programs.

TBI/PTSD

Question. According to a recent RAND study, one in five Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from PTSD. Nineteen percent report a possible traumatic brain injury during their deployment. Only half have sought treatment because of the stigma attached with seeking treatment and because of concerns about the quality of care. According to RAND, half of those who request treatment receive only "minimally adequate" support.

What steps is DOD taking to encourage servicemen and servicewomen to pursue help and to address the reasons why treatment is not sought?

Answer. It should first be noted that Service Members seek care for psychological health issues at the same rate as their civilian counterparts; in the RAND study, roughly half of civilians and military members who met the criteria for PTSD or

major depression had sought help. Stigma is the overarching similarity that keeps both civilians and Service members from seeking care. However, acknowledgement of this similarity is not stopping us from identifying other causes which prevent members from seeking care and working to mitigate these factors. In addition to stigma, structural aspects of services (wait times, availability of providers) and institutional policies which result in real or perceived adverse career consequences for individuals who seek treatment are being addressed.

Stigma

Stigma regarding psychological health services is a significant personal and cultural issue which must be addressed by a systematic approach in order to encourage Service members to seek care. The Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury were established to assist in this endeavor by providing leadership, facilitating culture change and advocating a consistent, evidence-based approach across the Services, tailored to DOD/Service member needs. As of August 27, 2008, 52 DCoE staff are on board, and staffing numbers are projected to reach 155 by October 31, 2008. Eight directorates are now at initial operating capability: (1) Resilience and Prevention, (2) Training and Education, (3) Clearinghouse, Outreach and Advocacy, (4) Psychological Health Clinical Standards of Care, (5) TBI Clinical Standards of Care, (6) Research, QA Program Evaluation & Surveillance, (7) Telehealth and Technology, and (8) Strategy, Plans and Programming. Completion of DCoE CONOPS and internal assessment metrics is projected for September 1, 2008. Meantime, Psychological Heath and TBI Standardization Workgroup meetings are underway with VA, National Institutes of Health, and selected academic institution participation to discuss standardization of definitions, metrics, outcomes, and instrumentation for Psychological Health and TBI surveillance and research. DCoE is partnering with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency, coalition partners and others in the public and private sectors to share the stories of line leaders, celebrities and other individuals who have volunteered their own stories of overcoming psychological health problems. DCoE has established a public website, a wide-reaching newsletter and is planning a 24/7 call center for Service members, family members and clinicians—all in an effort to educate, facilitate treatment and decrease stigma. Service training programs have been developed for providers, line leaders, families and community leaders, and DCoE is actively at work standardizing these curricula while ensuring Service-specific needs are addressed. The Commandant of the Marine Corps recently released a videotaped message emphasizing that seeking help when needed is courageous, expected and, indeed, a fundamental duty of every Marine. Leadership is taking this issue very seriously.

Despite the intense efforts to combat stigma, it remains exceedingly difficult to directly quantify, and even more difficult to demonstrate a direct causal relationship between efforts and outcomes. The Army's Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) V Study surveyed individuals with five separate questions to assess their perception of stigma: when compared with 2006, all five questions demonstrated a significant reduction in the perception of stigma. There are many other positive, indirect indicators available. For example, despite the decreasing numbers of traumatic combat casualties, current Military Health System metrics report a 100 percent increase in psychological health referrals in the past year. Psychological health referrals from Post Deployment Health Assessments rose from 3 to 5 percent. Post Deployment Health Reassessment referrals for psychological health issues increased from 6 to 8 percent in the first quarter fiscal year 2008. While it is too early to determine if the increase is the result of a reduction in stigma or an increase in psychological distress or both, in the context of decreasing combat casualties it appears likely that efforts at decreasing stigma are beginning to have a positive effect. Standardization and centralization of DOD data collection and analysis should begin to yield more definitive Joint data by year's end.

Wait Times and Provider Availability

Wait times are the metric by which DOD measures its success at providing care within a predetermined acceptable amount of time. This is affected by numbers of episodes of psychological health care sought, as well as numbers and availability of health care providers. The TRICARE wait time standard for routine psychological health care was previously established at 30 days. In order to expedite care delivery, DOD has taken three specific actions: (1) the wait time standard was decreased from 30 days to 7 days for an initial mental health appointment, (2) aggressive measures are underway to increase numbers of uniformed and civilian DOD mental health providers and (3) mental health functions have been moved into primary care settings to increase availability.

A population based, risk-adjusted staffing model was developed to more clearly inform us of the required number of mental health providers in given locations. DOD contracted with the Center for Naval Analysis to validate the model and expects results later this year. Using that validated model, DOD will adjust the requirements and disposition of psychological health providers in the next fiscal year. In the meantime, we are actively addressing the documented shortage of mental health providers.

Mental Health providers are in short supply across the country—complicated by hard-to-serve areas, such as remote rural locations. To increase providers in these areas, a partnership was initiated with the Public Health Service, which will provide 200 uniformed mental health providers to the Military Health System. Twenty-five mental health care providers are already working in DOD; 35 additional mental health professionals have been recruited and are currently in the training pipeline destined for DOD MTFs in need; the remaining 145 are yet to be recruited, but are anticipated to be on board at full operational capability in DOD MTFs by the end of fiscal year 2009. Civilian and contract providers are also being employed to increase psychological health staff; military treatment facility commanders have hiring authority to increase their staffs to meet unique demands. In the past few months, the TRICARE managed care support contractors have added more than 2,800 new network psychological health providers and reached out to thousands of non-network providers to identify clinicians who would be available to take on new patients if a network provider could not be identified with the established wait times.

Other initiatives to increase provider availability include embedding mental health providers in line units, training primary care providers to offer evidence-based mental health care directly to their beneficiaries, and building a telehealth network to provide mental health services to underserved populations. Special pays for active duty psychiatrists have been significantly increased, and some psychologists also are now eligible for special pays with the goal of increasing retention of experienced active duty mental health providers.

Building Resilience

Lengthy, ongoing, and multiple deployments in our contemporary operating environment are stressful, demanding, and challenging on every level. More frequent and longer deployments increase the risk of stress injury. To foster prevention, encourage Service Members to pursue help and to address potential reasons why treatment is not sought, the DCoE endorses the Resilience Continuum Model which represents a cultural shift from treatment of illness to promotion of psychological health. The model promotes psychological health activities as a readiness issue and combat multiplier (seeking care when needed is considered a psychological health activity). The model will also be used to teach and train commanders and leaders at all levels to encourage their peers and subordinates to seek care when needed. There are several reasons why Warriors may not seek care. One reason (which is perhaps an under-recognized reason) is the lack of self awareness. It is common for Warriors to be unaware that they are in need of help. The Resilience Continuum Model can teach/train Warriors to recognize symptoms of distress and to apply proven tools that build resilience to mitigate risk, maximize performance, and prevent dysfunction. The Resilience Continuum Model will roll out on November 18, 2008 as part of the DOD Resilience Conference.

Institutional Policies

In some cases, DOD and Service policies are at odds with measures underway to reduce stigma associated with psychological health care. Evaluation of those policies/procedures that result in real or perceived adverse career consequences for individuals with psychological health problems are being reviewed and changed when possible and appropriate.

The recent change to Question 21 of the SF–86, or national security background questionnaire is a good example. Within the military, there are numerous vocational specialties that require attention to medical readiness or suitability for duty. Certain conditions may disqualify individuals from performing their duties within that vocation, either on a short-term or permanent basis. In the interest of safety and risk management, for example, removing an individual from their duties as an air traffic controller (during flight operations) aboard a nuclear powered aircraft carrier due to a condition that is associated with impairments in attention and concentration is necessary. Question 21 of the SF–86 asks whether one has received mental health care. Thus, when considering sensitive duties which require a security clearance, there has long been a palpable fear among Service members that their military and/or professional careers could be jeopardized if they were to receive a psy-

chiatric diagnosis/treatment which would than have to be reported on a national security background questionnaire. The reality is that most who have had a documented mental health condition and/or who may have received care for such condition do not often lose their security clearance, although they may have their clearance held pending an additional psychiatric evaluation. Still, the perception of threat or feeling of vulnerability remains. In a recent shift to support Service members' efforts to seek psychological health care, we have seen a change in Question 21, which now permits applicants to answer "no" if the psychological healthcare was strictly related to adjustments from service in a military combat environment. While this change does not address all of the concerns that service members have about the potential impact on their careers for seeking out psychological health care, it is a large step in the right direction.

Question. Why are military members receiving subpar support? What is your response to the finding that half of the treatment received is only "minimally adequate?"

Answer. The Department of Defense is appreciative of the RAND Report, "Invisible Wounds of War," as it supports the lessons we have learned since 9/11 and the actions we have been taking in response to the congressionally directed Task Force on Mental Health. DOD is well down the road in addressing the Task Force's vision of change by focusing our efforts on six key objectives: (1) leadership, culture and advocacy, (2) access to care, (3) quality of care, (4) resilience building and stigma reduction, (5) surveillance, research and evaluation and (6) care transition and coordination.

The RAND study assertions of "subpar" support and "minimally adequate" care are inextricably linked to the RAND definition of quality care. In order to be considered "high quality of care" in the RAND approach, treatment regimens must be evidence-based, efficient, equitable and timely. According to RAND's criteria, in order to meet the threshold for "minimally adequate" psychotherapy, at least eight sessions must be provided. It should be noted that in 2007 a committee from the Institute of Medicine reviewed scientific studies of PTSD treatment and was unable to draw conclusions regarding optimal length of treatment with psychopharmacology or psychotherapy. Clearly this is an area that deserves further research.

In the normal medical model, treatment regimens for common conditions have been sufficiently researched and scientific data (i.e. evidence) is available to substantiate not only what works, but what doesn't. This is not necessarily so with PTSD. The Institute of Medicine's 2007 report clearly states that of the many psychotherapy and medication treatment modalities currently utilized/available, only one has been scientifically studied enough to prove its effectiveness (exposure therapies). As the Institute of Medicine study notes, this does not mean other treatments (psychotherapies and medications) are not beneficial, but that they simply haven't been studied enough to provide scientific proof yet.

In today's scenario where only one empirically-validated modality currently exists and limited numbers of providers are available to provide those visits, and as the RAND authors note, when those evidence-based treatments for PTSD are not yet available in all treatment settings, gaps in systematic implementation are not surprising. The DOD situation is even further complicated by the limited numbers of mental health providers available to provide eight or more visits to meet the RAND definition of "minimally adequate" care. That said, gaps in care to our warriors and their families are unacceptable, and DOD is actively working to address and close these gaps.

DOD accepts the responsibility to provide the highest possible level of care and support to our military wounded, ill and injured and to close the systematic implementation gaps as soon as possible. The Defense Centers of Excellence (DCoE) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury were established to assist in this endeavor by providing leadership, facilitating culture change and advocating a consistent, evidence-based approach across the Services, tailored to DOD/Service member needs. As of August 27, 2008, 52 DCoE staff are on board, and eight directorates are now at initial operating capability: (1) Resilience and Prevention, (2) Training and Education, (3) Clearinghouse, Outreach and Advocacy, (4) Psychological Health Clinical Standards of Care, (5) TBI Clinical Standards of Care, (6) Research, QA Program Evaluation & Surveillance, (7) Telehealth and Technology, and (8) Strategy, Plans and Programming.

$270 million is targeted for Psychological Health initiatives across the DOD this year alone, $20 million specifically for quality of care improvement efforts. DCoE is leveraging existing expertise by integrating functions currently or shortly to be housed within six component Centers of Excellence: The Defense Veteran's Brain Injury Center (TBI evaluation, treatment, follow-up), Center for Deployment Psychology (deployment-related behavioral health training for mental health profes-

sionals), Deployment Health Clinical Center (medical advocacy/assistance for military personnel and families with deployment-related health concerns), Center for Study of Traumatic Stress (PH research, education, consultation and training), Telehealth and Technology Center (leveraging telehealth and other technologies to screen, educate, prevent, assess, and treat PH and TBI problems), and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (PH/TBI clinical evaluation, diagnosis, treatment plans, family-centered education, telehealth and long-term follow-up.) Psychological Health Standardization Workgroup meetings are underway with VA, National Institutes of Health, and selected academic institution participation to discuss standardization of definitions, metrics, outcomes, and instrumentation for Psychological Health surveillance and research.

Clinical research to investigate evidence-based treatment for deployment-related psychological health problems, including PTSD, is a major stepping stone on the road to the high quality of care our Service members need and deserve. These research efforts include evaluations of complimentary and alternative treatment approaches. DOD's unprecedented $150 million investment in Psychological Health studies this year is a direct reflection of our commitment to our men and women in uniform. Within 18 months, initial results from these studies will begin to objectively guide us as we continue development and implementation of these critical, evidence-based programs.

The recently implemented MHS Dashboard, which is reviewed by Service and DOD leaders on a regular basis, brings critical information about psychological health and TBI performance to the most senior leaders who can then act on this information.

To ensure the provision of quality, evidence-based care, each Service is also implementing Service-specific programs. The Air Force's mental health providers are receiving additional training from civilian and military experts on current evidence-based treatment techniques for PTSD. By the time this training is complete, 300–400 providers will receive prolonged exposure and cognitive processing training. Air Force Combat and Operational Stress Control programs provide full spectrum care to strengthen the war fighter during deployment. Deployed mental health providers continue to perform prevention/outreach services, outpatient behavioral health services, and combat stress support services, 24 hours per day, as needed. In addition a Traumatic Stress Integrated Process Team was chartered to address screening, prevention and treatment of traumatic stress in deployers and identify profiles of risk/vulnerability.

The Army has implemented Combat and Operational Stress Control programs and the Battlemind initiative continues to be implemented as a primary tool to enhance recovery and resiliency, with an investment of $3.2 million for training, video and personnel.

Navy medicine (which also provides care to Marines) has provided training to psychology and psychiatry trainees and providers on appropriate treatments for PTSD, depression and the range of psychological health problems associated with combat stress, all consistent with VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guidelines. Standardized PTSD training was developed and provided for Navy and Marine Corps chaplains, primary care physicians, corpsmen and Fleet and Family Support Center counselors. The Center for Deployment Psychology, one of the component centers of the DCoE has provided training for Navy mental health providers and non-mental health providers in deployment-related psychological health issues, as well as treatment modalities identified in the VA/DOD Clinical Practice Guidelines for the treatment of PTSD, with primary emphasis on evidence-based exposure therapy. In addition the Marine Corps hosts an annual COSC Conference which is well attended by both providers and line leaders, facilitating the sharing of ideas and concerns, as well as fostering the all-important collaboration between medical and line personnel.

Despite the intense efforts to expand care to areas in need, train healthcare providers in evidence-based modalities, and standardize infrastructure/service efforts, it remains difficult to directly quantify clinical outcomes, and even more difficult to demonstrate a direct causal relationship between efforts and outcomes. Military Health System-wide metrics indicate an overall increase in numbers of in-theater mental health encounters. It remains unclear whether these findings are a result of increased mental health distress, increased numbers of medical personnel or increased awareness on the part of healthcare personnel, but in light of other decreased measurements of stress/emotional impairment of work performance, it would suggest that increased awareness on the part of leaders and medical personnel is having a positive effect. Standardization and centralization of DOD data collection and analysis should begin to yield initial joint data by year's end. This will allow us to improve our ability to perform an ongoing, objective evaluation of

actions taken to date. This information will then be used to inform future actions and initiatives.

Question. The truth is that mental health treatment remains a stigma in our armed forces. Junior enlisted and officers play an important role in furthering a frank discussion about the benefits of mental health treatment.

What efforts have been made to have junior leaders, both enlisted and officer, trained to identify the symptoms of PTSD?

Answer. All members of all Services receive training on recognizing the signs and symptoms of psychological stress symptoms and the benefits of mental health treatment when appropriate. This training occurs prior to and then is repeated following return from deployment. Some components of the training are specifically designed to address leaders within the enlisted and officer ranks. Last year the Army conducted an additional force-wide program of training for all Army personnel to identify the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as well as those of traumatic brain injury in themselves and in their fellow members. Additionally, this training emphasized the importance of receiving an evaluation and potential treatment if such symptoms are present.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Question. Last year, the Administration requested $88.3 million for the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program in the fiscal year 2008 National Nuclear Security Administration budget and $30 million in the Department of Defense budget. Congress, on a clear bipartisan basis, eliminated all funding for this program in the NNSA budget in the fiscal year 2008 Omnibus Appropriations bill. It did provide $15 million for the Navy to study how to place a Reliable Replacement Warhead on a Trident missile.

Since Congress eliminated funding for the Reliable Replacement Warhead program in the NNSA budget, is the Navy still moving forward with its study? If so, why? If not, how are the funds being spent?

Answer. The Navy is not funding for the Reliable Replacement Warhead program. The Navy has briefed all four defense subcommittees and plans to use between $9.7 million and $10 million of the fiscal year 2008 funds to support an integrated, adaptable Arming, Fuzing and Firing (AF&F) system for strategic warheads.

The AF&F effort includes the development of requirements for Navy, Air Force and coalition partners (U.K.), and the investigation of the AF&F concepts, architectures and technologies needed to support those requirements, to include an analysis of adaptability.

This work is critical to the next AF&F system and should be applicable to Navy, Air Force or U.K. warheads.

The remaining $4.5 to $4.8 million will be utilized by the Department of Defense for either the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States or will be used for further AF&F integration efforts.

Question. The Administration requested $23 million for the Navy for RRW for fiscal year 2009. According to the Congressional Research Service, the Navy has said that these funds were requested before Congress eliminated all funding for RRW in the National Security Administration's budget for fiscal year 2008 and that these funds will not be spent on RRW. Is that true? If so, how will the funds be spent?

Answer. Although this effort is identified under RRW, the Navy has briefed all four defense subcommittees and plans to use the funding to conduct adaptable and integrated Arming, Fuzing and Firing (AF&F) development with multi-platform applicability. Funding is required to support a working group of U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force and United Kingdom engineers to coordinate requirements across services and countries, identify technology development and component demonstration for those technologies. The work is also needed to ensure the appropriate technologies are mature for the current programs of record for Navy W88 warhead and Air Force W78 warhead life extension programs.

Question. The fiscal year 2008 Defense Authorization bill mandated the creation of a Congressionally appointed bipartisan commission to examine the U.S. strategic posture and nuclear weapons policy. It is due to report its findings and recommendations to Congress and the President by December 1, 2008. The Defense Authorization bill also required the next President to conduct a nuclear posture review and issue a report by December 1, 2009. In my view, Congress should not provide any funds to RRW until we have had a chance to review the findings of these two reports.

Are you aware of any problem affecting the safety and reliability of the warheads in the current U.S. nuclear stockpile that would compel us to act now to fund RRW? Is there any new military requirement to replace the existing, well tested warheads?

Answer. At present, the combined impact of the Stockpile Stewardship Program and operational adjustments made by our military commanders have enabled us to conclude that the current stockpile is safe and, with manageable exceptions, reliable. The aging stockpile, however, does raise concerns.

To date, we have been able to resolve stockpile problems without underground nuclear testing, but this has not been without some effect on the military capabilities of several warheads in the stockpile. The current path for maintaining the stockpile by successive refurbishments of existing Cold War warheads raises risks in assuring long-term reliability. Changes due to aging components and materials result in a progression that takes us further away from the well-understood configurations that were certified with underground nuclear tests. The inevitable result is increasing uncertainty in performance and an eroding of our confidence in the safety and reliability of the stockpile over the long term.

The proposed RRW Phase 2A Design Definition and Cost Study would provide baseline information on project schedule, cost estimates, and impact on certification and the nuclear weapons infrastructure. Completion of this phase would provide much needed data for the upcoming 2009 Nuclear Posture Review and would directly inform the next administration's decisions on a comprehensive national nuclear strategy.

In the near term, we have no choice but to continue to extend the life of our aging legacy warheads and accept their decreasing performance margins. The RRW, however, offers attractive safety and security enhancements that significantly improve protection against threats. RRW would also increase long term confidence in the reliability of our weapons and allow for production processes that are less complex and that enable a responsive nuclear weapons infrastructure.

MILITARY ENERGY/FUEL ALTERNATIVES

Question. Former Secretary of Defense William Perry has stated: "On balance, I believe that we could defer action for many years on the RRW program. And I have no doubt that this would put us in a stronger position to lead the international community in the continuing battle against nuclear proliferation, which threatens us all."

Do you agree and, if not, why not?

Answer. At present, the combined impact of the Stockpile Stewardship Program and operational adjustments made by our military commanders have enabled us to conclude that the current stockpile is safe and, with manageable exceptions, reliable. The aging stockpile, however, does raise concerns.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TED STEVENS

Question. As forces level in Iraq come down to pre-surge levels, please describe how that will impact the readiness of our non-deployed forces.

Answer. The reduction of forces in Iraq to pre-surge levels, by itself, will have minimal impact on the readiness of non-deployed forces in the near future. Only when the Army and Marine Corps reach their new end-strength goals, the demand signal for BCTs decreases to 15 or less deployed in support of OIF and OEF and the Army gains steady and predictable access to the Reserve Component will their be a significant and positive impact on the readiness of non-deployed forces in the long term.

Question. The supplemental budget request includes a substantial increase for the Commander's Emergency Response program. Can you please describe for us how this funding is being used and why it is such valuable tool for commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan?

Answer. The purpose of the Commanders' Emergency Response Program (CERP) is to enable local commanders in Afghanistan and Iraq to respond to urgent humanitarian relief and reconstruction requirements within their areas of responsibility by carrying out programs that will immediately assist the indigenous population. Examples of project categories are water and sanitation, food production and distribution, agriculture, electricity, healthcare, transportation, civic clean up and economic initiatives.

Commanders are using CERP to win the counter insurgency fight in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is a flexible and proven combat multiplier. With almost 90 percent of the projects averaging less than $200,000, CERP produces immediate results for the Commander in his battle space and enables "continuous effects" and retention of security gains after Coalition Forces depart the operational area. As we continue to conduct both kinetic and non-kinetic operations, Commanders must have adaptable resources to meet urgent humanitarian needs, rebuild critical infrastructure and initiate economic development. CERP provides the most flexible and adaptable funding available to meet the needs of the local Commanders.

Question. Some members of Congress have expressed concerns that CERP funding is not sufficiently coordinated with other funding sources and may lack sufficient oversight and internal controls. What are you doing to ensure these funds are spent wisely and are properly accounted for?

Answer. Local Commanders and Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in both Iraq and Afghanistan coordinate project and funding at the provincial level. I am confident the controls and coordination processes provide a balanced inter-agency approach that provides commanders the flexibility they need and the necessary collaboration for this extremely important program.

OSD has strengthened CERP guidance several times since the inception of the program, improving the clarity to ensure oversight of this critical program. The commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan incorporated this guidance and revisions into their own standard operating procedures further outlining funds control and accountability. Additionally, Multi-National Corps—Iraq (MNC–I) developed and fielded procedures to account for the $270 million provided by the Government of Iraq in support of the new Iraqi I–CERP program.

Question. Commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan want more full-motion video capability from UAV's and other ISR platforms. From and operational perspective, what can be accomplished through sensor development and wide area surveillance to meet this demand in the near future?

Answer. The department recognizes the significant increases in demand for FMV. To that end, we are investing in additional FMV capacity, pursuing increased efficiencies out of fielded capabilities to realize more FMV hours, and are investing in development of Wide Area Airborne Sensing (WAAS) capabilities.

[Deleted.]

The USAF WAAS Program Plan to address Service requirements for fielding wide area airborne sensors on existing unmanned aircraft systems platforms was briefed to the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) on April 24, 2008 and favorably endorsed in JROCM 106–08 on May 27, 2008. The USAF is currently developing JCIDS documents for WAAS Increment 1 while a WAAS concept of employment (CONEMP) document has already been drafted.

Several additional options for rapid development and fielding of wide area airborne surveillance sensors have been submitted to the Secretary of Defense ISR Surge Task Force. These wide area surveillance proposals, in concert with a multitude of other manned and unmanned full-motion video capability proposals, are currently being reviewed for executability, cost and value.

SUBCOMMITTEE RECESS

Senator INOUYE. The subcommittee will now stand in recess until Wednesday, June 4 at 10 a.m. when we will receive testimony from public witnesses. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 12:53 p.m., Tuesday, May 20, the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene at 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 4.]