

THE STATE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

NOVEMBER 15, 2007

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THE STATE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2007

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m. in room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Kennedy, Byrd, Reed, Akaka, E. Benjamin Nelson, Bayh, Pryor, Webb, Warner, Inhofe, Sessions, Collins, Cornyn, Thune, Martinez, and Corker.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director; and Leah C. Brewer, nominations and hearings clerk.

Majority staff members present: Jonathan D. Clark, counsel; Daniel J. Cox, Jr., professional staff member; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Gerald J. Leeling, counsel; Peter K. Levine, general counsel; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: Michael V. Kostiw, Republican staff director; William M. Caniano, professional staff member; Derek J. Maurer, minority counsel; Sean G. Stackley, professional staff member; Kristine L. Svinicki, professional staff member; Diana G. Tabler, professional staff member; and Richard F. Walsh, minority counsel.

Staff assistants present: Fletcher L. Cork, Jessica L. Kingston, Benjamin L. Rubin, and Brian F. Sebold.

Committee members' assistants present: Jay Maroney, assistant to Senator Kennedy; James Tuite, assistant to Senator Byrd; Frederick M. Downey and Colleen J. Shogan, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Elizabeth King, assistant to Senator Reed; Bonni Berge, assistant to Senator Akaka; Andrew R. Vanlandingham, assistant to Senator Ben Nelson; Jon Davey, assistant to Senator Bayh; M. Bradford Foley, assistant to Senator Pryor; Gordon I. Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Stephen C. Hedger, assistant to Senator McCaskill; Sandra Luff, assistant to Senator Warner; Anthony J. Lazarski, assistant to Senator Inhofe; Lenwood Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Mark J. Winter, assistant to Senator Collins; Stuart C. Mallory, assistant to Senator Thune; and Stacie L. Oliver, assistant to Senator Corker.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody.

Today, Secretary Geren and General Casey testify before our committee on the state of the Army. Secretary Geren testified 8

months ago, on March 15, along with then-Chief of Staff, General Schoomaker, at the annual Army posture hearing. General Casey, no stranger to the Senate, is testifying for the first time before the full committee as Army Chief of Staff.

We welcome you both and we thank you for your service.

Over the last 8 months since Secretary Geren testified, the Army's committed even more forces to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thousands more soldiers have deployed to those wars, hundreds more have died, and thousands more have been injured, many of them critically. These soldiers, their marine counterparts, their families, have borne the greatest burdens of these wars, and we owe them our heartfelt thanks.

Less than one-half of 1 percent of Americans, volunteers all, are fighting these wars while the vast majority of Americans go about their daily lives, largely unaffected and uninvolved. Yet, while Americans differ in their opinions about the war in Iraq, all Americans recognize and honor the bravery, self-sacrifice, and devotion to duty of our soldiers and their families; indeed, that of all of our military personnel and their families. Recognizing and honoring the soldiers and their families is not enough. All of us, no matter how we voted on authorizing the war and whether we've been critics or supporters of the President's handling of the war, are determined to see that our troops and their families are supported in every possible way.

The pending National Defense Authorization Bill is an effort to do that, providing, as it does, a 3½ percent across-the-board pay raise, enhanced education-assistance benefits for reservists, increased hardship-duty pay, authorizing end-strength increases for the ground forces, fully funding operations and maintenance (O&M) accounts, adding substantial additional funding for critical force-protection equipment, and supporting Army transformation.

Guiding our continuing efforts to support our troops must be an honest assessment of where we are, in terms of military readiness and investment in capabilities, present and future. We need our military leaders, in uniform and out of uniform, to help us help them by giving us the unvarnished truth as they see it about the state of the military and what needs to be done, no matter how costly or how politically popular or unpopular.

The Army has been engaged in Afghanistan for over 6 years, and it is now in its fifth year of war in Iraq. None of the rosy predictions have come true. In fact, with the recent surge, the number of soldiers engaged in Iraq has approached previous high-level marks. Some Army units are on or entering their third year of Afghanistan or Iraq service, and some individual soldiers are on their fourth.

According to recent press reports, Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, meeting with Army captains at Fort Sill last month, found the most prevalent concern was the impact on those soldiers and their families of the repeated deployments of 15 months, with 12 or fewer months home between rotations. One captain said, "We have soldiers that have spent more time in combat than World War II. Is there a point where you can say," he said, "that you've had enough?"

The heaviest burden in this war has fallen on the ground forces and on their families, and we simply must find a way, as General Casey has said, to bring the Army back in balance so that the demand for soldiers does not exceed, and continue to exceed, the supply. To do that, it is essential to turn over responsibility for internal security more quickly to Iraqi forces, and to reduce U.S. force levels in Iraq, or we will not achieve that balance.

The impact of the wars has affected the Army in many ways. In order to sustain the necessary high readiness levels in our deployed forces, the readiness of our nondeployed forces has steadily declined. Equipment and people are worn out. Most of those nondeployed units are not ready to be deployed. Consequently, getting those units reset and fully equipped and trained for their rotation to Iraq or Afghanistan is that much more difficult and risky. Getting those units equipped and trained for all potential conflicts, including high-intensity combat, is virtually impossible and is not being done. This Nation faces a substantially increased risk, should those forces be required to respond to other full-spectrum requirements of the national military strategy. The surge of additional forces to Iraq earlier this year puts even more pressure on an already strained readiness situation.

Long before the President announced his new strategy in Iraq, military leaders raised questions about the Nation's readiness to deal with other contingencies. In his testimony to this committee last February, General Schoomaker was direct in his concern for the strategic depth of our Army and its readiness. He was clear in his apprehensions about the short- and long-term risks resulting from the lower readiness levels of our nondeployed forces. General Casey sounded a similar alarm in his recent testimony before the House Armed Services Committee. I believe the current situation is intolerable, there can be no excuse for subjecting this Nation to that degree of risk.

In a marked change of position for the Department of Defense (DOD), the Army, earlier this year, proposed increasing its Active Duty end strength by 65,000 soldiers, to 547,000, over the next 5 years. General Casey has said that he wants to shorten that time by 2 years. In year 5 of the Iraq war, the proposed increases have come late, despite the proposals for increases from Senators on this committee over the past several years, proposals that the DOD previously opposed. But, even with General Casey's efforts to speed up the process, few of these proposed additional soldiers would be trained and ready to help relieve the stress on the Army in the next year or two. Plus, there are many who say even those increases are sufficient for the strategy the Army must be prepared to execute over the long term.

When increasing end strength, recruiting and retention become ever more critical. While quantity is, of course, important, quality must remain the highest priority. The Army must continue to uphold high standards—moral, intellectual, and physical—for new recruits, to ensure that these young men and women are capable of handling the great demands that they will face.

The committee is concerned that the Army is relaxing recruiting standards and approving more waivers in order to meet requirements. The press report cited earlier said that another one of those

captains in the meeting with Admiral Mullen who said the following: “concern over the Army’s growing practice of granting waivers to recruits for legal and health problems,” saying that he spent 80 percent of his time dealing with the 13 “problem children,” as he put it, in his 100-person unit, some of whom went absent without leave or had been methamphetamine dealers.

It has been reported that 18 percent of new recruits this year required a waiver, up by half from 2 years ago, and that recruitment from category 4, the least skilled category, has increased eightfold over the past 2 years. We cannot allow the Army to reach the state of the hollow Army of the 1970s. We must find a way to both increase the size of the Army and to maintain its standards.

Had we started in earnest to grow the Army even 4 years ago, our forces today would be less stressed and more ready. We must guard against merely creating a larger version of a less-ready force. Army plans for expansion must be comprehensive, detailed, and fully resourced.

The Secretary of the Army must marshal the necessary resources to meet this challenge. Congress must understand what is needed to bring our ground forces to the level of strength and readiness necessary to avoid the unacceptable risks and readiness shortfalls that exist today.

As daunting as it is to meet the current readiness challenge, we must also modernize our Army to meet our readiness requirements and our national security requirements into the future, and we must do so intelligently. In doing so, we must not fail to capture the lessons learned since the end of the Cold War and apply those lessons to building the force of the future.

Although it appears somewhat fashionable to question the relevance of ground forces prior to September 11, that can hardly be the case now. The reality of warfare in the 21st century demands both the high intensity force-on-force combat, as characterized in the early weeks of the Iraq war, and the grinding, all-encompassing stability and support and counterinsurgency operations of the last few years. The answer is not one mission or the other; the Army must be prepared to do both. Almost all types of warfare require, in Army parlance, “boots-on-the-ground,” they require an Army that is optimally organized, trained, and equipped for anything that we might ask it to do. The challenge for the Army, for this Nation, and for Congress, is sustaining an Army fully engaged in current operations of all varieties, while also modernizing and transforming that Army to meet future threats.

This hearing will, hopefully, help us understand the state of the Army today and what needs to be done to ensure an Army that is ready for all of its potential missions, both today and in the future. The Army and Congress owe nothing less to the soldiers, their families, and to the American people.

[The prepared statement of Senator McCain follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Geren and General Casey, thank you for testifying before the committee today on the state of the Army. You both have enjoyed long and distinguished careers serving this Nation and I appreciate your patriotism. General Casey, as Commander of Multinational Forces-Iraq, you and I disagreed on the initial execution of the war in Iraq. Thankfully, the strategy I advocated for the

first 3 years of this war—a counterinsurgency strategy—prevailed and we are winning. I just regret that we wasted so much time on a strategy that was doomed from the start, but now we’re succeeding. Overall violence is down 55 percent since June; civilian deaths are down 75 percent and we will begin to reduce our footprint there according to the situation on the ground. Despite our recent successes, the fight against radical Islamic extremism will remain the national security challenge of our time. Iraq is the central front of this conflict according to General Petraeus and our enemies.

I commend General Petraeus and all of the soldiers, airmen and marines under his command. However, I want to commend the Army in particular. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have taken a tremendous toll on all our brave men and women in uniform. No Service, active-duty and reservists, has been asked to do more than the Army. It has been the backbone in our fight against Islamic extremism in Iraq and Afghanistan. I am grateful for each and every one of these soldiers for their service, their sacrifice and patriotism.

We are winning in Iraq precisely because we have a strong, agile, and capable Army, but if we are to claim victory in this war and meet the challenges that will continue to confront us in the 21st century—we must grow the Army. Much of the reason, the Army is seriously overstretched is because it has been underfunded for decades.

Just as we did at the start of the Cold War, we must anticipate and prepare for future challenges and not resign ourselves to the paradigms of the past. Our Armed Forces are seriously overstretched and under resourced. I have called for an increase in the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps from the currently planned level of roughly 750,000 troops to 900,000 troops. While the enemy we confront threatens the freedom, peace and security, we tend to take all too often for granted, recruitment cannot rely solely on patriotism. Recruitment requires more resources and it will take time but it must be done and it must be done now.

Along with more personnel, our military, the Army specifically needs more equipment to make up for recent losses and it needs to update current equipment and facilities. We can offset some of this by cutting wasteful spending and choosing to help the troops rather than earmarking billions of dollars for pet projects and special interest. We can afford to spend more on defense. Currently, we spend less than 4 cents of every dollar that our economy generates on defense, that’s less than what we spent during the Cold War. We face a formidable adversary—one who is determined to destroy us and our way of life. These radical Islamists are not afraid to die, nor do they differentiate between soldiers or civilians in their effort to incite a global jihad. We must accelerate the transformation of our military; build a larger and more nimble Army that is fully-capable of deploying without calling up Reserve units. We must invest and configure the Army to fight the enemies of the future not the past. For years, I’ve call for a larger Army. Now that the Army is at its near breaking point we realize what it will take to confront our enemy, on our terms, and destroy him.

But we don’t just need more soldiers, we need more soldiers with the skills necessary to help friendly governments and their militaries resist our common foes. The Army should have at least 20,000 soldiers dedicated to partnering with militaries abroad. We also need to increase the number of U.S. personnel available to engage in Special Forces Operations, civil affairs activities, military policing, and military intelligence. We need a nonmilitary deployable police force to train foreign forces and to help maintain law and order in states on the verge of collapse.

It has taken us too long and too many lives for us to get it right in Iraq. Now that we are on the right path, it would be a national disgrace for us not to learn from the mistakes of the past and vigorously ensure they are not made in the future. For years, I have warned administrations of both parties that any major conflict ran the risk of breaking our military, particularly the U.S. Army. I hope, today, we all understand the grave consequences of inaction and are prepared to take the steps necessary to enhance our national defense and ensure that none of our brave men and women are ever sacrificed in vain.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Inhofe.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JAMES M. INHOFE

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just agree with a couple of things that you said, in terms of our readiness. It happens that I was chairman of the Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee during the 1990s, when

we downgraded the military. I can remember, many times, going to the floor of the Senate and saying that we'll rue the day and the euphoric attitude that, "The Cold War is over, we don't need a military anymore." So, the readiness went down, modernization went down, end strength went down, and we're paying for it now. Nobody knew that September 11 would take place. Nobody knew that we'd be in this long, arduous war.

But I'll say this. You made reference to the hollow military of the Carter administration. A lot of the same things are going on today. We had to build up, and build up fast. It wasn't easy to do. I've been over there probably more than any other member has, 15 times in the area of responsibility. I'm going to be going to Afghanistan, Mr. Chairman, a couple of weeks from now. Every time I go, I see something that surprises me even more. I was a product of the draft, and I've always felt that we wouldn't be able to sustain the things we're doing today without having compulsory service. But I was wrong. I see these kids out there, and I see the commitment that they have, and I see, particularly since the surge, the two or three times that I've been there since then, to see not just the attitude of our troops that are over there—but the fact that they are now living with and working with the Iraqi security forces (ISF), and they're developing intimate relationships, and we're seeing the imams and the clerics no longer giving anti-American messages in their weekly mosque meetings. I think a lot of that is due to the fact that this has happened. The surge clearly has worked.

I was gratified, yesterday, when up in room S-407 of the Capitol, the secure room—even though that's classified, a lot of the details are not classified—the fact that our improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are down 65 percent, attacks are down 50 percent, casualties are down by 50 percent.

My major concern now is that things are going well, and we're going to be able to tough it out. In your opening statements, you say something about the re-enlistments and some of the figures that we're having that are very, very favorable right now—but I would hope, also, that we keep in mind that we have to continue with the modernization program. I don't want the Future Combat System (FCS) program to suffer as a result of what we're going through right now, because we have to prepare for the future.

I remember my last year in the House of Representatives on the House Armed Services Committee—it was 1994—I remember, someone testified—they said, "In 10 years, we will no longer need ground troops." That's what they said. So, I have felt that if the American people's expectations are high—and I believe that we should have the best of everything—best on the ground, best in the air, best strike vehicles, best lift vehicles—that we should be prepared to have a larger percentage of our gross domestic product (GDP) to go into the military.

I would hope that we can keep online with the FCS programs and these good things that you guys are doing.

I just can't think of a better way to compliment the two of you than to say you're the best that there are, and you're doing a great job, and America appreciates you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

Secretary Geren?

**STATEMENT OF HON. PRESTON M. "PETE" GEREN III,
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

Secretary GEREN. Mr. Chairman and Senator Inhofe, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before your committee, and I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you and other members of the committee.

Mr. Chairman, I have a written statement I would like to submit for the record.

Chairman LEVIN. It will be made part of the record.

Secretary GEREN. You talked, in your opening statement, Mr. Chairman, about the strong bipartisan support our Army has. We certainly do have that, and, on behalf of the Army, I want to thank this Congress for your support.

I recently met with the senior military leader of the British Army, and he was lamenting what a poor relationship they had with their parliament, and, frankly, with the British people, and how difficult it was to get them to cooperate with the British Army in meeting their needs and understanding their concerns. I told him, "We don't have that problem." We're very grateful for the partnership that we have with the United States Congress and our United States Army. Thank you all very much for that.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Secretary GEREN. I also want to thank members who regularly go visit the troops all around the world. As you well know, that means a tremendous amount to the troops. It's important for them to be able to talk to you firsthand. All of you use your very scarce time to get out around the world, and they appreciate it very much.

We're here today to talk about the strategic direction for the Army. I'd like to just summarize some of the points that I made in my written statement.

I'd like to talk about four areas that are very important for the long-term strategic needs of the Army: one; health care issues, taking care of soldiers who have borne the battle; contracting issues; support to families, Mr. Chairman, as you discussed in your opening statement; and then I'd like to just conclude briefly with—talking about our need for predictable funding, and particularly for the supplemental that's in front of Congress now.

Out of calamity comes opportunity. Those of us who have been in the political world understand that, when crisis comes, it gives us an opportunity to do some things that we couldn't do without that crisis. It gives the political energy, the bureaucratic energy, to take on some hard issues and make some changes that are necessary, that we would never get around to, were it not for that.

Unfortunately, we've had two calamities that have exposed some weaknesses in our Army; and we're using those calamities to seize the opportunity.

One, well known to this committee, an area that you all have worked so aggressively in, is in the area of health care. What happened at Walter Reed, now nearly a year ago, has given us an opportunity to totally transform the military health care system, the government's disability system, something that we needed to do, and we are seizing this opportunity. Mr. Chairman and other mem-

bers of the committee, we thank you for the work that you all have done in this area, as well. We look forward to continuing to work together.

Our approach to the problems that surfaced at Walter Reed were on two fronts. One was: fix the immediate problem. In response to that, we have created an entirely new system for meeting the needs of our outpatients and wounded warriors. We've put 35 Warrior Transition Units (WTU) all across the country. You all have at your desk, it looks like a small thing, but it's a very important change in the way we run our WTUs. A different mission statement on the front, that talks about the job of the soldier who is in the WTU. Then, on the back is that soldier's chain of command. So, every soldier in the WTU knows who to call if he or she has a problem. This was a suggestion that came from Congress—have an 800 number for all of our folks in our health care system, and we've created a triad in support of all those soldiers.

We also have learned what we don't know about Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Congress has been very generous in providing us funds, and we are making great progress, but we still have a ways to go.

Reform of the disability system, this is something that Congress, DOD, and the administration are working hard on. We are beginning a pilot program, November 26, in the national capital region, to experiment with a single physical and other innovations.

Second area: contracting. We have unfortunately learned the hard way—that our contracting system was not up to meeting the needs of the Army in this century. Right now—or in 2007, the Army did 25 percent of all contracting for the entire government, \$111 billion.

Chairman LEVIN. Secretary Geren, I hate to do this to you, but we have a quorum, and it's very much to the advantage of the Secretary to have some of our business done while we have a quorum.

Secretary GEREN. I understand that.

Chairman LEVIN. So, I'm going to take this opportunity, since a quorum is present and one of our members must leave, which would end our quorum. [Recess.]

Thank you. Please continue Secretary Geren.

Secretary GEREN. On the subject of contracting, we also found ourselves with some very serious problems, primarily in theater, in the Kuwait contracting which led to reactions on two fronts by us. One was to put a task force in place that worked to immediately stop the bleeding. But, as with the health care challenge, we are also looking long-term. What have we learned from this, and what can we do to fix the contracting system? What we've learned from the work of Dr. Gansler in the Commission, it's a problem that we have in the Department of Army, a problem we have in the DOD, and, frankly, a problem that extends across the government. We need to do a better job of developing professional acquisition and contracting officers, provide the resources, the training, and valuing the invaluable role that these acquisition and contracting officers provide to our government. So, this is an area where we'll be doing a great deal of work.

As we look to this era of persistent conflict, and we look at how we are organized, trained, and equipped for conflict today, this one-

to-one ratio of contractors to deployed forces is no aberration. The outsourcing that we've done as a result of the downsizing we did in the 1990s, this large size of the contracting workforce is a part of the future of our Army, and we have to do a better job of organizing, training, and equipping, and coordinating the work of those contractors in support of our soldiers.

Lastly; families. Mr. Chairman, you spoke of this. We are in the 7th year of war in Afghanistan, over 4½ years of war in Iraq. This is the third longest conflict in United States history, behind the Vietnam War and the Revolutionary War. It's the longest conflict we have ever fought with an All-Volunteer Force, by quite a long shot. We're in uncharted waters, both for the soldiers and for the families.

This All-Volunteer Force is a different Army than we've ever had before, when you look at the demographics. Over half of the soldiers are married, and more than half of those spouses work outside the home. The support that we provided to those key members of the All-Volunteer Force over the first 25 years doesn't work as we move into the 7th year of conflict. We have to do a better job of supporting those families.

One of the things that we've done recently—and you also have one of these at your desk—across the entire Army, all 154 camp, posts, and stations around the world, we are entering into a Covenant with the Families—the commanders at each facility are signing this covenant; General Casey and I signed it here, and have been traveling around the world and signing it with soldiers—but, recognizing the importance of the families and the health of our All-Volunteer Force. Our families are volunteers. Our soldiers are volunteers, but our families are volunteers, as well, and our system must do a better job of supporting those families.

We moved \$100 million out of our budget, last summer, into family programs in 2008, with the supplemental, and the base, we've moved \$1.4 billion into family programs. We ask your support for those initiatives, but also ask your help as we consider innovative ways to support families, that critical part of our All-Volunteer Force.

Let me just conclude with a brief comment on the supplemental. Through our appropriations, we received \$27 billion in O&M funds. We spend roughly \$6.6 billion a month, if you look at the Army's O&M and look at the funding that we provide to global war on terror. Very quickly, we run through the resources that are available to us. When the President signed the Appropriations Bill, it stopped the other source of funding for the global war on terror. Secretary Gates has told us to start planning for what we're going to do if we reach the point where we do run out of our O&M funding, and start making plans for what we, as an Army, would do to deal with that eventuality.

Last year, we had bridge funding that helped us through this period. This year, we don't have that funding. So, we know there are many issues you all are working through regarding that supplemental, but it's very important for us to be able to provide the orderly and reliable support to our soldiers, for us to get that funding.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator Warner.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.
 Secretary GEREN. Thank you, members of the committee.
 [The prepared statement of Mr. Geren follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY HON. PETE GEREN

Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I want to thank you for inviting General Casey and myself to appear before you today to discuss the Army's strategic imperatives.

I'd also like to thank all of you for your unwavering support of our soldiers and their families. I know they appreciate your ongoing efforts to provide them not only with the ways and means to achieve the strategic objectives that our Nation demands, but also to improve their quality of life. Congress has been a partner in creating the remarkable Army we have today; we need the continued support of Congress and this committee to support and sustain it.

Today, I'd like to discuss how our work with the Congress can help the Army execute its critical missions and achieve the four imperatives essential to the success of the Army. Those imperatives are:

- Sustain our soldiers, families, and Army civilians;
- Prepare our soldiers for success in the current conflict;
- Reset the force expeditiously for future contingencies; and
- Transform the Army to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Every issue I discuss with you this morning falls under one of those imperatives. They are crucial to the future of the Army and General Casey and I will work as a team to implement them. But we can't do it alone. We need Congress to be part of that team.

In September, I visited soldiers and units in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, and Germany. As you all have seen on your own congressional delegations, our units, and their leaders, and most especially our great soldiers, continue doing a superb job under the most challenging conditions. Their courage and service are truly inspiring.

We are now into the 7th year of major combat operations in the global war on terror, making this the third longest war in American history, after the Revolutionary War and Vietnam. This is also the first extended conflict since the Revolution to be fought with an All-Volunteer Force.

To be sure, our Army is being stretched to meet the demands of the current conflict. The Army has over 150,000 soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait, including approximately 16 percent Army National Guard and Reserve soldiers. Since the beginning of combat operations, over 550,000 soldiers have served in combat zones; over 200,000 have been deployed multiple times. Our All-Volunteer Force is a national treasure, but after 6 years of major combat operations, it is in uncharted waters. We are adapting our policies, programs, and investments to reflect the realities of this era of persistent conflict.

The All-Volunteer Force is 34-years-old. Some of you may recall that in its very first decade it struggled with many difficulties including military pay that was inadequate to sustain a force of volunteers. In the early 1980s, Congress increased pay a total of 26 percent and has sustained competitive pay since that time. Today, the strain of multiple deployments on soldiers requires us likewise to work together to adapt in a way that ensures the health and well-being of the All-Volunteer Force.

Despite our many challenges, our soldiers remain the best-trained, best-led, and best-equipped force we have ever put in the field. Our soldiers count on their Army leadership to provide them the training, equipment, and leadership to take the fight to the enemy. They also count on Army leadership to make sure their families receive the support they need to stay Army strong.

On the wall in one of the Army conference rooms there is this quote by former Army Chief of Staff General Creighton Abrams: "People are not in the Army, they are the Army."

The people who "are" the Army extend to more than just the soldiers. Spouses and children are as much a part of the Army as the soldiers they love. Everyone in Army leadership recognizes the role of the family in the All-Volunteer Force and is committed to improving support to our Army families; and I am proud to partner with General Casey in working to improve the quality of life for soldiers and their families.

We are asking a great deal of our soldiers and Army families and we cannot expect that these demands will diminish in the foreseeable future. Organizational and institutional changes will continue for years and we must expect and plan for a future typified by persistent conflict and continuing deployments.

In order to sustain our All-Volunteer Force, we must do more to provide soldiers and families a quality of life equal to the quality of their service. Family support systems—such as health care, housing, childcare, and education—designed for the pre-September 11 peacetime Army must be adapted to sustain an Army at war.

Furthermore, the demographics of today's Army are markedly different from any Army that has fought an extended conflict in our Nation's history. Over half of our soldiers are married and a majority of Army spouses are employed. Army families include over 700,000 children—a number greater than the entire population of the capital city where we meet today. These demographics alone pose new challenges.

When a married mother or father deploys, he or she leaves behind a single parent household and all the challenges associated with that family dynamic. Single-parent soldiers must leave their children in the care of others. With multiple deployments and dwell time filled with training for the next deployment, the stress on the family increases.

SUPPORT FOR SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES

Recognizing this, General Casey and I have recently signed the Army Family Covenant, which states:

- We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our families are making every day.
- We recognize the strength of our soldiers comes from the strength of their families.
- We are committed to providing soldiers and families a quality of life that is commensurate with their service.
- We are committed to providing our families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.
- We are committed to building a partnership with Army families that enhances their strength and resilience.
- We are committed to improving family readiness by:
 - Standardizing and funding existing family programs and services.
 - Increasing accessibility and quality of health care.
 - Improving soldier and family housing.
 - Ensuring excellence in schools, youth services, and child care.
 - Expanding education and employment opportunities for family members.

The covenant is a solemn commitment by our Army to do more for our soldiers and families; to provide them a quality of life commensurate with the quality of their service.

When it comes to soldiers and families, Congress has been a strong partner in the service of our Army. For example, the Army continues to improve soldier and family housing, bolstered by congressional legislation allowing the Army to leverage its housing assets through private sector participation in military housing—we call it the Residential Community Initiative (RCI).

As of the beginning of this month, the Army had privatized almost 79,000 homes on 36 installations. The total cost to date is estimated at \$10.4 billion of which the Army share is only \$1.3 billion. The quality of the homes and neighborhoods built under the RCI has improved dramatically the quality of life for our Army families.

Just a few weeks ago, I toured RCI homes and talked with Army families at Fort Belvoir about this program. An Army spouse I spoke with said she was so pleased with the housing and her community that she didn't really mind too much if her husband had to deploy, as long as she could stay in her house. She and her husband shared a laugh over that comment.

A Sergeant said: "As long as my family is happy, it makes it easier to go to work." That kind of peace of mind is one of the reasons why these kinds of programs are so important to our readiness.

Congress deserves a great deal of the credit for this program and I look forward to working together on new initiatives to help Army families.

Besides the RCI, the Army is on a course to eventually eliminate inadequate family housing, first in the continental United States (CONUS), later outside the CONUS. Additionally, we also have been expanding housing for unmarried senior noncommissioned officers and officers at locations where off-post rentals are not available.

Our facility modernization efforts continue to focus on the long-term effort to improve Senior Unaccompanied Personnel Housing and we have delivered 200 new units in recent years at no cost to the Army with plans for another 1,200. In the past 5 fiscal years, the Army has invested about \$5.5 billion to fix, upgrade, and replace permanent party barracks for 72,400 soldiers.

The Army is shifting additional resources into family programs for 2008 and beyond. In recent years, the Army has increased by 40 the number of Child Development Centers with plans for 22 more. We also continue to build new fitness facilities, chapels, and youth centers. We've invested \$170 million in 19 new post exchanges.

Last summer, the Army transferred \$100 million into existing family programs, which had an immediate and positive impact. These funds are being used to hire Family Readiness Support Assistants down to the battalion level, expand the availability and reduce the cost of child care, provide additional respite care for family members with special needs, and enhance morale and recreational programs across the Army.

Additionally, after many months of work, the Army recently launched the Army Soldier-Family Action Plan (ASFAP). This plan to support families is based on the input of families from across our Army—here and around the globe. ASFAP will address issues such as education, access and quality of health care, employment opportunities, improved housing, and the resourcing of existing Army programs. It will be an important step forward, but it is not the final answer to the needs of Army families.

We have established a good momentum in improving life for Army families—we need the continued assistance of Congress, now and in the future, to keep that momentum going.

KEEPING FAITH WITH WOUNDED WARRIORS

As an Army, we pledge never to leave a fallen comrade—that means on the battlefield, in the hospital, in the outpatient clinic, or over a lifetime of dependency if that is what is required. I have witnessed the cost in human terms and to the institution of the Army when we break faith with that sacred pledge, as a handful did at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC), and we have worked hard to make that right.

Indeed, the silver lining in the WRAMC breakdown is that it prompted the Army to make dramatic changes in the way we care for our wounded warriors that go far beyond the fixes at WRAMC. Since that time, your Army has moved out aggressively to change what we can on our own.

I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress in the areas of infrastructure, leadership, and processes issues as part of our Army Medical Action Plan. A few examples:

- We've given wounded warriors a new mission that is codified in the Wounded Warrior Mission Statement: "I am a Warrior in Transition. My job is to heal as I transition back to duty or become a productive, responsible citizen in society. This is not a status but a mission. I will succeed in this mission because I am a Warrior."
- We've consolidated Medical Hold and Medical Holdover into single Warrior Transition Units (WTU), organized into military units that are under the command and control of the medical treatment facility commander. The WTU's mission is to focus solely on the care, treatment, and compassionate disposition of its soldiers.
- We've institutionalized a triad of support for every wounded warrior to include a primary care manager, nurse case manager, and squad leader, and we've organized outpatients in a chain of command.
- We've established Soldier and Family Assistance Centers at medical centers across the entire Army. These are one-stop shops where soldiers and families can get the information they need regarding entitlements, benefits, and services.
- There is now a Wounded Soldier Family Hotline that provides Warriors in Transition and their families 24-hour access to information and assistance.
- We've initiated a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) chain teaching program for every soldier in the Army, to not only educate and assist them in recognizing, preventing, and treating these conditions, but also to help remove the stigma associated with these injuries. Similar training is being provided to family members.

The problems at Walter Reed also led to a partnership between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to overhaul our military disability system—the Senior Oversight Committee (SOC).

The SOC goal is as simple to identify as it will be difficult to implement: a seamless transition for our soldiers from the Department of Defense disability system either back to service in the Army or to a productive life as a veteran. We begin that

task not by thinking in terms of how we can improve the current outmoded system, but thinking instead about what kind of system we would build if we could start from scratch.

The SOC has directed:

- DOD and the VA to establish a single, comprehensive, standardized medical exam for all Wounded Warriors;
- the VA to update its rating disabilities schedule to include TBI; and
- the establishment of a TBI/PTSD Center of Excellence supported by a \$900 million appropriation from Congress.

President Lincoln pledged our Nation to care for those who shall have borne the battle, their widows, and now, widowers and orphans. That pledge must be constantly renewed, not with words, but with deeds. I believe that the Department of Defense, Congress, and the Department of Veterans Affairs have an opportunity that does not come along often—to overhaul the entire military disability system. Let us not squander the opportunity.

FORCE OF THE FUTURE

Even without the global war on terror, we would be a busy Army, implementing the largest base realignment and closure in history. We are growing the total Army by 74,000 and completing the transformation of the Reserve component from a strategic Reserve to an operational force. We are half-way through the largest organizational change since World War II, converting our combat and enabling formations to modular formations. Our depots are operating at historical levels to reset and recapitalize our battle damaged vehicles and equipment. We are working to transform and modernize the force.

Our depots are operating at historical levels to reset and recapitalize our battle-damaged vehicles and equipment. We need your continued help with this vital reset effort.

We must transform and modernize the force that has served us so well. That force relies on the Stryker and what we called the “Big 5”—the Abrams, Bradley, Blackhawk, Apache, and Patriot—to meet the challenges of a very different enemy.

The new enemy that has emerged will not fight us in military formations on classic battlefields. The kind of warfare that dominated during the Cold War years is far different from the kind of warfare we confront now or will confront in the future.

So we in the Army are changing the way we think and fight. We are changing training, organization, and equipment to meet all contingencies. We are pursuing a modernization effort that ensures dominance in the full spectrum of land operations.

The purpose of the Army modernization effort is to maintain dominance in land operations—we never want to send our soldiers into a fair fight. The goal of Army modernization is to know before the enemy does where our forces are and where the enemy is. Knowledge is power, and nowhere is that dictum more applicable than on the battlefield.

The Future Combat System (FCS) will give our soldiers the knowledge they need to fight and win in any battle space, day or night, whether the battle is conventional or asymmetrical. Indeed, theatre commanders are validating the FCS as they request for field use the operational capabilities and technologies that we are currently developing in FCS.

For example, a few years ago in Afghanistan, one commander watched as his soldiers heaved grappling hooks into caves to detect booby traps. He knew there had to be a better way. So he asked for robots his soldiers could send into those caves. Robotic eyes and ears can tell our soldiers who and what is in that cave, down that alley, or in that darkened building—before they go in.

Through FCS spinouts, soldiers now have those robots and we are providing other capabilities that are critical to their current missions and force protection—unmanned aerial drones, ground sensors, and communications devices capable of sharing critical intelligence data with troops on a real-time basis.

We are doing all we can to allow our soldiers to accomplish their mission while mitigating their risk—force protection remains our top priority. Indeed, in the last few years the Army has experienced the greatest change in force protection since World War II.

The soldier of today looks far different even from the soldier of 6 years ago. Consider, in 2001 it cost the Army \$11,000 to outfit a soldier; now it costs \$17,000.

The Army is rapidly fielding the best new equipment to our forces. To date we have fielded:

- over 1 million sets of body armor to all soldiers and DOD civilians;
- over 21,000 uparmored HMMWVs and over 50,000 frag kits;

- theater requirement for 970 Armored Security Vehicles; and
- over 47,000 improvised explosive device defeat systems.

Integrated force protection strategy also includes Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, which Congress has done so much to support. To update you, the JROC has approved the Army's request for 10,000 MRAPs and production is now underway at several facilities. By the end of April 2008, we project that we will have fielded almost 4,100 MRAPs.

Force protection will continue to be the highest priority and key challenges remain. The enemy continues to evolve and we must try to stay a step ahead.

As you can see, the Army has a full plate. To meet these obligations smoothly and efficiently, timely, predictable funding is essential.

Make no mistake—timely funding is not about the war in Iraq; it is about taking care of soldiers and their families and defending this country.

Training and maintenance—and ultimately readiness—are perishable. Without stable and timely funding for these activities, skills diminish and equipment and facilities degrade.

I cannot stress enough how critical it is that Congress pass essential funding legislation in a timely manner. Our soldiers depend upon your legislation.

Additionally, in a few short months, you will see the fiscal year 2009 President's budget and global war on terrorism supplemental funding request arrive on the Hill. You will see that the Army's part of that submission will fully support the four imperatives in our strategic direction: sustain, prepare, reset, and transform. We look forward for your continued support in fulfilling these imperatives.

CONTRACTING ISSUES

On September 12, I commissioned Dr. Jacques Gansler to provide a comprehensive review of the Army's acquisition system. The Commission was given a broad charter to examine current operations as well as to ensure future contracting operations are more effective, efficient and transparent. Based on his extensive experience within DOD and specifically as a former Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, I was confident that Dr. Gansler would provide an uncompromising, big-picture review that the Army needed. On November 1, I accepted the report from the "Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations" chaired by Dr. Gansler.

My decision to charter the Gansler Commission followed investigations and audits which cited contractors and government contracting officials for corrupt activity related to contingency contracting operations. The investigations continue. As of November 6, the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command is conducting 80 investigations relating to contract fraud in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. While the cases vary in severity and complexity, most involve bribery. There are confirmed bribes in excess of \$15 million. Twenty-three U.S. citizens, to include 18 government employees, both military and civilian, have been charged or indicted in Federal court. Contracts valued at more than \$6 billion are affected. As a result of initial indications of this corruption within theater, the Army reorganized its contracting office in Kuwait, replaced its leaders, increased the size of the staff and provided more ethics training.

Dr. Gansler's report offered a very blunt and comprehensive assessment that I asked for and that the Army needed, and he also outlined a plan for the way ahead after citing structural weaknesses and organizational shortcomings in the U.S. Army's acquisition and contracting system used to support expeditionary operations. The commission outlined four areas as critical to future success:

- (1) increased stature, quantity and career development for contracting personnel both military and civilian, particularly for expeditionary operations;
- (2) restructure of the organization and responsibility to facilitate contracting and contract management;
- (3) training and tools for overall contracting activities in expeditionary operations; and
- (4) obtaining legislative, regulatory, and policy assistance to enable contracting effectiveness—important in expeditionary operations.

The Gansler report traced many of the difficulties to post-Cold War cuts in the Army acquisition budget, which led to an undersized acquisition workforce in the face of an expanding workload. This workforce has not been properly sized, trained, structured, or empowered to meet the needs of our warfighters, in major expeditionary operations. In fact, currently with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army administered over 25 percent of all Federal contracts in fiscal year 2007, valued in excess of \$111 billion. We also need to do a better job in training our com-

manders on their responsibilities for requirements definition and contractor performance.

Complementing the Gansler Commission's strategic review, I also formed an internal Army task force to review current contracting operations and take immediate action where appropriate. The Army Contracting Task Force, co-chaired by Lieutenant General N. Ross Thompson, Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology; and Ms. Kathryn Condon, Executive Deputy to the commanding general of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, has already made recommendations and is implementing improvements.

Expeditionary military Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have placed extraordinary demands on the contracting system and our contracting support personnel. The U.S. Army has never fought an extended conflict that required such reliance on contractor support. Approximately half of the personnel currently deployed in Iraq are contractor employees, who provide food services, interpreters, communications, equipment repair and other important services. Contracting and procurement must be an Army core competency.

While the overwhelming majority of our contracting workforce, civilian and military, is doing an outstanding job under challenging circumstances, we must do a better job of organizing, resourcing, and supporting them in their critical work. We will take the steps necessary to ensure that we execute our responsibility effectively, efficiently and fully consistent with Army values.

CONCLUSION

To paraphrase General Abrams, soldiers and their families are the All-Volunteer Force. We cannot have a healthy All-Volunteer Force without healthy Army families.

In today's Army, you recruit the soldier, you retain the family. Working with General Casey, I am confident we will do both and we will do both well.

I look forward to the dialogue with you today. We seek your continued strong support that will enable the Army to execute its many missions and help us to achieve the four imperatives set out by the Chief of Staff General George Casey. With your continued assistance to our soldiers and their families, we will remain the pre-eminent land power and we will remain Army Strong!

Again, thank you for allowing me to testify. I look forward to your questions.

Chairman LEVIN. General Casey?

STATEMENT OF GEN GEORGE W. CASEY, JR., USA, CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES ARMY

General CASEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

I welcome the opportunity to come before you today to share my views with you on what I've seen in my first 7 months on the job, and to talk about the direction that the Secretary and I believe we need to move the Army, with your help, in the next 3 or 4 years.

As has been pointed out, our Nation has been at war for over 6 years, and our Army has been a leader on the front lines of that war, both abroad and at home. Over time, these operations have expanded in scope and duration, and, as a result, our All-Volunteer Force has been stretched and stressed.

Over the last 6 years, Congress has responded to our request for resources; and that kind of commitment to the Army, our soldiers, and our families is both necessary and deeply appreciated.

We live in a world where global terrorism and extremist ideologies are realities. As I look to the future, I believe that the next decades will be ones of what I call "persistent conflict." What I mean by that is a period of protracted confrontation among states, nonstates, and individual actors who are increasingly willing to use violence to accomplish their political and ideological ends. There are several emerging global trends that I believe are

likely to exacerbate this period of protracted confrontation. I'd like to mention just a few.

First of all: globalization. Now, there's no question that globalization has had very positive effects on the prosperity of a lot of people around the globe, but it has also created "have" and "have-not" conditions that are ripe for exploitation by some of these global terrorist groups.

Technology is another double-edged sword. The same innovations that improve the quality of life and education and livelihood are also employed by terrorists who export terror around the globe and to manipulate our media.

Demographic change. The populations of these lesser-developed countries are expected to double in the next 20 years. That'll create a youth bulge that, again, is ripe for exploitation by terrorist groups, especially as most of the governments of these lesser-developed countries are unable to deal with large populations.

The demand for energy, water, and food for growing populations is likely to increase competition, and possibly conflict.

I was on climate change and natural disasters. Now, they can cause humanitarian crises, population migrations, and epidemic diseases.

The last two trends, global trends that worry me the most, are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and safe havens.

But there are over 1,200 terrorist groups around the world, and we know for a fact that a lot of them, particularly al Qaeda, are seeking weapons of mass destruction. I firmly believe that if they get a weapon, they'll attempt to use it against a developed country.

With respect to safe havens—and by that, I mean countries that are unwilling or unable to govern their own territory, much like we had in Afghanistan prior to September 11—safe havens can be used by these terrorists to plan and export their terrorist operations around the world.

So, those are the trends that I believe will exacerbate this period of persistent conflict. While analysts generally agree with those trends, and they also agree that we can't rule out conflict with a state actor, however unlikely that may be—they also agree that we're going to be unlikely to predict the time, location, or scope of these coming conflicts.

We do know, however, that the Army will remain central to our Nation's security, and that we need versatile and agile forces that can rapidly adapt to unexpected circumstances.

Now, the Army has a vision to build those forces, and we're already executing it. We intend to transform the current force into a campaign-quality expeditionary force that is capable of supporting the needs of combatant commanders across the spectrum of conflict, from peacetime engagement to conventional war in the 21st century. That's what we're about.

So, Mr. Chairman, as we look to the future, we do so with an Army that's already stretched by the impacts of 6 years at war. While we remain a resilient, committed, professional force, today's Army is out of balance. The current demand for our forces exceeds the sustainable supply. We're consumed with meeting the demands of the current fight, and are unable to provide ready forces as rapidly as necessary for other contingencies.

Our Reserve components are performing magnificently, but in an operational role for which they were neither organized or resourced. Our current operations requirements for forces in limited periods of time between the deployments necessitates a focus on counterinsurgency training at the expense of training for the full spectrum of operations.

Soldiers, families, support systems, and equipment are stressed by the demands of these repeated deployments. Overall, we're consuming our readiness as fast as we can build it. But, with your help, we can act to restore balance and preserve this All-Volunteer Force, restore necessary depth and breadth to Army capabilities, and build capacity for the future.

Mr. Chairman, I believe there are four imperatives that we need to do to restore the Army to balance. Implementing these imperatives will require several years, considerable resources, and the continued support of Congress and the American people. Those imperatives are: sustain, prepare, reset, and transform.

First imperative: sustain. As Secretary Geren said, we need to improve the manner in which we sustain the Army's soldiers, families, and civilians. The recruiting and training—and retaining of our soldiers, who are the centerpiece of this force, can only be done by transforming our quality recruits into soldiers who are physically tough, mentally adaptive, and who live the warrior ethos. These warriors are our ultimate asymmetric advantage, and that's the one thing that no enemy can duplicate, now or in the future. We need to keep them with us.

I mentioned we recognize the strain on families. We also recognize they play an increasing role in the readiness of this All-Volunteer Force, so we will ensure the quality of life for soldiers and their families is commensurate with the quality of their magnificent service.

We will also ensure that our wounded warriors are cared for and reintegrated into the Army and society, and we'll never forget our moral obligation to the spouses and children and families who have lost their soldier since September 11.

Second imperative: prepare. We need to continue to prepare forces for success in the current conflict. With your help, we've made great strides in equipping our soldiers, and we're continually adapting our training and equipment to keep pace with an evolving enemy.

We remain committed to providing our deploying soldiers the best available equipment to ensure they maintain a technological advantage over any enemy that they face. We will also continue to provide tough, demanding training at home stations and combat training centers to give our soldiers and leaders the confidence they need to succeed in these complex environments. Military success in this war is tied to the capabilities of our leaders and soldiers, and we will not fail to prepare them for success.

Third is: reset. We have to continue in this—especially in this period, to reset our soldiers for future deployments, as well as future contingencies. Let me stress the point that, as we reset, we are resetting for the future, not resetting the past.

Since 2003, equipment has been used at a rate of over five times what we program, in harsh, demanding desert conditions. So, in

addition to fixing, replacing, and upgrading our equipment, and re-training for future missions, we also have to revitalize our soldiers and their families by providing them the time and the opportunity to recover from the cumulative effects of sustained operations.

Resetting our force is critical to restoring readiness, and reset must continue as long as we have forced deployed and for several years thereafter. The commitment to providing the resources to reset our forces is essential to restoring strategic depth and flexibility in the defense of the country.

Lastly; transform. We must transform our Army to meet the demands of the 21st century. Transformation for us is a holistic effort to adapt how we fight, how we train, how we modernize, how we develop leaders, how we base our forces, and how we support our soldiers, families, and civilians. It's a journey for us, not a destination.

Let me just say a few words about one element of our transformation. That's modernization.

We believe we must continually modernize our forces to put our cold-war formations and our cold-war systems behind us, and to provide our soldiers with a decisive advantage over any enemy that they face.

With your help, we'll continue to rapidly field the best equipment to our fighting forces, to upgrade and modernize existing combat and support systems, to incorporate new technologies spun out of the FCS, and, finally, to begin the fielding of FCS Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) themselves. We're ultimately working toward an agile, globally responsive Army that's enhanced by modern networks, precision sensors, precision weapons, and platforms that are lighter, less logistics-dependent, and less manpower-intensive. It's truly a 21st-century force.

Sustain, prepare, reset, and transform. Each of these imperatives requires resources. At the start of fiscal year 2007, Congress provided the Army sufficient base and supplemental funding to support the war, to reset, and to maintain and train the force. We did a lot of good with that. As Secretary Geren said, we have challenges this year. We need prompt funding of our global war on terror requirements to sustain the momentum that you've helped us gain in putting ourselves back in balance.

In closing, your Army is the best in the world at what it does, and we are that way because of our values, because of our ethos and because of our people.

We talk about our warrior ethos, and it is what all of our soldiers are grounded in, and it gives us a unifying theme across the whole force.

Let me just wrap up, then. I get a lot of questions on quality. Some of you mentioned "quality" here. I was in Baghdad in August, I had the opportunity to pin a Silver Star on a young sergeant. It was Sergeant Kenneth Thomas. He was a member of the 1st Cavalry Division. He was out on a riverboat patrol on the Tigris River with the Iraqi police. The patrol was ambushed from the riverbank by about 50 to 75 insurgents. The Iraqi policeman that was manning the machine gun, the primary weapon of the boat, abandoned his position. Sergeant Thomas jumped on the weapon, began returning fire as incoming rounds bounced off the steel plates around

the boat. They tried to punch through. They couldn't. They diverted to the opposite side of the river, got everyone out of the boat into a depression; so, they weren't taking fire, but they couldn't get out. The squad leader turned around and looked ask Sergeant Thomas and said, "Get us a way out of here." He charged up the bank of the river, under fire, only to find that his departure exit was stopped by a fence. He took out his wire cutters, he began cutting the fence. The fence was electric. It knocked him down. He got back up. He continued to cut the fence, while the gloves were melting in his hand. He got through, pulled the whole squad through. The last guy got hung up, and this is all under fire. He went back, knowing he was going to get jolted again, got knocked down, dragged the last guy through, organized the squad, assaulted a house, and secured it so they could be evacuated. About an hour and a half of steady combat. For that, he was awarded the Silver Star. That's the kind of men and women that you have in your Armed Forces today.

But it will require more than the courage and value of our soldiers to ensure our Army can continue to fight and win the Nation's wars in an era of persistent conflict. It'll require clear recognition by national leaders, like yourselves, of the threats and challenges that America faces in the years ahead and the need to ensure that our Armed Forces are prepared to meet them. I am optimistic that we can work together to face those challenges.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of General Casey follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY GEN GEORGE W. CASEY, JR., USA

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, on behalf of the more than 1 million Active, Guard, and Reserve soldiers, their families, and the civilians of the United States Army, serving around the globe, the Secretary and I welcome the opportunity to discuss the direction we intend to take the Army in the next several years.

Our Nation has been at war for over 6 years. Our Army has been a leader on the front lines of this war and back here at home—protecting our people and securing our borders. Over time, these operations have expanded in scope and duration. As a result, they have stretched and stressed our All-Volunteer Force.

Over these last 6 years, Congress has responded to the Army's requests for resources. In fiscal year 2007 alone, Congress provided over \$200 billion to the Army, most at the start of the fiscal year and in time for the fully-funded Reset Program. That kind of commitment to the Army and our soldiers is both necessary and deeply appreciated.

We live in a world where global terrorism and extremist ideologies are real threats. As we look to the future, national security experts are virtually unanimous in predicting that the next several decades will be ones of persistent conflict—protracted confrontation among state, non-state, and individual actors that use violence to achieve their political and ideological ends. Adversaries will employ propaganda, threat, intimidation, and overt violence to coerce people and gain control of their land or resources. Some will avoid our proven advantages by adopting asymmetric techniques, utilizing indirect approaches, and immersing themselves in the population.

Many of these conflicts will likely be protracted—ebbing and flowing in intensity, challenging our Nation's will to persevere. Several emerging global trends may fuel this violence and enable extremist groups to undermine governments, societies, and values. Globalization, despite its positive effects on global prosperity, may create "have" and "have not" conditions that spawn conflict. Population growth and its "youth bulge" will increase opportunities for instability, radicalism, and extremism. Resource demand for energy, water, and food for growing populations will increase competition and conflict. Adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters may cause humanitarian crises, population migrations, and epidemic diseases. Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will increase the potential for catastrophic

attacks that will be globally destabilizing and detrimental to economic development. Finally, failed or failing states unable or unwilling to maintain control over their territory may provide safe havens for global or regional terrorist groups to prepare and export terror.

While analysts generally agree on these trends, we cannot predict the exact time, location, or scope of individual conflicts. We do know, however, that the Army will remain central to our national strategy to ensure our security in spite of these threatening trends. We need to ensure our forces are agile enough to respond rapidly to unexpected circumstances; led by versatile, culturally astute, and adaptive leaders; and supported by institutions capable of sustaining operations for as long as necessary to ensure victory. The Army has a vision to build that force, and is already executing this vision. We will continue along these lines and transform our current force into a campaign-quality expeditionary force that is capable of supporting the needs of combatant commanders operating effectively with joint, inter-agency, and multinational partners across the spectrum of conflict from peacetime engagement to conventional war. Simultaneously, the Army will pursue the necessary actions to restore balance to our current forces.

While we remain a resilient and committed professional force, our Army today is out of balance for several reasons. The current demand for our forces exceeds the sustainable supply. We are consumed with meeting the demands of the current fight and are unable to provide ready forces as rapidly as necessary for other potential contingencies. Our Reserve components are performing an operational role for which they were neither originally designed nor resourced. Current operational requirements for forces and limited periods between deployments necessitate a focus on counterinsurgency to the detriment of preparedness for the full range of military missions. Soldiers, families, and equipment are stretched and stressed by the demands of lengthy and repeated deployments with insufficient recovery time. Equipment used repeatedly in harsh environmental conditions is wearing out at a far greater pace than expected. Army support systems including health care, education, and family support systems that were designed for the pre-September 11 era are straining under the pressures from 6 years at war.

Overall, our readiness is being consumed as fast as we can build it. We will act quickly to restore balance to preserve our All-Volunteer Force, restore necessary depth and breadth to Army capabilities, and build essential capacity for the future. Four “imperatives” frame the work we will do. Implementing them will require several years, considerable resources, and sustained commitment from Congress and the American people.

First, we need to improve the manner in which we sustain the Army’s soldiers, families, and civilians. Recruiting, training, and retaining our soldiers—the centerpiece of the Army—can only be done by transforming quality recruits into soldiers who are physically tough, mentally adaptive and live the Warrior Ethos. These Warriors are our ultimate asymmetric advantage—the one thing that cannot be matched by our adversaries—now or in the future. We recognize the strain on families, are aware that families play an important role in maintaining the readiness of our All-Volunteer Force, and must therefore ensure that their quality of life is commensurate with their quality of service. For these reasons, we will build a partnership with Army families and improve family readiness by standardizing and funding existing family programs and services; increasing accessibility and quality of health care; improving soldier and family housing; ensuring excellence in schools, youth services, and family child care; and expanding education and employment opportunities for family members. We will also ensure that our Wounded Warriors are cared for and reintegrated into the Army and society. We must never forget our moral obligation to the spouses, children, and families who have lost their soldier since September 11. Finally, we must continue to support our Army civilians. They have a 230-year record of dedicated service and they remain an integral part of the Army. As the Army’s missions evolve and become more complex, so will the roles of Army civilians.

Second, we will continue to prepare forces to succeed in the current conflict. We have made great strides in equipping our soldiers and are continually adapting our training and equipment to keep pace with an evolving enemy. We remain committed to providing all deploying soldiers the best available equipment to ensure they maintain a technological advantage over any enemy they face. We will continue to provide tough, demanding training at home stations and in our combat training centers to give our soldiers and their leaders the confidence they need to succeed in these complex environments. We will implement the Army Force Generation model by 2011 to manage the preparation of forces for employment and improve predictability for soldiers and families. Military success in this war is tied to the capabilities of our leaders and our soldiers—we will not fail to prepare them for success.

Third, we must continue to reset our units and rebuild the readiness consumed in operations to prepare them for future deployments and future contingencies. Sustained combat has taken a toll on our soldiers, leaders, families, and equipment. Since 2003, equipment has been used at a rate over five times that programmed—in harsh and demanding desert and mountainous conditions. In addition to fixing, replacing, and upgrading our equipment and retraining for future missions, we must also revitalize our soldiers and families by providing them time and opportunity to recover in order to reverse the cumulative effects of a sustained high operational tempo. Resetting our forces is critical to restoring readiness—this year we will reset over 130,000 pieces of equipment and almost 200,000 soldiers. Reset must continue as long as we have forces deployed and for several years thereafter to ensure readiness for the future. Commitment to providing the resources to reset our forces is essential to restoring balance and to providing strategic depth and flexibility for the Nation.

Fourth, we must continue to transform our Army to meet the demands of the 21st century. Transformation is a holistic effort to adapt how we fight, train, modernize, develop leaders, station, and support our soldiers, families, and civilians. Transformation is a journey—not a destination. Transformation is also a multi-faceted process.

We must grow the Army to provide and sustain sufficient forces for the full range and duration of current operations and future contingencies. This growth will allow us to revitalize and balance our force, reduce deployment periods, increase dwell time, increase capability and capacity, and strengthen the systems that support our forces. We have authorization to increase the Army's size by 74,000 soldiers over the next 5 years. We will achieve this as fast as possible.

We must continuously modernize our forces to put our Cold War formations and systems behind us and to provide our soldiers a decisive advantage over our enemies. We will continue to rapidly field the best new equipment to our fighting forces, upgrade and modernize existing systems, incorporate new technologies derived from the Future Combat Systems research and development, and soon begin to field the Future Combat Systems themselves. We are ultimately working toward an agile, globally responsive Army that is enhanced by modern networks, surveillance sensors, precision weapons, and platforms that are lighter, less logistics-dependant, and less manpower-intensive.

We are over half-way through the largest organizational change since World War II. We must continue to convert our combat and enabling formations to modular units that are more deployable, tailorable, and versatile, and have demonstrated their effectiveness in Iraq and Afghanistan. We must also continue to rebalance our capabilities by converting less necessary skills to those in high demand, and by shifting much-needed Reserve Forces into the Active component.

We must continue institutional change in processes, policies, and procedures to support an expeditionary Army during a time of war. Most of our systems were designed to support the pre-September 11 Army. Our transformation cannot be cemented until the institutional systems—personnel, education, training, health care, procurement, and support among them—are adapted to meet the realities of our current and future environments. We will continue Army Business Transformation through management, contracting, and acquisition reform; comprehensive redesign of organizations and business processes that support our expeditionary Army at war; and consolidation of bases and activities. While this is largely an internal process, it may well be the most difficult aspect of transformation—and the one that is most essential to giving us the Army we will need for the rest of this century.

We must continue to adapt our Reserve components from a paradigm of a strategic Reserve only mobilized in national emergencies, to an operational Reserve, employed on a cyclical basis to add depth to the Active Force. This has been happening for the last 6 years and will be required in a future of persistent conflict. Operationalizing the Reserve components requires national and State consensus and support as well as continued commitment from Reserve component employers, soldiers, and families. It necessitates changes in the way we train, equip, resource, and mobilize the Reserve components.

We must continue to develop agile and adaptive leaders. Leaders in the 21st century must be competent in their core proficiencies; broad enough to operate across the spectrum of conflict—from humanitarian and peacekeeping operations through counterinsurgency to major conventional operations; able to operate in joint, inter-agency, and combined environments and leverage political and diplomatic efforts in achieving their objectives; at home in other cultures, able to use this awareness and understanding to support operations in innovative ways; and courageous enough to see and exploit opportunities in the challenges and complexities of our future operating environments.

Each of these imperatives requires resources—on time and in the amounts needed to meet the mission. We are 46 days into fiscal year 2008, and it is imperative that the Army and Congress work in partnership to ensure that funding is made available to the Army in order for us to sustain, prepare, reset, and transform.

With enactment of the DOD Appropriations Bill, the Army can continue essential missions for a limited time. Lack of funding for the global war on terror will cause us to tap into our base programs to continue essential operations. In the case of our operation and maintenance account, we project that with the base program paying for both base and global war on terrorism costs at current levels, OMA funds will be exhausted by late January, or if Congress approves a reprogramming request, mid-late February.

I ask Congress to provide the necessary resources to ensure we maintain continuity of funding in order to support an Army at War. Our continued and close partnership with Congress will be essential as we restore the Army's balance over the next several years.

The Army has long been the strength of this Nation. We were in 1775, and we are today. For 232 years, the Army has symbolized, in the truest sense, American resolve and commitment to defend its interests. We protect the homeland and lead the Nation's efforts against the scourge of global terror, and we will do so in a future of persistent conflict. Our soldiers, their families, and our Army civilians epitomize what is best about America: they work hard, selflessly carry heavy burdens, and are willing to face a hard road ahead.

Today, we are locked in a war against a global extremist threat that is fixed on defeating the United States and destroying our way of life. This foe will not go away nor will it give up easily. At stake is the power of our values and our civilization—exemplified by the promise of America—to confront and defeat the menace of extremist terrorists. At stake is whether the authority of those who treasure the rights of free individuals will stand firm against the ruthless and pitiless men who wantonly slay the defenseless. At stake is whether the future will be framed by the individual freedoms we hold so dear or be dominated by demented forms of extremism. At stake is whether we will continue to expand freedom, opportunity, and decency for those who thirst for it, or let fall the darkness of extremism and terror.

Faced with such a long and difficult struggle, we must remind ourselves that this Army exists to field forces for victory. We are at war, fighting for our freedom, our security, and our future as a Nation. We have made hard sacrifices, and there will be more. We have lost more than 2,400 soldiers to hostile fire and had over 20,000 wounded—nearly a quarter of those from the Reserve components. We have also awarded a Medal of Honor, 9 Distinguished Service Cross Medals, 440 Silver Stars, and more than 6,700 other awards for valor.

Our soldiers, families, and civilians are the strength of our Army and they make the Army the strength of the Nation. Their sacrifices are what builds a better future for others, and preserves our way of life. They will lead our Nation to victory over our enemies. They will preserve the peace for us and for our allies. Our Warrior Ethos has it right—I will always place the mission first, I will never quit, I will never accept defeat, and I will never leave a fallen comrade.

The Secretary and I are greatly encouraged by the recent actions of Congress, the President, and the Secretary of Defense, which reflect clear recognition of our challenges following 6 years of war. We look forward to working with you to maintain our Army—still the best in the world at what we do.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, General.

First, let me ask you, Mr. Secretary—we have wounded warrior legislation, a very extensive and comprehensive legislation, as part of our Senate-passed authorization bill. It would end the conflicts in disability assessments, it would end the waits for disability assessments, it would end the gaps between the DOD and the Veterans Administration (VA). We've worked very carefully with the Veterans Affairs Committee on this legislation. Does the administration support our wounded warrior legislation?

Secretary GEREN. Well, we see parts of this legislation that work very well with what we're trying to do. The President would like to see Dole-Shalala implemented, and I understand—I haven't seen the—

Chairman LEVIN. There are some additional provisions in Dole-Shalala which are not in our provision. I know the President would

like them to be adopted. But, as far as our legislation goes, which is comprehensive, does the President support our legislation?

Secretary GEREN. Let me speak from the perspective of the Department of the Army and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Again, the President has said he wants to see Dole-Shalala, in its entirety, enacted. Your legislation addresses parts of that, but not all of it.

Chairman LEVIN. I would have put it the other way. I would say Dole-Shalala addresses part of our legislation and adds something to it. Would you accept that?

Secretary GEREN. There's overlap and issues in your legislation that aren't covered in Dole-Shalala, and vice versa.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Let me move on, then.

Chairman LEVIN. General, the training and equipment readiness for our nondeployed units has fallen sharply, would you agree with that?

General CASEY. It's actually stayed about the same since last summer and it's not good.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. But last summer was below what it needs to be.

General CASEY. Right.

Chairman LEVIN. Would you tell us how far below what it needs to be it is, and whether that is an acceptable risk.

General CASEY. At this level of classification at this hearing—

Chairman LEVIN. Yes.

General CASEY.—as you'll recall from last summer, it is not where it needs, and that is a key element of putting ourselves back in balance. To do that, we have to increase the supply of our forces, and the demand has to come down. The sooner we do those two things, the faster we will build the readiness in the next-to-deploy forces.

Chairman LEVIN. Is the current level of risk, which has accompanied that lower level that it needs to be, an acceptable level of risk?

General CASEY. I believe the level of strategic risk is acceptable.

Chairman LEVIN. It is.

General, would you agree with the following statement: that the Army went to war in Iraq with insufficient body armor, insufficient armor on wheeled vehicles, insufficient radios, machine guns, insufficient aviation survivability equipment—would you agree with that? If you do agree, can you tell us what we are doing to overcome those shortfalls and how we're factoring in the lessons that are learned from current operations to preclude or to minimize those kind of problems in the future? But, first, would you agree with that, what I said at the beginning?

What are we doing now to avoid those from being repeated?

General CASEY. I think, as I said in my opening statement, we have already made great strides in equipping our soldiers. But I think Senator Inhofe's point here about what happened in the 1990s is instructive for all of us. As I came in and I had my transition team look out to 2020, I also had them look back 13 years, to 1994, and I said, "What was the country doing then?" We were basking in the glow of the great success in Operation Desert Storm, basking in the glow of success in the Cold War, looking around to

spend the peace dividend, and decreasing the size of the Army by about 300,000. So, we made some decisions a decade ago that put us in the position we found ourselves in on September 11, and I think that's a huge message for this committee. When we make mistakes like that, it takes another decade or so to fix them. So, we all need to work on that together.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

On recruiting and retention, according to Army data, retention of West Point graduates is lower than historical norms. The West Point class of 2000 saw 34 percent leave the Service as soon as they were able; 54 percent of that class left active Service by the 5½-year point. Can you tell us if that is troubling, and, if so, what is being done to reverse that trend?

The second part of this question has to do with the increase over the last 4 years of new recruits that lack a high school diploma. In 2003, 94 percent of all new recruits graduated from high school; in fiscal year 2007, the number had dropped to 79 percent.

So, both in terms of retention of the West Point graduates, which is at the lower level than historically the case, but also in terms of the increase of category-4 recruits, which means the lower number of high school graduates, in particular; what is the Army doing in both of those areas?

General CASEY. First of all, on the officer retention, Senator, your data on the—those West Point classes is, in fact, right. They're 8 percent above historic norms.

Chairman LEVIN. Above, in terms of dropout?

General CASEY. Of dropouts.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay.

General CASEY. Now, that said, officer retention, in general, is stable. But it is one of our primary concerns. As I said in my statement, we invest in these young captains and majors and sergeants, and it's an 8- to 10-year investment. If we lose them, it takes another decade to build them back. So, we're very concerned about that. Several months ago, we initiated a selective retention bonus for captains. Over 9,000 captains have already taken that bonus, and so, we think that's a very positive incentive. We are concerned about it. We have to keep the good people with us. That's my greatest concern.

On the quality of recruits, all of our recruits are qualified. They may not have a high school diploma, but they have a high school education. We are meeting standards in the lowest categories, and in the first three intelligence categories. We are watching that very closely. When Secretary Gates agreed to accelerate the growth of the Army by 2 years, he did it with the proviso that we not sacrifice quality to do that. The Secretary and I are committed to coming across on that.

Chairman LEVIN. Is the increase in the number of category-4 recruits a problem, as far as you can see? I'm asking you whether or not it's the increase in that percentage, does that trouble you? That's all I'm asking.

General CASEY. No. It's such a small percentage increase, I'm not concerned about that right now.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator Warner.

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

I commend both of you. The Army, at this point in its history, needs strong leadership. I view, in both of you, that potential that you've given it, are giving it, and will continue to give it.

I want to turn to that very interesting statement, that you look into the future, General Casey, and you see persistent conflict. Regrettably, that may well be the state of the world. But, I also wish to draw your attention to the fact that we are focusing, here today and the coming budgets, on the Army and meeting the four imperatives that you listed, General Casey. But, bear in mind that that persistent conflict is across a spectrum of challenges that really require this country to maintain a very strong Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Army.

So, throughout history there's always been, I think, a strong competition between the military departments, for resources. I was privileged to serve in the Pentagon many years ago as the Navy Secretary. I saw it firsthand. I've seen it here these many years that I've been privileged to serve on this committee. That will continue. But, at this point in time, I think the pendulum has to swing somewhat towards the Army to meet your four imperatives. We cannot take our eye off that persistent conflict, diversity, and the challenge that the overall Armed Forces may meet.

After the privilege of being in this body for many years and associated with the military. I think future Presidents, future Congresses are going to exercise, within their respective constitutional powers, very, very firm oversight and direction on future military operations. This one has taught us many lessons, not only Iraq, but the continuing situation in Afghanistan. As a consequence, as we do that, we have to keep a balanced force structure, as envisioned by Goldwater-Nichols, the jointness that has made, I think, our Armed Forces stronger and more effective today.

You said you need our help. There's a disposition in the Congress to give that help. But is that help only in the form of money, or do you wish to have some legislation to enable you to achieve the four imperatives that you've listed?

General CASEY. Senator, it's primarily in the form of money. However, I will tell you, I mentioned the fact that the National Guard and Reserve are executing operational missions that they weren't originally designed for, and we are working within the Department here to reshape some of the legislation and policies that were put in place in the 1950s for a different kind of Guard and Reserve. We've changed the paradigm on our Reserve component forces, and I think we need to level with them, tell it what it is. To do that, I think it's ultimately going to require some legislation to change that. So, I'd like to work with you on that in the coming months.

Senator WARNER. Will that be forthcoming in the present budget cycle for 2009?

General CASEY. I think it'll probably be 2010. I don't think we're at a point to get it into 2009 just yet.

Senator WARNER. I want to talk broadly about another issue. Quite interesting. There's an excellent article, in my judgment, in today's Washington Post on the military perspective of the situa-

tion in Iraq and how the surge operations have achieved the result that the President laid down; that is, a greater security.

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 Met 2 Edition

Iraqis Wasting An Opportunity, U.S. Officers Say;
 With Attacks Ebbing, Government Is Urged to Reach Out
 to Opponents

BYLINE: Thomas E. Ricks; Washington Post Staff Writer

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Senior military commanders here now portray the intransigence of Iraq's Shiite-dominated government as the key threat facing the U.S. effort in Iraq, rather than al-Qaeda terrorists, Sunni insurgents or Iranian-backed militias.

In more than a dozen interviews, U.S. military officials expressed growing concern over the Iraqi government's failure to capitalize on sharp declines in attacks against U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians. A window of opportunity has opened for the government to reach out to its former foes, said **Army Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno**, the commander of day-to-day U.S. military operations in Iraq, but "it's unclear how long that window is going to be open."

The lack of political progress calls into question the core rationale behind the troop buildup President Bush announced in January, which was premised on the notion that improved security would create space for Iraqis to arrive at new power-sharing arrangements. And what if there is no such breakthrough by next summer? "If that doesn't happen," Odierno said, "we're going to have to review our strategy."

Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell, deputy commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, complained last week that Iraqi politicians appear out of touch with everyday citizens. "The ministers, they don't get out," he said. "They don't know what the hell is going on on the ground." Campbell noted approvingly that Lt. Gen. Aboud Qanbar, the top Iraqi commander in the Baghdad security offensive, lately has begun escorting cabinet officials involved in health, housing, oil and other issues out of the Green Zone to show them, as Campbell put it, "Hey, I got the security, bring in the [expletive] essential services."

Indeed, some U.S. Army officers now talk more sympathetically about former insurgents than they do about their ostensible allies in the Shiite-led central government. "It is painful, very painful," dealing with the obstructionism of Iraqi officials, said Army Lt. Col. Mark Fetter. As for the Sunni fighters who for years bombed and shot U.S. soldiers and now want to join the police, Fetter shrugged. "They have got to eat," he said over lunch in the 1st Cavalry Division's mess hall here. "There are so many we've detained and interrogated, they did what they did for money."

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The best promise for breaking the deadlock would be holding provincial elections, officers said -- though they recognize that elections could turn bloody and turbulent, undercutting the fragile stability they now see developing in Iraq.

"The tipping point that I've been looking for as an intel officer, we are there," said one Army officer here who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of his position. "The GOI [government of Iraq] and ISF [Iraqi security forces] are at the point where they can make it or break it."

The latest news of declining violence comes as the U.S. troop contingent in Iraq has reached an all-time high. This week, the U.S. troop number will hit 175,000 -- the largest presence so far in the 4 1/2 -year war -- as units that are rotating in and out overlap briefly. But those numbers are scheduled to come down rapidly over the next several months, which will place an increasing burden on Iraqi security forces and an Iraqi government that has yet to demonstrate it is up to the challenge, senior military officials said.

Indeed, after years of seizing on every positive development and complaining that the good news wasn't being adequately conveyed, American military officials now warn against excessive optimism. "It's never as bad as it was, and it's not as good as it's being reported now," said Army Maj. Gen. Michael Barbero, chief of strategic operations for U.S. forces in Iraq.

On the diplomatic side of the Iraq equation, U.S. officials said they realize time is short. "We've got six months because the military is leaving," said one official. But this official and others expressed irritation with the military's negativity toward the Iraqi government -- which they interpret as blaming the State Department for not speeding reconciliation.

"That's their out," the official said of the military. "It's convenient, and I know plenty of them have been helping that story around."

Diplomatic officials, none of whom were authorized to speak on the record, insisted that progress is being made, even if it lags behind military successes. They highlighted two key elements needed for political reconciliation in Iraq, one domestic and one external. Internally, sectarian politicians remain deadlocked on a range of issues. Shiite political groups are holding back as they vie for national power and control over resources, while the majority Shiite population fears that the Sunnis hope to recapture the dominance they held under Saddam Hussein.

In recent weeks, U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker has focused on external forces, hoping to persuade neighboring Sunni Arab governments to increase their official presence in Iraq -- no Arab government currently has an embassy in Baghdad -- to boost the confidence of Iraqi Sunnis.

Late last month, Crocker traveled to virtually every nearby Arab country except Syria and Saudi Arabia. His message, one official said, was "Look, you have got to get behind this because you've got to do everything you can to give all sides confidence."

The U.S. military approach in Iraq this year has focused on striking deals with Sunni insurgents, under which they stop fighting the Americans and instead protect their own neighborhoods. So far about 70,000 such volunteers have been enrolled -- a trend that makes the Shiite-led central government nervous, especially as the movement gets closer to Baghdad.

Indeed, all the U.S. military officials interviewed said their most pressing concern is that Sunnis will sour if the Iraqi government doesn't begin to reciprocate their peace overtures. "The Sunnis have shown great patience," said Campbell. "You don't want the Sunnis that are working with you . . . to go back to the dark side."

The Army officer who requested anonymity said that if the Iraqi government doesn't reach out, then for former Sunni insurgents "it's game on -- they're back to attacking again."

The year-long progress in fighting al-Qaeda in Iraq could carry a downside. Maj. Mark Brady, who works on reconciliation issues, noted that a Sunni leader told him: "As soon as we finish with al-Qaeda, we start with the Shiite extremists." Talk like

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that is sharply discouraged, Brady noted as he walked across the dusty ground of Camp Liberty, on the western fringes of Baghdad.

But not all agreed that the Sunnis would take up arms. "I don't think going back to violence is in the cards," said Barbero. Rather, he predicted that if they give up on reaching an accommodation, they will resort to new political actions. One possibility mentioned by other officials is a symbolic Sunni move to secede from Iraq.

Also, some outside experts contend that U.S. officials still don't grasp how their empowerment of militias under the bottom-up model of reconciliation is helping tear apart Iraq. Marc Lynch, a George Washington University expert on the Middle East, argued recently on his blog, Abu Aardvark, that partly because of U.S. political tactics in Iraq, the country is drifting "towards a warlord state, along a Basra model, with power devolved to local militias, gangs, tribes, and power-brokers, with a purely nominal central state."

Officials identified other potential problems flowing from reductions in violence. Military planners already worry that if security continues to improve, many of the 2 million Iraqis who fled the country will return. Those who left are overwhelmingly Sunni, and many of their old houses are occupied by Shiites. How would the Shiite-dominated Iraqi army and police handle the likely friction? "Displaced people is a major flashpoint" to worry about in 2008, said Fetter.

The answer to many of Iraq's problems, several military officials said, would be to hold provincial elections, which they said would inject new blood into Iraq's political life and also better link the Baghdad government to the people. The question under debate is whether to hold them sooner, while the U.S. military still has available its five "surge" brigades, or hold them later and let Iraqis enjoy their growing sense of safety -- even though a smaller U.S. military would have less flexibility. "Some areas, you need them right now, to get people into the government," said Campbell. "But the other side of me says, let it settle in, let security develop, let people see some services." Later rather than sooner is especially appealing because the election campaigns are expected to turn violent.

But the longer provincial balloting is put off, the more likely the current political stalemate will continue. Also, if elections are postponed until, say, the fall of next year, they will be held on the eve of a U.S. presidential vote in which the Iraq war promises to be a major issue, military planners here note.

So, how to force political change in Iraq without destabilizing the country further? "I pity the guy who has to reconcile that tension," said Lt. Col. Douglas Ollivant, the chief of planning for U.S. military operations in Baghdad, whose tour of duty ends next month.

Staff writer Karen DeYoung in Washington contributed to this report.

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Senator WARNER. Yesterday, many of us attended briefings with the Secretary of State and Defense and confirmed we have not received that degree of political reconciliation from top down, as distinguished from bottom up.

A number of officers have spoken out, I think, very courageously on this, but, nevertheless, anonymously and that brings me to the following. We're all familiar with General Sanchez's comments on October 12, when he spoke about the war, and he said, "America is living in a nightmare with no end in sight."

Now, I fully respect the right of a retired officer to make those comments, hopefully within the bounds never to inflict injury or greater risk to the forces fighting. But in that same forum, he was asked why he did not bring up his concerns about the conduct of

the war when he was on Active Duty. He responded, "The last thing you want is for currently-serving officers to stand up to political leadership."

Reading in that article today, I think those officers that were quoted were within the confines, but what is your direction, General Casey, to your officer corps today about their responsibility to speak up while in uniform and address issues which they see, particularly those on the front lines of the combat situation, like the deterioration of the ability of the Iraqi government to come forward and respond to the improved security arrangements which have been fought so hard; death, wounds, and all sorts of sacrifices to achieve it?

General CASEY. Senator, what I tell my generals is, they're obliged to ask the hard questions and to speak the hard truths. They owe it to the country, and they owe it to their soldiers to ensure the political leaders, here, their unvarnished views on hard issues. I tried to do that the whole time I was in Iraq, and I encourage everybody to do the same.

Senator WARNER. My time is up, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Warner.

Senator Kennedy.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you very much.

I listened carefully—General Casey, you talked about the attitude of the defense of our country after Operation Desert Storm and the Cold War, and that's where we were in September 11; but on September 11 the Army had 1,300,000 in Active Duty. We're battling against Iraq, of 25 million, that had been beaten 10 years before against—whose army had been disbanded, military had been put in jail—Iraqis who had fought the Iranians during that period of time. Five years later, you're saying the current demand on our forces exceeds the sustainable supply, we are consumed with meeting demands of the current fight, unable to provide ready forces rapidly as necessary for potential. Our Reserve components are performing an operational role which they are neither originally designed nor resourced, current operational requirements for forces in limited periods between deployment necessitates a focus on counterinsurgent, to the detriment of preparedness for full range of military missions; soldiers, families, equipment are stretched by demands of lengthy, repeated deployments, equipment used in harsh environment, wearing out at a far greater pace than expected. Who is this mythical military that's battling and taking on an army of 1,300,000 people and find ourselves in this kind of shape? Who is this incredible military force that is challenging the greatest military force that we had, even on September 11? Who are they?

General CASEY. Are you talking about the insurgents and the terrorists that are operating inside Iraq and Afghanistan?

Senator KENNEDY. I'm talking about who has challenged our military, that it put the military in the condition that you've just described, when we had 1,300,000 at the start of the war, against a country of 25 million, which we defeated successfully 10 years before, and whose army had been basically dismissed, the military had been put in jail, and now we have this incredible force, and you talk about how we are going to, in the military, we're going to

have to take on this increasingly threatening force that is out there, the enemy. How did this all happen?

How are we going to alter, change, and shift it?

General CASEY. Senator, I'd go back to what we said about decisions that were made in the 1990s. This force in numbers was 1.3 million, but it was not organized, trained, and equipped fully.

Senator KENNEDY. 1,300,000 against, who? What were they against?

General CASEY. Half of those are in the Guard and Reserve.

Senator KENNEDY. All right. But who's their opposition?

General CASEY. The opposition was originally the Iraqi military, which we dealt with quite rapidly.

Senator KENNEDY. The military, they were defeated and disbanded.

General CASEY. Right.

Senator KENNEDY. With this 1,300,000, who is it that we can't handle?

General CASEY. But I'd go back to that 1,300,000, Senator, was not properly organized, trained, and equipped.

Senator KENNEDY. To take on an Iraq of 25 million, that had been defeated—

General CASEY. To take on anything.

Senator KENNEDY.—10 years before and had a defense budget of, what?

General CASEY. There's a perception that the National Guard left a bunch of its equipment in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They never had it.

Senator KENNEDY. If we can keep moving, just to follow up on a question posed by Senator Levin. As I understand it, over half of the West Point class of 2000 left as soon as possible; 2001 fared slightly better, 54 percent. So, are we losing half of the West Point class now?

General CASEY. Those figures sound about right, Senator. As I told Senator Levin.

Senator KENNEDY. Is that the best that we can do?

General CASEY. That is slightly above historical norms.

Senator KENNEDY. Is that acceptable to you? Just as somebody who takes seriously the people I appoint to the military academy, I'm really rather shocked that the people that I appoint, that get that opportunity to serve, are not staying in there. They make all kinds of representations when they're looking for these appointments to go to the military academy, and they're outstanding young people. Well, why is it that they're not staying in, with the kinds of opportunities they have and the expressions I'm sure they've made to each and every one of us. We appoint a certain percent; the House of Representatives, the President selects the others; and only half of the people that we appoint are staying in the military from West Point.

General CASEY. Yes. Senator, all those decisions to stay or go are very personal decisions. As I talk to the young captains and majors, a big factor is the extended deployments that we're putting them on. As I said, we have to put ourselves back in balance.

Senator KENNEDY. This is in today's Washington Post. It talked about Army Lieutenant General Odierno, the commander. It's un-

clear how long the window, as Senator Warner pointed openly, declined at least as they define in attack—sharp reduction on attacks on troops and civilians. The lack of political progress calls into question the core rationale behind the troop buildup President Bush announced in January, which is premised on the notion of improved security to create space for Iraqis to arrive at new power-sharing. What happens if there is no breakthrough at the next summit—if that doesn't happen, Odierno said, we're going to have to review our strategy.

Here's General Campbell, 1st Cavalry, complained last week, "The Iraqi politicians, out of touch, ministers don't get out, they don't know what the hell is going on, on the ground."

Aren't we effectively outsourcing American military and security issues to the politicians in Iraq that refuse to leave the buildings and go out and see what's going on and making an accommodation so that we might be able to see the beginning of the withdrawal of American troops?

General CASEY. I wouldn't agree with the statement that we're outsourcing security, Senator.

Senator KENNEDY. He couldn't say it any better, "The ministers don't get out, they don't know what the hell is going on, on the ground." We're still staying over there? How long are we going to stay over there? Until the civilian leadership understand what's going, on the ground?

General CASEY. Senator, I think the better way to say it is what we have all said, that the solution in Iraq is ultimately not a military solution, it's a political solution. I applaud those officers for speaking out about that.

Senator WARNER. I join you and applaud those officers for speaking out, because that's the type of information this body needs.

Chairman LEVIN. I think we all, by the way, are grateful when military officers speak out, speak honestly. We ask them to do that. They do that. Their comments this morning, as far as I'm concerned, are just what many of us have been saying for the last few years, and we're grateful for that.

Secretary GEREN. Mr. Chairman, I'm concerned that perhaps something that General Casey or I said has been misunderstood, based on Senator Kennedy's question. I just want to make sure the record is correct, as far as the number of Active Duty soldiers. Perhaps we said something referring to the total military, but the active-duty military, in 2001, was about 482,000, and we're now at about 520,000. But with Guard and Reserve, it approaches a million. Just to make sure that the record reflects that. When you look at the rest of the military (Air Force and Navy) obviously, the numbers are greater. But I want to make sure the record was clear on that.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay, thank you.

Senator SESSIONS. Is that just Army? You said "the military."

Secretary GEREN. 520,000 Active Duty Army and roughly a half a million in the Guard and Reserve. So, the total Army is around a million soldiers today.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator COLLINS.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, in your testimony you referred briefly to improvements in treatment for TBI, which many people have called the signature wound of this war. I first became very concerned about the lack of accurate and timely diagnoses of TBI when a neurologist from Maine came to see me many months ago and told me about a soldier, whom he diagnosed as having TBI, who had not been caught in any of the screening. That, obviously, is very serious. You talk, in your testimony, about having a program for every soldier to educate and assist them in recognizing and preventing TBI, but what the medical experts tell me would be most effective is if there were both pre- and post-deployment screening specifically for TBI, so there would be a baseline test that could be used, upon a soldier's return, to compare, to see if, in fact, there is an incident of TBI that has not been picked up. Are you doing that kind of screening now?

Secretary GEREN. You're exactly right, we just started this past summer in order to properly diagnose and analyze the information we have, it's important to have baseline information. For all the combat brigades that are going over now, we do a baseline test before they go. By early next year, we will have that test for everybody that deploys. But we do need that information before they leave, so we have something to compare to when they get back. When they get back, we have an immediate post-deployment health assessment, which includes a TBI test. Six months later, we have a second. But we started, this summer, at Fort Campbell, with a pilot program on doing the predeployment screening, and it's something we're going to extend to the entire force. Very important. I agree with you, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. I want to thank Senator Collins, by the way. One of the reasons we have, in our bill, that requirement for predeployment and postdeployment screening is because of her efforts. Other members of this committee made a real point of putting that into our wounded warriors legislation. There's a number of us who have been involved in that.

Secretary GEREN. Thank you, I appreciate that. That's a very important initiative.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm also concerned about reports that PTSD is showing up, particularly in our Guard and Reserve members, many months after they've returned and have resumed their civilian jobs. You mentioned, just now, a 6-month reassessment. Is that happening for Guard and Reserve members? General Casey, if this should be directed to you instead, don't hesitate to intervene.

Secretary GEREN. It's for all forces that have been deployed. This issue, I know you're aware of, but I want to mention. Starting last summer, we started a chain-teach program with the goal of reaching all of our soldiers—Active, Guard, and Reserve—on how to spot the symptoms for both PTSD and TBI. It's a chain-teach program. So far, we've now taught it to over 750,000 of our million soldiers. We're going to complete the rest over the coming months. But it's a primer on, what kind of symptoms to look for, what do you do for treatment? I think, most importantly, we believe that this chain-teach program is going to help remove the stigma, so people

that are experiencing problems in this area will come forward and try to deal with them, and not be something they're ashamed of. We're also providing this chain teaching to families, as well, so they would be in a position to spot these symptoms in their loved ones.

So, it's an area where we have a lot to learn. Congress has provided us considerable additional resources. You all gave us \$900 million last year in the supplemental, \$300 million for research and \$600 million for clinical, and we are working to apply those resources effectively.

Senator Warner asked things that Congress could help us with—both for mental health and other types of health care services, there's a shortage of trained providers. We've had an effort out to hire 300 new mental health workers. We've been able to fill less than a third of those, up until now. It's a real challenge for us.

We also hear, from around the country, that we aren't getting the kind of participation in the TRICARE system to provide services to our soldiers and their families outside of off-post. So, the health care area is an area that, as a country, where we face shortages, and it impacts our ability to deliver those services, but it's an area where, as an Army, we recognize the challenge, and we're doing better, but it's an area, working with Congress, I'm hopeful we'll continue to improve.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

General Casey, I assume you're familiar with a relatively new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report—it came out in September—that talks about the readiness challenges of the Army National Guard. It points out that equipment shortages and personnel challenges have increased as a result of the onerous demands that are being put on the Guard and Reserve components, as they're being deployed more and more often overseas—and it raises concerns about whether our Guard units have sufficient resources, in terms of equipment and personnel, to cope with natural disasters when they're called up by the States' Governors and also their homeland security responsibilities, which are of particular concern to me, given my responsibilities on the Homeland Security Committee.

What is being done specifically to ensure that we have adequate resources at home to cope with homeland security challenges and natural disasters?

General CASEY. Thank you very much, Senator. We are working very closely with the Guard to ensure that they have sufficient equipment on hand to deal with State missions, as well as to prepare themselves for future missions; and then, we are absolutely committed to ensuring, when they do deploy, they deploy with the latest and best possible equipment.

We've made great strides in this area, but we have a few more years to go. With your help, we have about \$35 billion over the last few years to put against National Guard equipment; about half of that, \$14 billion, will be fielded in the next 2 years.

So, just let me give you some examples of what that means. In 2001, there were about 5,800 heavy trucks in the Guard; by next year—or by 2009, that'll be up to 32,000. Radios, in 2001, 13,000; by 2009, 66,000.

So, it's coming. It's not there yet. We do specific work on hurricane seasons to make sure that the States that are hurricane prone have the equipment they need for those, but we understand the needs and we're committed to providing the Guard the equipment that they need for both State and for real missions.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I know my time has expired. I would suggest that the September GAO report paints a far worse picture than what General Casey has just described, and I think it would be helpful to the committee if the General would respond more specifically to the findings in the GAO report.

General CASEY. I don't want to try to paint a rosy picture. We are where we are now. What I tried to give you was where we'd be in 2 years.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. General, if you could, for the record, respond to the GAO report, as requested by Senator Collins, we'd appreciate it.

[The information referred to follows:]

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) report sought to address the sufficiency of tracking reset expenditures and the reset strategies of the Army and Marine Corps. As noted on page 40 of the report, the Department of Defense nonconcurred with the GAO's findings.

In this report, the GAO noted that large amounts of National Guard equipment had been left in theater to support ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, citing a dated report from October 2005. The facts show that, as of November 25, 2007, the Army National Guard had left less than 1 percent of its equipment behind.

The Army has committed an unprecedented level of resources to address National Guard equipping needs. With \$17.1 billion in fiscal year 2007 funding, the Army reset 9 Army National Guard Brigades, repaired 55,145 pieces of National Guard equipment at the State level, and began procuring \$2.5 billion in equipment to replace Reserve equipment left behind in theater. We are also fencing \$27 billion for Army National Guard procurement through 2013. Equipment deliveries are beginning to fill shortages and modernize our fleets.

However, we need your continued support. Working together, we will ensure the Army National Guard maintains the necessary equipment to conduct homeland defense and security missions, while also completing its transition from a strategic Reserve to an operational Reserve.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Byrd.

Senator BYRD. General Casey, in your comments before the National Press Club in August, and in your prepared testimony today, you suggest that increasing competition for oil resources, particularly with the growing demand in China and India, will be a source of international conflict in coming decades. You appear to be suggesting that a primary justification for developing an expanded military is to secure adequate oil supplies for the U.S. If so, is that not an unrealistic objective, and would it not be more prudent to accelerate investment in infrastructure and alternative energy and to ensure that market mechanisms operate smoothly?

General CASEY. That was not what I was trying to suggest, Senator. I was just trying to point out the fact that—for example, the middle class population of India is burgeoning, and it already exceeds the population of the United States. The estimates that I have read about oil research and infrastructure improvements say that it's not going to bridge the gap, we're not going to have the oil resources that we need. As people try to shift to cleaner fuels, like natural gas, 60 percent of the world's natural gas resources are

in Russia, Iran, and Qatar—we're going to be drawn more to the Middle East, I think, rather than less. China also has a burgeoning middle class. I believe the competition, not just for oil resources, but for water and other things, is going to generate global competition. Now, whether it turns to conflict remains to be seen.

Senator BYRD. The International Energy Agency forecasts—contrary, I believe, to your estimate that the demand for oil will outpace supply by around 2030—forecasts that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will have little spare capacity left by 2012, and predicts that supply increases from other producers will start flagging as early as 2009. Now, if this estimate is accurate, the competition, that you suggest may occur, is already upon us. Specifically, what role do you see the military taking in this global struggle for energy resources?

General CASEY. Yes. I don't see the military playing a direct role in it, Senator. What I highlighted those trends, of which this is one, as trends that could exacerbate what is already likely to be a period of protracted confrontation. But I do not see the military having a direct role in this.

Senator BYRD. You do not.

Iran currently has a stable government and economy, and has the second largest oil Reserves, globally, with approximately 10 percent of the world's oil. While the U.S. does not import oil from Iran, the economies of Japan and Europe are dependent on Iranian oil production and export. Is a military conflict in Iran a practical approach to addressing our differences with the Iranian government? Is it a practical approach?

General CASEY. Senator, that's a policy question here that I wouldn't even want to comment on.

Senator BYRD. It sounds more like a practical approach to oblivion, a military conflict in Iran.

General Casey, does the United States have the military depth to conduct combat operations in Iran? Could we be certain that a U.S. strike would destroy all Iranian nuclear facilities?

General CASEY. Senator, you're asking hypothetical situations that would have to have a lot of conditions before I could even give you a remote answer to that. I'd prefer not to address it.

Senator BYRD. Well, hypothetical—I'm asking a question. I don't think we're talking about hypothetical situations here. Does the United States have the military depth to conduct combat operations in Iran? Could we be certain that a U.S. strike would destroy all Iranian nuclear facilities.

General CASEY. Senator, the U.S. military has the depth to conduct combat operations anywhere in the world. On the second question, the track record for destroying targets entirely by air is not 100 percent, and so, I would expect any type of attack wouldn't be 100-percent successful. Again, this is a hypothetical situation.

Senator BYRD. Thank you, General.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Byrd.

Senator Martinez.

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both of the witnesses today for their service to our country at this difficult time.

General Casey, would you expand for me on the condition of the National Guard and its equipment as we were faced in a post-September 11 world which then require their deployment? Because I'm not sure that was fully answered earlier. So, if you wouldn't mind.

General CASEY. As I started to respond to Senator Kennedy, the Guard and Reserve Forces, prior to September 11, were not fully manned and equipped. There's a perception that the reason that the Guard and Reserve have equipment shortages was that they left it in Iraq is just not true. Less than 5 percent of the Guard and the Reserve equipment was left in Iraq. They never had it, to begin with, because they were a strategic Reserve, and that's what I said in my opening statement. We're using them in a role that they weren't originally designed or resourced for, as an operational Reserve.

Now, that said, we've made great strides, right from the beginning, in ensuring that the Guard and Reserve had the equipment, the right equipment, when they deployed. We made a decision, back when I was the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, to issue the first new soldier personal equipment to the Guard brigades that were going over in early 2004, and that has continued. We have shared the quality of the equipment with the Active, the Guard, and Reserve equitably.

Now, as I said to Senator Collins, we're not where we need to be right now, by any stretch of the imagination. But you have given us the resources that are going to allow us, over the next several years, to buy the equipment and bring the Guard and Reserve back to the point where they need to be so that they can support the State missions, train for further missions, and have the quality equipment they need when they deploy.

Senator MARTINEZ. General, you spoke earlier in your testimony, about the challenges of globalization, the "have" and "have-nots," which, merged into humanitarian crises, could lead to mischief in the world and potential conflict and problems. My question has to do with the role that you envision for the Army, but, as well, the totality of our Federal Government as we respond to problems abroad that might present themselves, where nations may have problems that, if unaddressed, would lead them to potential conflict, how we address the issues of financial problems, health issues, housing issues, rule of law, education, and the potential for economic development and growth, which could then lead to a healthier environment in which it would be more difficult for the mischief you spoke of to sustain itself. Could you address how we are prepared, or not prepared, for that type of challenge in the 21st century?

General CASEY. Senator, first of all, considering the different trends I mentioned, the reason that they're important to us, from a security perspective now, is because global terrorism and extremism are realities that we're dealing with, and they create recruits that can sustain this effort. As you suggest, it's not necessarily going to be the military solution that is the one that is ultimately going to bring stability to these different countries. As we are seeing in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is a great need for civil efforts to do the kind of things that the military doesn't necessarily do,

like build rule-of-law institutions, build financial institutions, municipal government and those kinds of things.

As we look to the future, I believe that we, as a country, need to think about how we are organized to do that most effectively, because I've been looking at this since Bosnia, and I remember, after going into Bosnia, saying, "You know, we ought to put together a group"—I thought it was an international group—"that could do post-conflict reconstruction kinds of things."

Senator MARTINEZ. But sometimes this might even arise in the context of no conflict, in fact, but it might be as a proactive measure.

General CASEY. It could prevent it.

Senator MARTINEZ.—could prevent further conflict or developing conflicts in underdeveloped areas of the world.

General CASEY. I think you're exactly right. Any strategy that helps people help themselves, I believe, is the one that would be successful.

I don't know, Mr. Secretary, if you have any views on that.

Senator MARTINEZ. Mr. Secretary, I wanted to ask you about the family concerns that you expressed and that I know all of us share, in terms of the stress that the continued deployments and the length of the conflicts we've been involved in have had on the military's backbone, which is the strength of the military—families. I was particularly intrigued in your testimony that you mentioned a program of privatized housing programs within the Army, and I wonder if you might comment on that a little more and give us your assessment of the Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) and the success that it has had.

Secretary GEREN. Senator, thank you for bringing up the RCI. Again, a question that Senator Warner asked earlier, "What are things that Congress can do to help the Army, in addition to funding?" that's a great example. The RCI was not something that we started, it was something Congress started. It was authority that you all gave us in the late 1990s, and in 2001 the Army embraced it, and it's been a tremendous success.

We're in the process, by leveraging government resources with private investors, of privatizing all the on-post housing in the United States Army. We will have invested close to a billion in the private sector. We'll invest around 10 billion in this effort to privatize. I know many of you have been to the installations and seen this RCI housing. They're top-quality homes, and they're real neighborhoods—an important part of sustaining an All-Volunteer Force. When we ask families and young men and women to devote their lives and their careers to the military, they shouldn't have to live with substandard housing, they ought to have the kind of housing in the Army that they would expect for comparably accomplished people on the outside. With this RCI, it's been a tremendous success. It'll take us several more years to complete it across the Army, but every place we've done it, the response from the families has been great. In most cases, you double the size of the number of square feet in a housing unit, building sidewalks, building neighborhoods, building parks, building community centers. It has been a tremendous success, and it's allowed us to bring into the Army so many of the innovations in housing and neighborhood

development that most Americans on the outside just flat take for granted, but we had not incorporated into the quality of life for families. But the commitment the Chief mentioned, quality of life commensurate with the quality of the service, housing has to be at the top of that list. It's at the top of the list of any family you talk to.

Senator MARTINEZ. Thank you, General Casey, Secretary Geren, both of you.

Thank you. My time is up.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Martinez.

Senator Reed.

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

General Casey, published reports suggest that, except for the brigades in Iraq and Afghanistan, and those preparing to deploy, that the remaining brigades of the Army are—very few, if any—are C1; they're either C3 because of training, equipment, or personnel. Is that a fair estimate of your situation?

General CASEY. It is. I mean, that's what I said—that's one of the main elements of being out of balance.

Senator REED. So, roughly a half of the brigades in the United States Army are not ready, according to your own measures.

General CASEY. That's true. I'm hesitating, only because of the classification of the hearing.

Senator REED. I understand that, but this has been discussed in the press.

General CASEY. Again, that's a key element of being out of balance.

Senator REED. Was that the case in 2000?

General CASEY. That was not the case, Senator.

Senator REED. Not the case. So, in the last 6 years, we have seen a deterioration in the readiness of the Army, based on its own measures of readiness. Is that accurate?

General CASEY. Not exactly, Senator. We have seen a deterioration of readiness of the next-to-deploy units. The ones that are being committed in Iraq and Afghanistan which are absolutely first rate.

Senator REED. I'm not suggesting, as I said, that the units you're deploying in Iraq are fully ready. You've done that. But half of the Army, roughly, is not ready, by your own measures, and that's a significant deterioration from 2000.

General CASEY. It is not—it is true—and, again, this was raised in the summer of 2006, and it hasn't really changed much because I said in my testimony, we're consuming readiness as fast as we build it, because of the rotation scheme.

Senator REED. But there's been a significant change. I mean, the administration has allowed this condition to persist for 6 years. We have all allowed it to—

General CASEY. Several variables contribute to this in building readiness. One of the first is, as I said, the demand for this exceeds our sustainable supply. Everyone's either going or getting ready to go. So, because they're turning so quickly, they have time to do counterinsurgency training and not full-spectrum training. I think we rate ourselves on our ability to do full-spectrum training.

Senator REED. I know that.

General CASEY. The second piece is the equipment, and we discussed it, with the Guard. The same type of thing applied to the Active Force. You have given us the money, and it takes about 2 years from the time we get the money from you until that equipment is in the unit. So, it has been addressed. There's a time lag—

Senator REED. The reality is that in 6 years, we've seen the readiness of the Army deteriorate significantly. I think we have to be careful—excepting those forces that are committed, who are fully ready to deploy, and you're sending them out ready, but we have a significant problem here, because it reflects your ability to conduct full-spectrum operations. There's no strategic Reserve from a land-forces perspective. We're in a much more difficult situation than we were 6 years ago.

The administration reluctantly increased the size of the Army. Do you think they did it fast enough and with a significant increase to meet your demand problem?

General CASEY. I can't comment on the speed, I wasn't in this position when they did that.

Senator REED. Well, they didn't do it immediately, because they resisted it for several years when some of us proposed it.

General CASEY. I believe that the 547,000 Active that we're building here is a good milestone. I believe it's probably not big enough. However, I want to get there. Once we get that going, then I want to have a discussion about, "Okay, does it need to be bigger? If so, are we prepared to provide the resources to make it the quality of force that we need?" I don't want big. Big is not necessarily good. Big and hollow is bad.

Senator REED. Well, getting there is going to be a challenge, because just staying in place is a challenge. You're recruiting, and you've met your standards for the last several months. One of the ways you've done that is to draw on your delayed-entry pool. Until recently, you tried to maintain a pool by the measure of 25 percent, I guess, which is a baseline number you try to maintain. Now it's down to 9 percent. You're pulling people forward and counting them. Are you robbing Peter to pay Paul? I think there are two issues here. One is, can you keep making this present end-state number? Two is, how do you grow the force if you—if it's hard just to stay in place?

General CASEY. We believe we can. We based our accelerated growth initiative on the premise that we could recruit about 80,000 a year. We think we can do that. The Secretary and I directed, several months ago, a soup-to-nuts review of how we're doing this, because this is the first time we've had to recruit an All-Volunteer Force in a protracted conflict since the Revolution, and we need to do things differently. So we're working that very hard.

The second piece of it is, we're going to increase our retention a bit. Retention is generally good, with the exception of the officer retention that we've talked about here earlier. But in the noncommissioned officers, retention is generally good, and that's very important.

We're also working on a program we call Active First, where the Guard, who has been very successful with the local recruiting initiative, is going to bring folks online and then put them in the Ac-

tive Force for 3½ to 4 years, and then they go back to the Guard without prejudice and with GI bill benefits.

We think those three things, together, will give us the 84,000 or so a year we need to grow the force by 2010.

Senator REED. The overall thrust of your questions is that you have to get the Army back in balance. Is your objective premised on bringing down the deployment in Iraq from the current roughly 160 to 130 or 120? Alternatively, if you have to maintain the 160 level in Iraq, you can't bring your forces in balance.

General CASEY. When we get down to the 15-brigade level, which—

Senator REED. Which is roughly 130?

General CASEY.—what the President has said, by July 2008, we can get ourselves back in balance. It will just take us longer. So, if we get down to less than that, we can do this by about 2011, which is my target.

Senator REED. The final point I want to make is that—long-term, the Army—would have a very difficult time surging again, past 160,000 troops in Iraq, because that would put you further out of balance.

General CASEY. Oh, sure. Sure.

Senator REED. So, there's an operational force structure constraint on the number of forces we can put in Iraq.

General CASEY. Without more extensive mobilization of Guard and Reserve brigades, yes.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary GEREN. If I could just add one thing, quickly. When you talked about the readiness issue, and there's just one factor that's important to that. In your discussion at the end of your comments about the deployment schedule—at the point in time when we're able to have soldiers at home longer, that will also impact the readiness. With the short period of time that they're home today, the ability to train up for multiple specialties is challenging. As we see the time at home grow, the training piece of the readiness indicators will improve. But when you're home for 12 months, and getting ready to go back for counterinsurgency operations, it limits the other type of training that you can take on and be competent at. So, that's an issue that will get better as the deployment schedule gets more back in balance.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator Thune.

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for your service.

I want to ask General Casey, if I might, a question, because earlier this year, at the Army posture hearing, I believe, that your predecessor, General Schoomaker, raised concerns about the effect of not delivering adequate and predictable funding, particularly in the form of supplemental funding for the war effort. We're 46 days into the first quarter of fiscal year 2008, we don't have an authorization bill, we don't have a bridge funding bill for DOD, and we don't have a fiscal year 2008 global war on terror supplemental. We recently sent a Defense appropriations bill to the President, which he has signed into law, but that has little to do with the war effort.

So my question is, what will be the effect of no timely bridge funding or supplemental funding? Will you have to cancel service contracts, lay people off, slow down work at depots, those sorts of things, if you could address that subject?

Secretary GEREN. Secretary Gates has instructed us to begin planning for that possibility. The signing of the appropriations bill did two things. One, it gave us money for our base budget, but it also stopped the continuing-resolution funding that was going to support the war. So, now we're faced with having to fund the war, without a bridge, out of the base budget. Our Army O&M account is about \$27 billion. When you look at our Army base budget needs plus the war, you're talking about \$6.6 billion a month. If the Army is asked to fund this without any type of bridge or without any additional resources, we're going to run through that \$27 billion probably around mid-February, and we cannot wait until then to start making some of the decisions that will have to be made.

Our employment contracts, many of them require 60 or 45 days notice before you can furlough somebody. We have many of the services that are provided by civilians, by contractors. It would have a hugely detrimental effect on the home base. We will beggar the home front to make sure that our soldiers that are in theater have everything that they need, and it will put a terrible burden on soldiers, on families, on the institutional Army, our ability to train.

Timely funding is absolutely essential. An organization of our size cannot live effectively with unpredictable funding, and we need that supplemental passed soon or we're going to have to start planning for the possibility that we're not going to have it.

Senator THUNE. General Schoomaker also testified that the Army was forced to cash-flow itself through the first quarter of fiscal year 2006. Could you explain what that means? Will the Army have to do that again?

Secretary GEREN. We're in that position now. The O&M account is our account that offers us the greatest flexibility. Most of the other accounts are constrained by specific—we call the term “color of money.” But we would find ourselves having to spend that O&M money, not only to support the Army, but also to support the war effort. So, we are in that position today, and using up the funds at a rate of \$6.5 billion a month against a \$27 billion total.

Senator THUNE. Mr. Secretary, there's a saying that you recruit a soldier, but you re-enlist a family. This year, Congress has yet to send the Military Construction (MILCON)/Veterans Affairs appropriations bill to the President to get signed into law. MILCON funding goes to support important aspects of military quality-of-life issues, such as barracks, training facilities, childcare centers, and family housing units. What is the status of the Army's MILCON accounts? Without a MILCON appropriations bill signed into law, when is the Army going to experience problems paying for military infrastructure and quality-of-life expenditures?

Secretary GEREN. The impact of no MILCON bill affects us on several levels. Last year the MILCON bill was slow; we didn't get it until well into the fiscal year. We're operating, in the MILCON area, still under a continuing resolution, but that holds up about

\$5 billion that we have planned for all types of military construction projects.

Now, the base realignment and closure (BRAC) piece of this is still able to be funded under the continuing resolution, but at reduced levels. So, it threatens our ability to meet the BRAC timelines.

But MILCON is a significant piece of the quality of life for soldiers and their families, and if we cannot get the MILCON bill, it holds up about \$5 billion, with a delay, and it will impact our construction for barracks, for other types of quality-of-life improvements, and impact our ability to meet our timelines of moving soldiers around the system. It poses a real challenge for us. Every day that goes by after the end of the last fiscal year puts that part of our Army planning and budgeting under stress.

Senator THUNE. General, how do these funding issues, the lack thereof, affect our ability to reset and transform?

General CASEY. From my perspective as the Chief, the two primary aspects of lack of stable, predictable funding; in particular, the current situation. First is, it makes my job—organizing, training, and equipping the force, harder. Every time you have a delay or a perturbation, you get second- and third-order effects that just takes you months to recover from.

I mentioned, in my opening statement, about last year. We got the funding—the global war on terror funding with the base, and, as a result of that, we were able to get right into reset—reset 27 brigades last year, 18 in the Active component, 9 in the Reserve component. Our depots processed 123,000 big pieces of equipment, like tanks and Bradleys, and they fixed over 10,000 Humvees for the Guard and Reserve. So, there's a lot we can do with the money on time.

The second element I'd comment on is just that—my role as a spokesman for the Army soldiers and families. We have about nine brigades that are coming back from Iraq right now, between September and January, and it just sends absolutely the wrong signal to those soldiers and families who have been out there for 15 months, to have the potential of the services that support them when they come home cancel.

Senator THUNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary and General.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Thune.

Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much.

I want to follow up on Senator Collins' question on how we're screening our soldiers for PTSD and TBI before and after deployment. Army researchers released a report, 2 days ago, that found between 27 and 35 percent of troops returning from Iraq are experiencing mental health issues. General Casey, are these troops identified as—mental health issues considered by the Army as being deployable, or are they considered to be wounded? I just wonder how you classify that. In particular, can you address those who are found to be suffering from PTSD or TBI, and what happens to them?

General CASEY. Overall, Senator, it really depends on the severity of the injury, but we have had a proactive program here, since

early in the conflict, to measure mental health, and we've continually upgraded that program over time. We started off just with a post-deployment assessment. As you read in that article, about 2005 we started an additional reassessment at 6 months, because our doctors told us that the symptoms sometimes take that long to develop. We found what we thought we'd find.

The other element that the Secretary mentioned there, we've added a baseline assessment on the front end, so we have something to compare it to.

We're working on helmet sensors that we can put in a soldier's helmet that will measure the blasts that he or she is exposed to, and then we can measure that and keep track, like we used to do with those nuclear dosimeters; you measure impacts overtime.

So, it's been a steady process. Again, as the Secretary said to me, the most important element of success here is to reduce the stigma attached to PTSD and TBI. This chain-teaching program that we initiated in July is that we hope to be beginning to turn that, and we've already seen indications that it has; people are more willing to come forward and talk about what's really an injury, not a mental health problem.

Senator AKAKA. General Casey, Hawaii's 29th BCT has been notified that they will be deployed to Kuwait next summer, which is only 2½ years after returning from their last deployment in Iraq. This is far less than the goal of 5 years between deployments for National Guard and Reserves. By the time they return from this deployment, they will have spent 2½ years deployed in the Middle East over the previous 5-year period. While they have a greater time between deployments, their operational tempo is still comparable to the tempo for Active Duty soldiers, in that it is 1 month home for every month deployed.

The question, General Casey is, has the 29th BCT been given adequate time to reset its equipment and complete its training requirements in time to meet the deployment schedule? Have any training requirements been modified, reduced, or even accelerated in order to meet the deployment schedule? If so, what are those potential impacts on the unit?

General CASEY. Yes, Senator. While I don't know the specifics of the preparedness of that particular brigade, I can tell you that, for the Guard and Reserve, much like for the Active, we're not meeting our objective goals for deployment-to-dwell ratios. The Guard and Reserve are running about one to three-and-a-half. Obviously there are some, like the 29th, that are less than that. Again, this is part of putting ourselves back in balance.

I will address your questions on the specifics of the 29th's preparations, here, and I'll get back to you individually, if that's all right.

[The information referred to follows:]

The Army National Guard and 1st Army will ensure the 29th BCT is well-trained, properly equipped, adequately resourced, and fully prepared to meet mission requirements when it deploys next summer. As the 29th BCT prepares for its second wartime mission, pre-deployment unit training will be conducted at Schofield Barracks to ensure the unit's readiness meets the same high standards set for every Army unit—whether Active or Reserve.

The 29th BCT is 1 of 15 Army National Guard brigades deploying in fiscal year 2009. All of these brigades have between 20 and 40 months of dwell time. Admit-

tedly, the dwell time does not meet our ultimate goal of a 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio. It is in keeping, however, with the dwell time of other brigades being called upon for deployment.

Meanwhile, the Army is providing \$14 billion worth of new equipment to the Army National Guard over the next 2 years to reduce equipment shortages. We will ensure that critical equipment items are available to support Hawaii's pre-deployment training through a cross-leveling of equipment within Hawaii and with other States and territories.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Secretary Geren, in your prepared statement, you briefly described the Gansler Commission started to examine current Army contracting operations to ensure that future contracting operations are more effective, efficient, and transparent. You indicated that the Commission identified a number of recommendations that you consider critical to future contracting success. Are you committed to implementing all of the Commission's recommendations? If not, can you describe those that you will not be implementing? Also, how long will it take to complete the implementation of the Commission's recommendations?

Secretary GEREN. Dr. Gansler finished his work a few weeks ago, and I asked for a very blunt assessment of our situation, and he gave us that. His report is going to provide a guideline, a blueprint for us as we move forward in the contracting area. He raised issues that are not just specific to the Army, but OSD, and there are issues for the entire Federal Government. The acquisition workforce, the contracting workforce, has been under-resourced, under-invested. We saw steady downward pressure on this workforce in the 1990s, and the seams were exposed in a dramatic way when we saw this big ramp-up in contracting that came with the war. But the problems had been there for a while.

We already are implementing some of his recommendations. Some are DOD-wide. I met with Secretary Gates, and he's instructed the other Services, as well as the OSD staff, to look at this and look where these reforms should be undertaken across the entire DOD.

But what we've learned, as an Army, we are under-resourced in this area, we do not have enough personnel, we do not have the proper training, we do not have the proper leadership structure when it comes to acquisition and contracting, and we are not developing either soldiers or civilians in this area to meet the challenges of contracting.

We have a great deal of work to do. It's not going to happen overnight. It's going to be years. It's an area that I expect, in the next couple of months, we'll be coming forward with some legislative initiatives—ask you to consider and to support us as we make these reforms.

The Army of the future, the DOD forces, whether they are Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines, are going to go to war strongly supported by a large contractor base. We have to shape our organized training-and-equip efforts to make sure that those are properly coordinated. We have not done a good job up until now. It's one of the lessons that we've learned from this protracted conflict. It's a lesson we're taking to heart, and we're working aggressively to implement the recommendations of Dr. Gansler. I'm going to keep

him involved over the coming months to make sure that we stay on track.

Senator AKAKA. Finally, Secretary Geren, you indicated that the Commission's recommendations were in four broad areas. One of those areas is obtaining legislative, regulatory, and policy assistance to enable contracting effectiveness by important expeditionary operations. My question to you is, do you need help from Congress to implement any of the recommendations? If so, how can we help?

Secretary GEREN. We will need help from Congress. We're working with the Secretary of Defense's office to put together that package. We don't have it yet. But we will be coming to you with requests for help, because there will be some areas where we need some legislative assistance, and there will be some policy changes. Not only will we come to you with suggestions, but, both among your membership and among your staff, you have people very experienced in this area, and I see us working together to address this issue. It will be a multiyear effort, because we've dug this hole over 15 years, and it's going to take more than the next year to dig ourselves out of it.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you for your responses.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Akaka.

Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. General Casey and Secretary Geren, we thank you for your excellent work. We have to recognize and always remember that our Army is a national treasure. It's performed beyond expectations that any of us could have had for them. The volunteer Army has continued to work in a prolonged conflict, our people are still signing up to join the Army, and retention remains above what many of us could expect. But we do know there's a limit, and if we stress our Army too strong, we can hurt or damage this fabulous institution that's served us so well. So, I want you to know that we want to be informed on the real problems that you have, and this Congress, I believe, will respond.

I had a number of things I wanted to ask you about, but, listening to your comments and thinking through where we are, we simply have to talk about the funding for our soldiers who are in conflict now. We have to have this funding, and we cannot wait and wait and wait, and leave the DOD in a position of having to rob Peter to pay Paul, to manipulate budget accounts, creating all kinds of uncertainty. That is exactly the wrong thing for us to do at this time.

I see Deputy Secretary England's letter from just a few days ago to Congressman Murtha, in which he says, "Without this critical funding, the Department will have no choice but to deplete key appropriations accounts by early next year. In particular, the Army's operation and maintenance account will be completely exhausted in mid- to late-January. The limited general transfer authority available can only provide 3 additional weeks of relief. This situation will result in a profoundly negative impact on the defense civilian workforce, depot situation, base operations, and training activities. Specifically, DOD would have to begin notifications as early as next year to properly carry out the resulting closure of military facilities, furloughing civilian workers, and deferral of contract activity."

Do you agree that that's the kind of serious situation we're facing if we don't pass the supplemental for our troops?

Secretary GEREN. Without the supplemental, we will run through our O&M account. We have to fund the base operations of the Army, as well as the global war on terror, out of that account.

At the end of your question, you mentioned the civilians. This will fall most heavily on them. The Military Personnel (MILPERS) accounts will continue to pay soldiers, but if we do not get some funding relief by mid-February, we'll be in a position where we'll have to start furloughing our civilians, canceling contracts. It would be over 100,000 civilians, potentially, to be furloughed. In contrast to years before, we don't have a bridge this year to sustain us while we wait.

Senator SESSIONS. When you say a "bridge," what do you mean, a "bridge"?

Secretary GEREN. In years past, when we've found ourselves waiting on the supplemental, there have been bridge funds that have helped bridge the gap, I guess is where the term came from. We don't have that this year. When the President signed the appropriations bill, it cut off the continuing resolution support to the war effort. So, a large organization such as ours cannot turn on a dime. The Secretary has instructed us to start planning for the possibility that this impasse continues. It would have a dramatic effect. We will have to make serious cuts on services on the homefront in order to continue to sustain operations overseas; it will fall heavily on home-based troops and their families and on installations.

Senator SESSIONS. Mr. Secretary, I'm sure you can go on for a whole lot more dire consequences of us failing to do this. Let me just say what I think pretty much is undisputable. We had a big debate this summer over whether or not we were going to fund the surge and continue our effort in Iraq, or withdraw or set a firm date and pull out. We rejected that. We agreed to fund General Petraeus and the activities that are going on over there, with additional surge. That has, in recent weeks, produced positive results beyond what I think any of us would have imagined at the time when we did that. So, we're having positive results of an unexpected degree, and now we're at a point where we're nickel-and-diming you, delaying you on the fundamental monies you need to continue what is turning out to be a successful military operation.

So, I just think we can't do this. It's just unthinkable that we would commit military men and women to harm's way—General Casey, you've commanded those troops over there—they're entitled to absolute support from the United States Congress. If we're going to say we're not going to do this anymore, and we're just going to quit, well, let us step up and say that; but that's not what we said this summer, when things were much more grim than they are today. After a full discussion this summer, Congress said, "Let's go forward." So, let's not play political games with this now. It increases the risk to our soldiers.

General Casey, do you believe that if we leave the uncertainty of funding for the operations we have underway today, that this can adversely affect the morale and confidence of our military and our allies, and can put them at greater risk?

General CASEY. As I said earlier, Senator, it sends absolutely the wrong signal to our soldiers and to our families.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think we'll work through this. People have some strong feelings about the war, they wish we hadn't started it, they're not happy with the way it's been conducted. I know that. But, at this point, our great Nation has to make a decision, and I think our decision was made this summer, to go forward and give our military a chance to be successful, which they are proving able to do.

I do want to note that, with regard to the complaints about the Government of Iraq and the legislators there, I share a lot of those concerns, but would note, for the most part, that's a responsibility of the State Department and other departments of Government, not the United States military, to work with the Government in Iraq. I'm just concerned that State Department is having difficulty, it seems to me, in fulfilling their requirements in this very difficult time.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Ben Nelson?

Senator BEN NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank both of you for your service to our country.

Obviously, General Casey, you have commanded the troops in Iraq. Secretary Geren, you're getting your feet wet, helping the Army as its Secretary, and we appreciate that, as well, and appreciate your depth of knowledge in this hearing.

Part of the problem we have here with the funding is just fundamental, and that is that so much of the funding of this war, and resetting and repairing, is coming in the form of a supplemental, as opposed to being within the general budget to begin with. We've talked to Secretary Gates about this, and I understand that there are some things that are not predictable. I know you want predictable funding. I think if we can make sure that more of this funding is in the budget, that we deal with an authorization and appropriations in the ordinary course of what we do here, we'll be a lot better off, and I think the military will be a lot better off, as well.

So, we're all responsible for some unpredictable funding situations here because of the lack of having this in the regular budget. If it's in the regular budget, it's going to be less likely to become a political football, as, in some cases, it may be today.

But I think there's a serious concern that some have in saying that we want to fund it all, and I respect that position. It's not mine. I think we should fully fund the war effort, and that we should pass the supplemental. But I think we ought to do it in a way where there are no strings attached to it. There is a rope. The rope is to pull it back up for a review on March 31, 2008, in light of what we would require, and that would be a report from General Petraeus, as we've had before, before Congress. We have a report from the GAO and a report from the President on the success, or lack of success, or at least the effort at achieving the benchmarks, at least the major four benchmarks that we know that we've put in the last supplemental. I think it's appropriate to review how this is going. That's part of the problem. Just approving \$190 billion and saying, "Okay, that's that, and what's next? Well, we'll find out after all that." I think continuing to have an interest, where we

pull it back up with a rope, but without strings, if you understand the difference that I'm saying—it's probably a western Nebraska term, to put a rope on something to pull it back up. But I think that's what we have to do, to take a look at it once it's all funded.

I agree with you that it needs to be predictable. I don't agree with those who suggest Congress is making it less predictable, because it becomes less predictable because of the process. If we change the process, I think the funding will be more predictable for the military.

What are your thoughts, Secretary Geren?

Secretary GEREN. Well, last year, with the delivery of the President's budget, we delivered part of what became the supplemental request.

Senator BEN NELSON. I think we plugged-in about \$50 billion or something like that.

Secretary GEREN. So, it was a step in the right direction. I think the earlier we can get the request through the administration to Congress, the better. The day that we're able to have those all considered together would be an improvement over the situation we find ourselves in today.

Senator BEN NELSON. Be more predictable, because we're not assuming that everything offered would be included.

Secretary GEREN. No.

Senator BEN NELSON. But the size of it would be most likely included in some debate in authorization about the details.

Secretary GEREN. Go through the normal processes that are set up for considering it. I think that would be an improvement. Again, by submitting most of it at the beginning of the year, it provided the opportunity for it to move more according to regular order, but there was an additional request in the fall. But in the Army we are looking towards the day when we expect that the supplementals will all be absorbed into the base budget, and trying to look down the road and plan accordingly. The process in Congress, with the authorization and appropriations committee working together, that would provide an approach that would increase the chances of moving things together in a predictable fashion, I agree with you.

Senator BEN NELSON. I hope that you'll continue to believe that—I know you will—and also express that concern and our frustration to Secretary Gates, because I know he's interested in getting the base budget much more in line with what the requirements will be, so that we don't end up with supplementals, which are outside the budget, in effect. They don't go through the authorization process. As far as I understand it, they don't even add technically to the deficit, that they drop directly to the bottom line of the debt. We have to get away from that kind of funding. There are things that are predictable. I think most of the expenses for this war will be predictable. Hurricane Katrina is not predictable. But there are differences, and I don't think we ought to be using supplementals the way we are right now.

One other thing, and that is going to be my proposal, at some point along the way, that we approve all of it, if the 50 percent or the 70 percent that's being talked about do not pass, then I would like to see us go to something like I just outlined: full funding, no strings, but a rope.

Thank you, again, for your candor. Also, please express our appreciation to the generals and the military officials who, in the Washington Post today, were so candid about the future of the political side of Iraq. We've all put pressure on Prime Minister al-Maliki, and we've put pressure on the Shiite government to reach out in a more fundamentally fair and equitable way to the Sunnis to bring about reconciliation. These comments tell us that the time that we put in place for them with the very successful surge, militarily, at a short term, they're squandering the opportunity. We can't continue to give them this opportunity if they're not going to step forward and run their government themselves, which they have to do fundamentally correct by meeting at least the top four benchmarks.

Once again, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Nelson.

Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was going to mention the same thing that Senator Nelson did about the article, so I associate myself with his remarks there.

I had to attend this other meeting, the same place Senator Warner is right now, so I apologize if I ask what has already been. General Casey, you mentioned your three areas of concern, the last one being the reset problems. I think that you didn't get a chance to elaborate enough on that. It seems to me—and I could be wrong—as I go around and I visit the depots, they are doing their job; they seem to be adequately funded. But the logjam seems to be getting the product of those depots back to the field of battle. Is this right? Where do you see the problem?

General CASEY. I'm not aware of a difficulty in getting the fixed equipment back out to units. The challenge that we have with the reset is what we've been talking about here with respect to lack of predictable funding. We have to buy the spares that we use in a reset, 2 years out. So, every time you delay with funding, you push back the time when those spares and things are available.

Senator INHOFE. So, there's really not the problem of getting them out, because I can tell you where to go to see the long lines of the products that have been finished that still haven't quite reached there, so it might be something we can look into.

General CASEY. With all the money that you gave us, we have also, over the past 4 years, put in a significant effort in improving the efficiency of the depots. Last year, 12 of our depots won the Shingo award, which is a public-sector award for manufacturing excellence. I wanted to get that on the record because it's a significant accomplishment here. So, we're efficiently using the money that Congress has provided.

Senator INHOFE. I know you are. By the way, although it's not a subject of this committee hearing, the same thing is true with air logistics centers around the country, and they've done, really, a good job, very competitive job.

Secretary Geren, you and I have had many discussions about FCS and where we are right now. A statement that you made, I will quote. You said, "FCS will give our soldiers the knowledge they need to fight and win in any battle space, day or night, whether the battle is conventional or asymmetric."

While FCS is not in the field yet, there are—the technologies and the spin-outs on FCS are in the fight right now—aerial drones, robots, sensors, communications equipment.

Now, my concern is this, that the Defense Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2008 contains provisions that are vital for the continued success of the funding of FCS, and yet, it was cut, I believe, by a little over \$200 million—I think, \$205, \$206 million. I'd like to get your idea as to what effect that's going to have, that cut, in the progress of the FCS.

Secretary GEREN. Well, let me first say, I want to thank this committee for your strong support of FCS. When we look at the future, and look at full-spectrum readiness, the FCS is an important part of full-spectrum readiness, for whatever type of conflict we find ourselves in. FCS is a part of the answer to the readiness challenge that we have.

Over the years that we have had the FCS program, it has been cut approximately \$850 million. That has caused the program to slow down. It has caused it to be restructured, caused it to be changed—in some areas, significantly.

This cut this year will cause some challenges. We're working through it right now, trying to figure out how we minimize the impact. But we believe that it could slow—it could slow the non-line-of-sight (NLOS) cannon, it could slow other aspects of the program, the spin-outs. I can't tell you with certainty today, but, once we got word of the \$200-million cut, we have gone to work to figure out how to minimize the impact. It will be significant, and it will slow it down. Those delays end up costing more in the long-term. So, it won't save money long-term, it'll cost money long-term.

Senator INHOFE. Mr. Secretary, you brought up the NLOS cannon. That's one of my major concerns. If you look at the deficiencies that we have relative to prospective enemies in the field, the cannon is, in my opinion, number one. There are five countries now, including South Africa, that make a better cannon system, artillery system, than we have. In fact, ours is really the World War II technology of the old Paladin. I can remember, about 2 years ago, 3 years ago, I made the statement that it's so antiquated that, after every shot, you have to get out and swab the breach, and nobody believed me until we showed them the pictures.

So, that's something that needs to stay on schedule, as all of these do, and I'm really concerned about it.

Let me just ask you a question, of either one or both of you. We've talked about the top line. During the Eisenhower administration, the percentage was as high as 10 percent. I'm talking a percentage of GDP. We heard testimony about 8 years ago from Secretary Rumsfeld in response to a question at that time, and—about the problems that we're facing in the future. I know we're concerned about what's bleeding the most today, but we still have to look toward the future. That's what FCS is all about. They commented that we went through the entire last century of averaging 5.7 percent of GDP on military readiness and on military spending. It got down to as low as 2.7 at the end of the 1990s. I'd just like to get your thoughts to get in the record at this time as to where you think we ought to be eventually looking into the future.

One of the reasons for this is that I don't care how smart, General Casey, all of your generals are, if you look at, "What is our problem going to be 10 years from now?" you're going to guess, but you'll probably be wrong. So, the only way to resolve that is to have the best of everything. So, do you have any thoughts on that, where we ought to be in the future?

Secretary GEREN. Well, one of the biggest challenges for us as a country, over the history of this country, has been sustaining readiness in between conflicts. I think the nature of a democracy is, when a war is over, we think they'll never happen again, and we, unfortunately, plan accordingly. All of us who were here in the 1990s are guilty of letting hope triumph over our country's experience.

I don't know what the right percentage is. But I think, as leaders in this country, one of the biggest challenges is going to be maintaining the kind of investments, when this war is over, whenever that is. Modernization initiatives, like FCS, I think, come under particular challenge at times when—in between conflicts, when Americans' interests turn elsewhere, as they did in the 1990s—in sustaining a good base of funding, particularly for modernization, and maintaining a quality civilian workforce, as well as a properly trained uniformed military in those periods, to me, is one of the biggest challenges. How we lock ourselves into that course of action in between conflicts, I think, is a real challenge for us. I don't know that I know the answer, but I think it's something that, as leaders, we just need to make sure that the country focuses on the reality of the challenge, and not repeat the mistake that we made in the 1990s.

Senator INHOFE. Excellent statement.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Inhofe.

Senator Webb.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, there's been some rhetoric from the other side today, with the implication that people on this side may be reluctant to fully fund the people who are actually on the battlefield. We all know that's not going to happen. I don't know anybody up here who would, in any way, be moving toward that direction. In fact, I don't know anybody up here who doesn't strongly believe that, when we put the United States military into the field, it's going to be able to control its battle space. That's just not the questions. We all know that. The true questions before us really are the strategic benefit of these tactical policies that are in play, and you could take a look at the front page of the Washington Post today and see that that's a debate that isn't limited to Democrat versus Republican, or even civilian versus military. It's something we're all struggling with.

There's been some comment today, some questions about the utility of using the attrition rates from West Point. Mr. Chairman, we've seen this go back and forth. General, you've made a comment, saying that these numbers are just marginally above the traditional attrition rates.

I have a letter here that I received from a West Point Class of 2002 graduate, last week, who was actually thanking me for the

dwell-time amendment that I introduced, "As a soldier and Iraq war veteran with two tours, I can vouch for the importance of your dwell-time amendment. Though the amendment fell a few votes short, I sincerely appreciate the fact that someone in our Congress understands the strain that multiple deployments are placing on our soldiers, families, unit training, and equipment." He then goes into the attrition rates. In his letter he mentions this data that's been going back and forth all year, saying that more than 54 percent of the 935 graduates in the Class of 2000 had left Active Duty by last January. More than 46 percent of 2001. He says in here that these numbers are staggering, considering that, previously, West Point officer attrition rates usually fell between 10 and 30 percent for similar time increments.

So, what I would ask—and I would assume this could be done in a timely manner—is that you could provide us data—even these numbers that we're using here, the 54 percent and 46 percent, that data's now 11 months old. That's as of the end of the last year. So, if you could give us, in a timely manner, what the numbers are and how they compare with time increments—similar time increments in other classes, I think we can clear the air on this, Mr. Chairman, if we could put this in the record, as well.

Secretary GEREN. We can get you that information today, Senator.

[The information referred to follows:]

The information requested by Senator Webb was directly provided to him in the form of charts. These charts are attached.

INFORMATION PAPER

MAPO
21Nov07

SUBJECT: Retention of West Point Graduates

1. Purpose: To correct record ref. West Point graduates retention rates that have been reported in the press and repeated by Congress.

2. Facts:

a. West Point graduate retention is stable. Before 9-11 our six year retention rate was about 50%, and after 9-11 our six year retention rate remains about 50%.

b. Currently, Class of '02 retention is slightly higher than '00-01. The Class of '03 has not yet completed their 5-year Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO).

c. WP graduate (and ROTC) retention IS down compared to the heady, initial stages of OIF, 2003-6, and compared to pre-Desert Storm era levels. In 1992 (class of '87) retention upon completion of the ADSO decreased significantly and has remained at approx those levels.

YG	5 Years	6 Years	10 Years	15 Years	20 Years
1977	90		57	45	36
1982	83	70	51	37	32
1987	60	48	37	30	27
1992	77	58	38	35	
1993	70	51	36		
1994	68	48	36		
1995	67	50	40		
1996	72	54	36		
1997	73	58	37		
1998	80	58			
1999	72	59			
2000	70	51			
2001	66	50			
2002	68				

Data as of EOM Aug

d. Comments from the Class of 2000-4 suggest primary reasons for leaving active duty are high optempo and dissatisfaction with the Army experience.

e. Although WP graduate retention has not risen over the past decade, West Point and the Army understand the stresses on our Soldiers and are working to improve retention. The BRADSO option is working, with 15% opting for a longer service obligation to get the branch they want—and the branch they most want is Infantry.

Senator WEBB. Okay, thank you.

General CASEY. I checked it recently, before we came up here, and it's about 8 percent above normal.

Senator WEBB. We've been going back and forth on this, and I have other questions I want to ask, but I would like to see the data. This individual said, actually along the lines of what you have said, "I can tell you that, for many of us, the decision to leave the Service is not because we dislike the Army. When we decide to get out, we make it because we understand the realities of multiple redeployments and the burden it places on our families and loved ones," et cetera.

I'm looking at your covenant, which you're talking about today, and I would suggest that the best thing you can do for families is to enact a sensible rotation policy for our troops. General, I recall when you called me and told me that you were going to the 15-

month deployment with a 12-month at-home dwell time, I was stunned, as someone who knows what it's like to have a dad deployed, who knows what it's like to be deployed, who knows what it's like to have a son deployed, and who has 5 years in the Pentagon, 4 years in policymaking, that it's something I would have expected a lot of pushback from on the uniformed side. Your comment to me at the time was to the effect that you have to feed the strategy, that somebody else creates the strategy, the Army has to feed it.

Then, when we had General Petraeus here in September, I asked him about it, and his initial comment was, "Well, that's something for the Chief of Staff of the Army."

So, my first question, if you could answer this in a sentence, is; who is accountable for this policy?

General CASEY. We made the recommendation to the Secretary of Defense to go to the 15-month policy, for three reasons. I don't remember our particular conversations, but this is what I've said consistently. One is to support the needs of the commander in the field. Two, it gave us more predictability for our soldiers and families. We were in a position where we were getting ready to extend a brigade a month, and you know how that works, you're next to go, you know you're going, but you don't. So, that's the second. The third, probably the most important, was, we needed 12 months at home to ensure that the soldiers deploying were adequately prepared.

Now, we have a common interest in establishing, as you said, a reasonable deployment policy. We are working that very hard. The 15 months was always intended to be temporary. We will come off of that as soon as we can. I'm working that very hard right now, with all of my different commanders.

Senator WEBB. The Commandant of the Marine Corps has stated that his goal is a 2-to-1, not a 1-to-1. What is your goal?

General CASEY. Our goal is 1-to-3, but we don't expect to see—

Senator WEBB. 1-to-3?

General CASEY. 1-to-3.

Senator WEBB. For Active Duty?

General CASEY. For Active Duty, to sustain. Now, we're not going to get there anytime in the near future, so 1-to-2 is our short-term goal.

Senator WEBB. When would you expect to see that?

General CASEY. One of the key elements of putting the Army back in balance is to get there by about 2011. To do that, we have to increase our supply, which we'll do by about 10 BCTs, and the demand has died down.

Senator WEBB. My time is running out, here. I want to ask you one other question, just to clear the air on something else here. You said something which I believe is important, and that is, looking in the future, at the types of enemies we're going to face, that we cannot predict the time, nature, or location of future conflicts. I think that is a basic assumption of American strategy. Would you agree that it is strategically dangerous to have such a high percentage of our ground forces tied down in one country that was not directly threatening us in the first place, and whose major tensions now seem to be sectarian, particularly with the fluidity of al

Qaeda? Would you believe that's dangerous, strategically, for us to be tied down the way we are?

General CASEY. I wouldn't agree with your whole statement, Senator, but to have all of the numbers of forces that we have committed now increases our level of strategic risk. But, as I said, I believe, looking broadly at the strategic situation, right now it's an acceptable level of risk.

Senator WEBB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Webb.

Senator Cornyn.

Senator CORNYN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, General, welcome.

General Casey, as the former Commander of Multinational Forces in Iraq and General Petraeus's predecessor, could you give the committee your assessment of the effectiveness of the surge of additional troops and operations in Iraq over the last few months?

General CASEY. I could give you my personal views, but I think General Petraeus did a marvelous job of laying that out for everybody in September, and I certainly agree with the way he portrayed it.

Senator CORNYN. I agree, he did a good job in September. Maybe I could just ask you to update your observations from that September timeframe over the last 2 months.

General CASEY. My impression is, reading the reports and actually talking to General Petraeus, that the security situation has continued to improve.

Senator CORNYN. Certainly seems to be all—

General CASEY. I'm hesitating—it's not what I do anymore.

Senator CORNYN. I gotcha. There seems to be all the published reports I read, the number of attacks, down; casualties, down; IEDs, down; imported explosively formed penetrators from Iran, down. Sounds like some progress.

I want to ask you a little bit about the criticism that has been made against national Iraqi leaders for lack of political reconciliation progress, and to just ask you, from your experience—and you have more experience than just about anybody on the planet in Iraq—were you surprised, or did you expect to see the kind of reconciliation process from the bottom up that we've observed in places like Anbar province, and which is now apparently extending to other areas of the country?

General CASEY. I wasn't surprised with the progress in Anbar province. That was in process, as we were there. So, the seeds were basically laid for this progress there.

I'm exceeding my brief here, but the Sunni were really in the middle, in the time I was leading, because they were being attacked by al Qaeda, they were being attacked by the Shi'a, and they were being attacked by us, if they were attacking us. So, the fact that they've decided to come in and seek some support is not surprising to me.

Senator CORNYN. Well, I guess there are different types of political reconciliation—for our own country, as I recall my American history, with the 13 colonies and the States that created the National government. So, it shouldn't be surprising to us that local and provincial reconciliation progress could well proceed and com-

plement efforts made for reconciliation at the National level. I would expect that all of us, hoping and praying for success in our efforts, and our ability to bring our troops home as soon as conditions on the ground permit, I would think we would all rejoice and be pleased at those developments.

You and Secretary Geren have talked about the consequences of limiting the funds for the so-called “bridge,” which I would think, for a more descriptive term, would be: “emergency troop funding for the war effort” would be a better way to talk about it—but the House has sent over a \$50 billion emergency troop funding bill, when the Pentagon has requested a \$200 billion fund, right at a quarter of what’s requested, but it comes with a few additions, which I’d like for you to comment on. One is a goal for withdrawal of all troops by December 15, 2008. What would be the consequence of Congress adopting, and the President signing, a troop funding provision that provided a goal for withdrawing on December 15, 2008?

Chairman LEVIN. Would Senator Cornyn yield, just on that? Because it doesn’t say “all troops.” I wonder if the Senator might agree that it doesn’t say “all.”

Senator CORNYN. I stand corrected, Mr. Chairman. A goal for withdrawal of all troops, except those necessary for diplomatic, security, counterterror operations, by December 15, 2008.

Secretary GEREN. Well, the President, as I understand, made it clear that he wouldn’t sign an appropriation with those sort of strings and with those sort of limitations.

Senator CORNYN. Let me amend my question. What would be the consequence of Congress passing that legislation? We can leave it to the President to make his mind up as to what he intends to do with it.

Secretary GEREN. From the perspective of the Army, in our organize, train, and equip role, I’d be reluctant to offer a strategic or a tactical perspective from the field. So, I decline to answer that, other than that the President has made it clear that he will not sign that, and so, the Army is having to plan as if that route to funding our needs is not going to become a reality. We are forced to look into the future, try to anticipate what our funding challenges are going to be, and plan accordingly, and that’s what we’re doing.

Senator CORNYN. I am asking you what a withdrawal date, even as a goal—whether that is helpful or unhelpful, in terms of advancing the security situation in Iraq.

General Casey, what’s your opinion?

General CASEY. With my Joint Chiefs hat on, Senator, I—

Senator CORNYN. Sir, you have those four stars on your shoulder, and I respect your military judgment, and, whether or not it’s within your current portfolio, you have a lot more experience than anybody up here on this side of the bench, and I’d like your views.

General CASEY. It has been the consistent policy of the Joint Chiefs that any type of firm withdrawal date would undermine our ability to conduct the operations there in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Senator CORNYN. Would it make any military sense to—in your opinion, General Casey, to limit the range of permissible oper-

ations, by the Commander of Multinational Forces in Iraq, to diplomatic security and counterterror operations?

General CASEY. It's also been the consistent position of the Chiefs that any statutory limitation to the mission of the commander on the ground in an environment as complex as Iraq is, it would be extremely detrimental to the accomplishment of his mission.

Senator CORNYN. That's your view as well?

General CASEY. Yes.

Senator CORNYN. Finally, there's a provision in the House bill that would extend the Army's approved interrogation techniques under the Army Field Manual to all Federal agencies and employees. Do you have any opinion or understanding as to why a provision that would not apply to the uniformed military would be included in a emergency troop funding bill?

General CASEY. I don't, Senator. I don't have any background on that.

Senator CORNYN. That was, I take it, not part of the request from the Pentagon, to cover non-uniformed government employees.

General CASEY. Not from the Department of the Army. I don't know if the DOD had something.

Senator CORNYN. Mr. Secretary, is that your understanding, as well?

Secretary GEREN. That is. That was not part of the request.

Senator CORNYN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time's up.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Cornyn.

Senator Bayh?

Senator BAYH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, thank you for your service to our country. You've been very patient today, and I appreciate your presence here.

I have the unfortunate duty to ask, particularly you, Mr. Secretary, about something that I hope to never have to ask an official of our government about again, and that is the unnecessary death of an American serviceman because of the apparent negligence or incompetence of our own government. I think we all agree here that wounded servicemen deserve the very best care, but that does not appear to have been the case when it comes to Indiana National Guardsman Sergeant Gerald Cassidy. By all indications, the enemy could not kill him, but our own government did. Not intentionally, to be sure. But the end result apparently was the same.

I wrote you a letter about this, Mr. Secretary, on October 10, which states in part: "Sergeant Cassidy was assigned to Fort Knox following injuries he sustained in Iraq. He died at Fort Knox on September 21, under the Army's care, just days before he was to be sent home. Preliminary reports state that he may have lain unconscious in his room for several days, and was possibly dead for several hours before being discovered."

So far, I haven't received a response to my letter, but I hope to have one here before too long.

On August 10, Mr. Secretary, you were quoted in the U.S. Army press as saying of wounded soldiers who had previously been placed on medical hold, and I'm quoting here, "They're all in WTUs, being treated like soldiers rather than patients. Every soldier has a primary-care manager, a nurse that's a care manager,

and a squad leader who understands the soldier and can work the soldier through the system.”

On September 21, Sergeant Cassidy died at Fort Knox, as I indicated. By all accounts, he was not receiving the level of care and attention that you said was in place on August 10. Five days later, a GAO study reported that only 17—that’s less than a majority—of the 32 WTUs were in place, and they had—they had 50-percent staff in place—17 of the 32 WTUs had less than 50 percent staff in place, and 46 percent of eligible soldiers had yet to be assigned to a WTU.

So, Mr. Secretary, my first question is, what can you tell us today to assure the American people that the Army is fixing this problem and there won’t be another fatality like Sergeant Cassidy’s or another Walter Reed? The situation is particularly shocking, given the revelations at Walter Reed. I’m concerned about whether we only respond to adverse publicity, and when these folks in the press go away, whether it’s just a return to business as usual. So, what can you tell us to assure us that the system is being fixed? In particular, why should we place confidence in your response, given the disparity between the press release and the GAO report, about a month later, and what they found to be the case?

Secretary GEREN. Let me start with Sergeant Cassidy, a tragedy for the Army and a tragedy for his family. The matter is under investigation, but we have already taken steps—relieved his entire chain of command. His platoon sergeant, his captain, and his battalion commander were all relieved as a result of their conduct of the operations regarding Sergeant Cassidy.

Senator BAYH. By the way, Mr. Secretary, while I’m being a little tough on you here today, I do want to compliment you and those who made those steps. I mean, there seems to have been some real accountability in the chain of command, which I think is appropriate.

Secretary GEREN. They were all relieved immediately. I asked General Schoomaker and General Tucker to go up there and assess the situation. They have. We’ve made changes there. I’ve been to Fort Knox, I’ve been briefed on the situation from General Williams. I also met with all the soldiers in that WTU, and with all their senior leaders out of the room so I could hear from them personally, and did. We’ve taken steps there to correct that problem.

As far as WTUs across the country—

Senator BAYH. How can you assure us this is an anomaly? This took place after the whole Walter Reed revelations.

In your opinion, was this just an isolated incident? How can we assure people this isn’t going to happen again?

Secretary GEREN. Thankfully, so far, it has proven to be an isolated incident. We took steps to address it, and we put people in place that are the right leaders to assume that role.

Since we began the WTUs, last spring, we’ve moved an additional 1,700 soldiers into support of the soldiers that we’ve put in WTUs. By January 1, we’ll be up to the full complement, which is 2,400. So, we have, since we were made aware of the problems late last winter, early spring, we’ve put 1,700 soldiers in support of those soldiers in WTUs. It’s not to 100 percent yet. It’ll be 100 percent in January.

Senator BAYH. So, you're saying the situation found in the GAO report will be rectified by this coming January?

Secretary GEREN. The GAO report talked about the numbers who are there now. We were not able to, just overnight, put 2,400 soldiers—the right soldiers—into these positions. We don't only want to fill the positions, we're trying to move the best soldiers. In fact, the battalion commander we put in after the one that we relieved, one of the tops in the field, and he's a wounded warrior himself, and I met with him when I was out there. We've moved 1,700 in. By January, we will have all 2,400 in. The system is a completely different approach to—

Senator BAYH. So, all eligible soldiers will be in these units by this coming January?

Secretary GEREN. All these WTUs will be fully staffed.

Senator BAYH. So, the staff will be adequate, but what about the soldiers who are eligible? Will they have been assigned to them?

Secretary GEREN. The soldiers will be assigned, based on a determination of what their individual needs are and what their medical-care needs are. But the soldiers that we deem to be best suited for assignment in those WTUs, yes, will be.

Senator BAYH. Let me ask you about that, a little bit. In the civilian world, when you have a medical problem, you seek out the best specialist, and you try and get their care. As I understand it, one of the issues here is that, in the military, you're assigned to the base closest to where the family resides, at least that was the case here. Since we're from Indiana, he was assigned to Fort Knox. My staff has traveled down there, and the senior officer at Fort Knox candidly told a member of my staff that, at least in his opinion, that Fort Knox is not the right place for a soldier with a TBI, which was believed what Sergeant Cassidy had. So, my question to you, Mr. Secretary, is, don't you think a loving family would prefer to see that their—I mean, if you can get the right care and be close, that's ideal. But if you have to choose between being close or getting the right care, my guess is, most families would choose: get the right care.

Secretary GEREN. When the soldiers are assigned to a WTU, the right care is the primary consideration, also take into consideration what sort of family support would be available. It's a balancing act. In fact, when I was at Fort Knox recently, I had two soldiers in the WTU complain that they were not closer to home. One was from Oregon, and he said, "I'd like to be closer to Oregon." One was from Rhode Island. So, there is that tension.

The family support, as you well know, is very important. The family support that people are able to deliver out at Walter Reed is an important part of their rehabilitation. So, there's a tension there. We try to put the soldiers close to the medical care that they need. I was at Fort Campbell last week, and we run daily buses back and forth to the Vanderbilt Hospital to make sure that our soldiers can have that highly specialized care that's available there. So, it is a balancing act, but the availability of the health care is the primary driver of those decisions.

Senator BAYH. Let me ask you one last thing about that. One of the tragic aspects here is that the family actually did get actively involved and had a team of private neurologists and brain special-

ists lined up in Indianapolis to help provide for care for the young man. But it took 5 months for the transfer order to be approved. Why did it take so long? What can we do to shorten those delays?

Secretary GEREN. I can't speak—to the details of that aspect. That is being investigated.

I can tell you, though, one of the things that we see is absolutely essential in providing good care to these soldiers is to make sure that their voice is heard. The squad leader who is in charge of his unit, it's his or her job to make sure that these issues are raised up the chain of command, that they don't stay buried, like they apparently did at Walter Reed, to give that soldier a voice. Every one of those soldiers has a card, one is at your desk, that has his chain of command on the back.

Senator BAYH. That didn't appear to have happened here. I mean, it took 5 months.

Secretary GEREN. Sir, it failed. As I said, we relieved his entire chain of command, three soldiers that were in his chain of command lost their job because of how they handled this case. Unacceptable.

Senator BAYH. That's what I wanted to hear, Mr. Secretary. In your opinion, this situation was unacceptable.

Secretary GEREN. Unacceptable, and I think the decisions on accountability demonstrated that we believe that, and we acted on that.

Senator BAYH. I'll tell you where I'm coming from. I'm sure both of you gentlemen will agree with this. My heart goes out to the family of this soldier, and obviously, they're grief-stricken. But the least we can do is try to ensure, to them and the American people, that this sort of thing isn't going to happen again.

Secretary GEREN. I can assure you, we hold nothing closer to our heart than the commitment to that very principle, not only as civilians, but as soldiers.

When you saw what happened at Walter Reed, I was very heartened by the response of the Army and soldiers to that situation. Soldiers take care of soldiers. If somebody drops the ball in taking care of a soldier, it violates everything soldiers stand for. When we have a situation where a soldier fails another soldier, this is an institution that holds those folks accountable.

Senator BAYH. Mr. Secretary, that's what I want to hear. I mean, accountability, a commitment to correcting the situation, making sure there are no more Sergeant Gerald Cassidys.

Secretary GEREN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BAYH. We owe that to these men and women. We owe that to their families. I'm going to be following up with you and your staff to make sure, not only do we get to the bottom of this particular incident, but that we put in place the systemic improvements that you indicated here, and that they're actually put in place.

Secretary GEREN. I share your commitment, I assure you.

Senator BAYH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is the situation that I have alluded to you.

Chairman LEVIN. I was going to make reference to that.

Senator Bayh has been very, very active on this issue and the implications of this issue, not just for Sergeant Cassidy, tragically gone, and his family, but for other soldiers.

The language that we have added to the wounded warrior legislation, which is added at the request of Senator Bayh, to make sure that people like Sergeant Cassidy are not only given the appropriate level of care, public or private, but in a facility closest to their home. That language is now in our wounded warrior legislation, and we want to thank Senator Bayh for that effort. It's there because of that effort.

We, as a committee, are interested in this matter, in this particular case, and the outcome of your investigation in this matter, which you say is underway, so that, as a committee matter, in addition to Senator Bayh's very urgent and passionate involvement in this, we would ask that you let the committee know of the outcome of this investigation.

Secretary GEREN. Certainly will.

Chairman LEVIN. As well as Senator Bayh, personally.

Senator BAYH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary GEREN. Certainly will. Mr. Chairman, this matter is very troubling. The new surgeon general, before he was a surgeon general, but while he was under consideration, asked him to go up and meet with the families. It was a major failing. General Schoomaker is personally involved in making sure that we rectify this situation. General Tucker, who has also met with your committee, is working this issue. We take it very seriously, I can assure you. I think our actions would support that, and we will certainly keep you informed.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Secretary and General, you were asked by Senator Cornyn about the language in the House bill. First, on the transition question to the more limited mission that is currently the case. Have you read the language?

Secretary GEREN. No, sir, I have not.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, then let me tell you that he left out one of the critical missions, when he did state the missions that are laid out here. In addition to protecting diplomatic facilities, U.S. Armed Forces, and American citizens, and engaging in counterterrorism operations, there's a third mission, which is to conduct limited training, equipping, and providing logistical and intelligence support to the ISF. That's an important element of the House language.

I understand that the administration has adopted a goal of transitioning our mission, putting greater responsibility on the Iraqi forces, so that it is the intent of the administration to transition the mission from what we currently have to the Iraqi forces and evolving into a more limited mission over time for our forces. Is that correct, General?

General CASEY. We still have a strategy to transition the security mission to the ISF, that's correct.

Chairman LEVIN. All right, can you then state what the transition would be to for us? Is it different from what I've just read? I'm just wondering, is the transition to the mission, which you talk about a transition to give them greater responsibility. Is the transi-

tion to the mission that would remain for us different from what I just read to you?

General CASEY. Here's the difference. To say that the commander just has a counterterrorism mission—

Chairman LEVIN. It doesn't say—

General CASEY. But—as opposed to a counterinsurgency mission, for example—you can't tell the players apart, who's a terrorist, who's an insurgent.

Chairman LEVIN. Right.

General CASEY. It's just an artificial imposition on the commander that would only make his job harder, and make the troops have to work a heck of a lot harder. That's the concern on this.

Chairman LEVIN. I understand. What did the President mean when he said that he would transition the mission so that there would be greater responsibility on the Iraqi troops, lesser responsibility—what does the Commander in Chief mean by saying there will be a transition?

General CASEY. I'm dated on this, now, but—

Chairman LEVIN. Secretary Geren, what does he mean?

Secretary GEREN. I can't speak to that.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Second, you've indicated, if there were a firm withdrawal date, that that would be a problem. Would you agree that the language that I'm going to read to you does not represent a firm withdrawal date, but, rather, a goal? Would you agree to that? I'm going to read you the language, "The goal for the completion of the transition of the Armed Forces shall be a date not later than December 15, 2008." Would you agree that that is not a firm withdrawal date, but as it states, a goal? Would you agree with that?

Secretary Geren?

Secretary GEREN. Well, the language you read used the word "goal."

Chairman LEVIN. That's correct. Is that the same as a firm withdrawal date, to you? Does the words mean "firm withdrawal date" to you when it's stated to be a goal?

Secretary GEREN. I would like to read all of the language. This is a first impression for me. I had not seen the language—

Chairman LEVIN. All right. What is the goal for your transition, the President's transition? Is there a goal? You've stated there's a transition that he's spoken about, to Iraqi forces having greater responsibility. Let me ask you, What is his goal for the completion?

Secretary GEREN. I have not spoken to the strategy of the combatant commander in the field.

Chairman LEVIN. No, of the Commander in Chief.

Secretary GEREN. No, I don't believe that I've spoken to that, either.

Chairman LEVIN. But is there a goal?

Secretary GEREN. Sir, my role is: organize, train, and equip. I'm really not prepared to talk about the strategy of the combatant commanders here today.

Chairman LEVIN. I wasn't asking you about the combatant commanders. I've asked you about the Commander in Chief.

Secretary GEREN. Sir, as well, the conduct of the war is outside of the purview of my responsibilities.

Chairman LEVIN. General, is there a goal for the transition that you've referred to?

General CASEY. You're asking us to make policy comments here.

Chairman LEVIN. No, I'm not.

General CASEY. We're not the policy guys.

Chairman LEVIN. I'm just asking you, is there one? I'm not asking you, what should be the goal? That's policy. I'm asking you, is there one? That's fact. Is there a goal for the transition that the President has talked about? That's my question. Do you know of a goal?

General CASEY. A temporal goal?

Chairman LEVIN. Yes.

General CASEY. I do not know of a temporal goal.

Chairman LEVIN. Mr. Secretary?

Secretary GEREN. I do not know of a temporal goal.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, there sure as heck ought to be—if there's going to be a transition, which the President has spoken of, it seems to me that to simply say there will be one, without a goal, is to just simply talk air, rather than to talk anything that has a message in it to both our troops, to the American people, the American Congress, and to the Iraqi leaders. It is just words, unless there's at least a goal. I'm not talking about a firm date. I'm talking about a goal of a date for something to be achieved. Don't you have goals in the military for most of your missions to be achieved? Isn't that kind of ordinary?

General CASEY. Sure, we do.

Chairman LEVIN. Final question. Do you agree with General Odierno's comments in today's Washington Post?

Secretary GEREN. Could you read them? I'm sorry, I don't—

Chairman LEVIN. I will. Are you familiar with them, General?

General CASEY. I have not read them. I've just heard them quoted here today.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, what he's saying, it's unclear how long this window of opportunity is going to be open for the political leaders of Iraq to reach a political accommodation. Do you agree with that?

Secretary GEREN. Sir, you're asking me to offer opinions in an area in which I don't have the experience or the current knowledge.

Chairman LEVIN. Do you agree that we're going to have to review our strategy if the political leaders don't reach an accommodation?

Secretary GEREN. Once again, sir, this is beyond my area of expertise or responsibility.

Chairman LEVIN. General?

General CASEY. Same thing. I mean, I don't know the specifics and the context he was talking in.

Chairman LEVIN. He's trying to put some pressure on the Iraqi political leaders, saying what everyone's seeing with our own eyes. Our military has performed magnificently, courageously, bravely, at great cost of blood and treasure. Now the purpose of the surge, as he states, and as the article states, and as the President stated, was to give the political leaders breathing space to reach a political accommodation. That was its purpose. It has achieved some military gains—hopefully, longstanding, but we don't know how long they'll last. That was the question about, how long will that win-

dow of opportunity be open? No one knows. It could be a lull. Maybe not. Hopefully, long-lasting. But the purpose of the surge, as stated by the Commander in Chief, was to give the political leaders breathing space. They haven't used it. No one knows how long the window of opportunity's going to be open. General Odierno says, and I think that's clear, no one knows for sure that can—but, for heaven's sakes, are you not able to say whether or not you agree with General Odierno, the commander in the field, as to whether or not we're going to have to review our strategy if the political leaders don't do what they committed to do, which is to work out those political settlements in those key areas? Aren't you able to say whether or not you agree with that?

General CASEY. We don't make the strategy, Senator.

Chairman LEVIN. Personally. I'm asking your personal opinion. Do you agree with General Odierno, as a personal matter?

General CASEY. I don't know the context and the timeline he's talking about.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. Well, he talks about by next summer.

General CASEY. So, he's saying to review the strategy by next—

Chairman LEVIN. If there's no breakthrough by next summer—that was the question, apparently, to him. Do you agree with that?

General CASEY. Yes, that would make sense to me, yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay.

Secretary GEREN. Sir, I don't have enough information to offer an informed opinion.

Chairman LEVIN. All right, thanks. Fair enough.

Senator Warner.

Senator WARNER. Mr. Chairman, those are very important questions, and I think the witnesses—as they state, that falls beyond the daily purview of what they're responsible for. But, nevertheless, I would suggest to my good friend, the chairman, as soon as we come back from this hearing, in 2 weeks, that perhaps this committee could get the witnesses who are directly responsible—namely, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, perhaps others who are directly responsible for the formulation of policy. Because I will answer the question that General Odierno posed. I think we do have to review the strategy in the light of the inability of this Government of Iraq to have fulfilled what I believe to have been a commitment they made to the President at the time of the initiation in January—namely, January 10—of the surge. You have my support.

With all deference to our witnesses, I think they've done a very fine job of giving us tough, pragmatic, forthcoming responses to a wide range of questions. If there's one thing that I would carry out of here with, each of you have shown an enormous compassion from the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families. I remember, I was privileged, early on in my career in the DOD, to get to know General Abrams. I think I quote him accurately. He once said, "The people are not in the Army, they are the Army." I think you ought to put that up on the wall down there. That's one for all of us to follow.

Secretary GEREN. Sir, I'm pleased to tell you, it is on the wall in our conference room, and it's a guiding principle for us.

Senator WARNER. Is it really? I'm pleased, because I remember Secretary Melvin Laird went out, handpicked him to take on that job, and history someday may record that, had he been given a little more time, we might have had some different results in that period of our history. I agree with the chairman, the Army has performed brilliantly under these circumstances. They've carried out the orders of the Commander in Chief. Mr. Chairman, but we must address and I hope you'll consider that possibility.

Chairman LEVIN. On that point, if the Senator would just yield. I thank him for his comments. Those commitments that were made by the Government of Iraq were actually made, now, a year ago, even long before the surge.

Senator WARNER. Shortly after you and I came back from Iraq.

Chairman LEVIN. Exactly right. It was actually made a year ago this month. They were supposed to have been completed more than a year ago. Those commitments were supposed to have been carried out, in part, by a year ago this month—carried out, not made. They were made a year and a half ago.

I couldn't agree with General Odierno more, except for one thing. I agree with him, it's not clear how long the window is going to be open, but—we're going to have to review our strategy? It's long overdue that we review our strategy if they don't carry out what they've done. In other words, we shouldn't wait until next summer. That's the only disagreement I have. These commitments were supposed to have been carried out a year ago.

I welcome the suggestion of Senator Warner. As always, he's playing a very constructive role. I think we will look into the possibility that, in the 2 weeks after we have this, when we come back, that we should see if we can get both the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense up here to talk about what General Odierno is saying, which is, basically, the need to review strategy when the leaders of the Iraq Government don't do what they committed to do.

As my dear friend Senator Warner knows, last time we came back, I went so far as to recommend that, because of the failure of the Iraqi political leaders, that the assembly over there pick some leader who would carry out their commitments. Obviously, we can't bind the government. We're not going to dictate to the Iraqi government. They're a sovereign government. But we have a right to make recommendations and to make observations, and they have failed miserably in their political roles to carry out the commitments that they made to themselves. We didn't extract those commitments from them, they made those commitments to themselves. Those are Iraqi commitments. It seems to me that, when we look at the sacrifice which has been made by our troops, their families, and the American people, in terms of their treasury, the least we can tell the Iraqi leaders is what General Odierno signaled in this morning's Washington Post, that we have to review our strategy when they continue to fail to carry out the political commitments that they made.

I've interrupted Senator Warner.

I just want to thank you, again.

Senator WARNER. I would simply follow on, Mr. Chairman, you and I returned to Iraq, in September of this year, and, in the pres-

ence of the president of Iraq, they displayed to us draft documents to solve the energy—the question—the de-Baathification. They represented to us it was forthcoming.

Chairman LEVIN. Very true.

Senator WARNER. Now that was in August and September. So, you have my support, and I think it's wise that we have our distinguished Secretary of Defense, who spoke with us yesterday—you and I had the opportunity to question him yesterday—together with the Chairman, to come up and review that issue that you raise. I support, 100 percent.

I'd just like to tie up, Mr. Chairman, one or two things.

First, this Blackwater situation. We're not about, here today, in a few minutes, to try and pronounce judgment, but I think we'd better dispel any thought that the Army could pick up the myriad of responsibilities that Blackwater has been performing by way of internal security in Iraq. I just would like to have that as a part of the record. It's not that, if ordered, you wouldn't do your best, but that would put an undue stress, and particularly a category of individuals—namely, security forces—both the Army—we'd probably be a combined security force, with all of our services participating—but I just think that is something, for the moment, that's not an option. Would I be correct on that, General Casey?

General CASEY. I'm not sure exactly what's going on over there on this but for us to replace the Blackwater security and provide personal security would be very, very difficult for us to do.

Senator WARNER. So, let's hope those in positions of responsibility—I know the Secretary of State is working on this issue, as are others—they can work it out so that there's accountability that somehow does not suddenly, overnight, think we're going to pick it up here in the United States Army.

Secretary GEREN. Approximately—many other security firms operating in Iraq, around 8,000 or 9,000—so, if steps were taken, either by the Iraqi government or elsewhere, that caused those to leave, it would put a very heavy burden on our commitment.

Senator WARNER. Well, indeed, it would.

The Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle, Congress is supporting the acquisition of the numbers that you desire. I just wondered two things, General. Are we constantly doing a red-team/blue-team analysis of the technical aspects of that piece of very expensive equipment, to look into the future as to possible vulnerabilities, and, consequently, in the design now, taking care of every one that we can possibly—

General CASEY. We do that for all of our systems, Senator. We work very closely with Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization.

Senator WARNER. That's all I need to know.

General CASEY. Yes.

Senator WARNER. Are we designing that vehicle such that it could be adapted to future Army missions, which could be somewhat different than this one, both in Iraq and Afghanistan?

General CASEY. Short answer is yes, although it's not intended to be a replacement for the up-armored Humvee. We still need the joint light tactical vehicle. We always had the intention of taking these, once they're done with them in Iraq, and put them in pre-

positioned sets, because the IED, I believe, is going to be part of this landscape here for the future.

Senator WARNER. Regrettably, it's going to be a weapon of the future.

Your recruiting projections for 2008, have you announced what they are?

Secretary GEREN. Our goals are 80,000, plus 1,600 that we are forecasting to achieve from the Guard Active First Program. So, for the active duty, it would be 81,600, including those that have the active and a follow-on Guard commitment.

Senator WARNER. Is that for fiscal year 2008?

Secretary GEREN. Yes, sir, it is.

Senator WARNER. Are you reasonably confident you're going to be able to reach those goals?

Secretary GEREN. We're committed to doing that. It's a tough recruiting environment, but we believe that those are achievable. Last year, we had to work hard to meet those goals, but we did. I believe we'll accomplish the goal this year.

Senator WARNER. If it came to a judgment call that you're having to rely on trying to build your force and to meet your goals, in terms of numbers, but you don't see the quality coming in, I would hope both of you'd raise your hand and say, "Time out." We're not going to burden the Army with individuals, which, historically, particularly going back to your early days in the military, and that I knew, with the draft situation, General Casey—that put a tremendous burden, trying—a few individuals on the officer—junior officer corps and the senior noncommissioned officers (NCOs), to try and deal with those situations. You'll call, "Time out"?

Secretary GEREN. Yes, sir, absolutely. We're committed to maintaining the quality.

General CASEY. We've already told Secretary Gates that that was one of the conditions of this accelerated growth.

Senator WARNER. Good.

Now, your retention of NCOs, the backbone of so much of your work, beyond that 20-year level, that is appearing to be somewhat of a weak spot. Are you taking some steps to try and encourage that, retention of those individuals beyond their 20-year—

Secretary GEREN. Yes, sir.

Senator WARNER.—enabling them to get to their retirement?

General CASEY. Senator, we are not having a problem with NCO retention. I've not heard of a problem of NCO retention past 20, except in some specific skills, like signal intelligence and special forces.

Senator WARNER. Fine, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I think we've had a very good hearing. I commend you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Warner, very much.

Secretary GEREN. Mr. Chairman, could I say one thing?

Chairman LEVIN. Of course.

Secretary GEREN. Following on Senator Warner's question at—early in the hearing about what Congress can do, other than send us money. Money certainly helps. But this Covenant with Families, we are in uncharted waters when it comes to family support. All-Volunteer Force, 7 years of war. Never have we done this before

as a Nation. The families are volunteers, just like the soldiers are volunteers. If we're going to maintain this national treasure of the All-Volunteer Force, we're going to have to do more to sustain these families—look for better ways to provide employment opportunities for spouses, look for better ways to meet the educational needs for kids, health care, housing. I don't think we can sit here today and say what it needs to look like 3 years from now 5 years from now, but if we continue in this era of persistent conflict, the stress on the families is going to be something that we have not addressed as a Nation previously. I don't think it's just this committee. It's broader than this committee. But I invite you all to help us think through this. All the good ideas won't come from the Department of the Army. The RCI came from an initiative that you started in the late 1990s.

So, this, to me, is one of the most important strategic issues we face as a Nation. If we're going to retain the All-Volunteer Force, how do we retain the All-Volunteer Family? I think that's one of the biggest challenges we face as an Army and a DOD, and I'd invite your participation as we move out, to try to figure out what that needs to look like next year and 5 years from now.

Senator WARNER. I think that's an important observation, Mr. Secretary, and you have to put it in the framework that our Nation, while the population is—I've never seen greater support for the military, since World War II really, when it was quite clear that every man and woman in the United States supported the people in uniform. That level of support is there. But, at the same time, World War II, there was a great deal of sharing of the hardships between the civilians at home and the military and the military families. We were all sharing hardships. Today, our population—I'm not faulting it, just observing—they're moving on. But these young families are competing with other wives at the malls, in the shopping places, and in the schooling and the education, and, while the Army and the other military branches do provide some benefits, they're very much part of the mainstream of America. That mainstream, while supporting them, is not faced with the burdens that these families have.

Secretary GEREN. That's true, as I've mentioned, we're signing this Covenant with Families at every camp, post, and station. We're finishing it up right now. In the spring, we're going to do the same thing, a Community Covenant with the Families at every camp, post, and station, to draw—we get tremendous support, as you well know, from communities around our posts, where they help the families, everything from mowing lawns to childcare and all sorts of other financial benefits. But we're going to ask these communities to sign on the dotted line, to broaden the level of support we get at the community level.

I think the significance of the challenge we face in this really can't be overstated. We have never fought an extended conflict with an All-Volunteer Force before. Half of these soldiers are married. The success will depend upon those families hanging with us.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all.

Chairman LEVIN. There is, in the wounded warrior legislation that's part of our authorization bill, a number of provisions which reflect that commitment to families.

Secretary GEREN. There certainly are.
 Chairman LEVIN. We thank you both.
 We stand adjourned.
 [Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

NATICK SOLDIER CENTER

1. Senator KENNEDY. Secretary Geren, I understand that the Natick Soldier Center (NSC) would be better able to hire and retain high quality scientists and engineers and therefore be better able to perform their designated missions if a laboratory personnel demonstration program—similar to one currently being executed at the Air Force Research Laboratory and other defense labs—is established there. I understand that Natick's attempts to establish a personnel demonstration program (as they are authorized to by Congress) has been stifled by other parts of the Department of Defense (DOD). What are the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a personnel demonstration program at Natick?

Secretary GEREN. The previous DOD policy that allowed for new laboratory demonstration projects to be approved only if they provided for new “interventions” different from existing initiatives at laboratories has been impacted by the recently passed legislative initiatives contained in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2008, sections 1106 and 1107. Given the initiatives within the NDAA, Natick will be able to use any flexibility available to any other demonstration laboratory enumerated in the legislation. Therefore, the Army will not require any statutory changes to implement a laboratory demonstration program at Natick.

2. Senator KENNEDY. Secretary Geren, what is the plan and timeline for the rapid establishment and implementation of a laboratory personnel demonstration program at the NSC?

Secretary GEREN. In order to be considered for Laboratory Demonstration status, an organization must be designated as a Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory (STRL). The NSC pre-cursor organization, the Soldier, Biological and Chemical Command (SBCCOM), was designated by Congress as an STRL in 2004. At issue is whether the STRL designation remains valid based on SBCCOM's restructuring that formed NSC. The Office of General Counsel (OGC) for the Department of the Army has requested a determination of this designation by the DOD OGC. Upon the legal determination of the NSC status as an STRL, the Army will act appropriately.

3. Senator KENNEDY. Secretary Geren, what are the current bureaucratic barriers to the establishment of a personnel demonstration program at Natick?

Secretary GEREN. There are no bureaucratic issues to establishing a laboratory demonstration program at the NSC if the DOD OGC determines the center can retain its status as a valid STRL.

4. Senator KENNEDY. Secretary Geren, do you require any statutory changes to Army or DOD personnel authorities to enable Natick to establish and implement its demonstration program?

Secretary GEREN. The Army does not require any statutory changes to implement a laboratory demonstration program at Natick.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY AND SENATOR EVAN BAYH

DEPLOYMENT

5. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, now that the “surge” in Iraq is ending, when will the Army provide relief by shortening deployments to a more manageable year, or, like the Marine Corps, to 7 months?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. If the reduction in surge forces is completed by July 2008 as planned, our goal is to shorten deployment lengths shortly after that. However, circumstances in theater outside of the control of the Army will influence the timetable on shortening deployments.

6. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, when will the Army give soldiers the same amount of time home as they are asked to spend deployed?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Our short-term goal is to give our Active component soldiers at least the same amount of time home as they are deployed (1:1 ratio) and to have our Reserve component forces mobilized for 12 months every 4 years (1:4 ratio). We are currently not meeting this goal for either component. It will take a few more rotations to meet our goal.

If the reduction in surge forces is completed by July 2008 as planned, our goal is to shorten deployment lengths shortly after that. However, circumstances in theater outside of the control of the Army will influence the timetable on shortening deployments.

EDUCATION

7. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, with regards to the continued improvement and innovation of professional military education (PME) in the Army, how will you measure success?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. To measure the success of PME we continuously evaluate our performance in four critical areas. We use our findings to make appropriate adjustments to our training curricula. First, we continuously seek feedback from combat-experienced soldiers on whether we are providing the right content. Our processes for review of course content are continuous and rigorous. Professional educators and social scientists apply best practices in educational design to ensure coherent programs.

Second, we use performance-based testing and assessment to ensure that every Army leader who graduates from a PME course can perform the course objectives to standard.

Third, we survey PME graduates and their supervisors 6 months after graduation through our Quality Assurance program. This lets us know if graduates are successfully applying what they've learned in PME to perform their duties once they return to their units. Our annual "Leadership Assessment Survey" provides another systematic means to assess leader performance quality. The emerging Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback Program will generate aggregated data on leader performance from the perspectives of subordinates, superiors, peers, and the leaders themselves.

Finally, we evaluate the performance of our units and integrate lessons learned. We use professional observers and trainers at the Combat Training Centers to assess the collective performance of units in a realistic training environment. During deployments, Combined Arms Assessment Teams collect data on unit and leader performance in actual operations. The Center for Army Lessons Learned identifies and validates lessons learned and ensures we integrate them into our PME curricula as appropriate. By continuously reviewing progress in these four areas we are providing effective PME.

8. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, do you think it is time for a top-to-bottom review of the Army's PME, with the goal of better understanding what we're doing today, and more importantly, making recommendations to improve the system?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Army Leader Development Program (ALDP) represents the Army's continual effort to identify, develop and manage the leadership development of our soldiers and civilians. As part of this effort, between 2000 and 2007, we conducted several studies and programs to include the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP), Task Force Leader Development and Education (TF LD&E), Review of Education, Training, and Assignment of Leaders (RCTAL), Army Leaders for the 21st Century, and, most recently, we have launched Army Initiative #5 to "Accelerate Leader Development."

Based on feedback from these studies, we have restructured our PME and synchronized it with operational deployment cycles by using a balance of home station training, distributed learning and resident instruction. Examples of changes include:

- Officer Education and Warrant Officer Education have been integrated into a single Officer Education System (OES).
- OES focuses on Full Spectrum Operations (FSO) in a Joint, Intergovernmental, Interagency, and Multinational (JIIM) environment.
- Noncommissioned Officer Education has incorporated a life-long learning strategy, to balance focus on traditional Warrior Leader core competencies with development of critical thinking and resource management skills.

The ALDP is the Army's solution to continuously assess leader development and its supporting education systems and programs.

PROMOTION

9. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, how does the Army promote diversity at flag rank when the promotion system is designed to get us officers who have gotten mud on their boots by walking a well-traveled career path?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The strength of our Army comes from our diversity. We recently created a Diversity Task Force, headed by a general officer, to assess the current state of Army Diversity. It will access policies, practices, and leader awareness and training for military and civilians; benchmark successful private industry and government models against Army diversity; identify strengths and weaknesses; and recommend the way ahead. Our goals are to fill our General Officer Corps with the best-qualified officers and for our General Officer diversity to reflect that of our Army.

RESET

10. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, assuming that the Army's responsibilities in Iraq draw down sharply over the next 2 years, how long will it take the Army to reset its force so that it is fully prepared to handle 21st century threats?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Reset must continue as long as we have forces deployed and for several years thereafter to ensure readiness for the future. Commitment to providing the resources to reset our forces is essential to restoring balance and to providing strategic depth and flexibility for the Nation.

WARFARE

11. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, please describe the kind of Army you believe is necessary to properly execute a counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. As we look to the future, national security experts are virtually unanimous in predicting that the next several decades will be ones of persistent conflict protracted confrontation among state, non-state, and individual actors that use violence to achieve their political and ideological ends. We need to ensure our forces are agile enough to respond rapidly to unexpected circumstances and led by versatile, culturally astute, and adaptive leaders. The Army has a vision to build that force, and is already executing this vision. We will continue along these lines and transform our current force into a campaign-quality expeditionary force that is capable of supporting the needs of combatant commanders operating effectively with joint, interagency, and multinational partners across the spectrum of conflict from peacetime engagement to conventional war.

A COIN campaign requires a mix of offensive, defensive, and stability operations—in other words, FSOs—conducted along multiple lines of operations. COIN requires that our soldiers are able to employ a mix of familiar combat tasks along with other skills more often associated with nonmilitary agencies.

12. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, generally, how is today's Army preparing for asymmetric and irregular warfare in the future?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Army has been an active participant in a number of initiatives aimed at improving the Joint Force's ability to train for and conduct asymmetric and irregular warfare (IW) in the future. The Army helped develop the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept, approved in September 2007, which describes how future Joint Force Commanders (JFCs) could conduct protracted IW in the 2014–2026 timeframe. We are also participating in the IW Capabilities Based Assessment to identify and sponsor potential solutions to our capability gaps.

As we grow the Army, we are improving our capability to conduct asymmetric and irregular warfare by adding six Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) by fiscal year 2011. We are growing and rebalancing the operating force to provide more of the capabilities in the highest demand such as military intelligence, military police, engineers, special forces and support units. We are also exploring the concept of a Theater Military Advisory and Assistance Group to support security cooperation activities

such as training and advising foreign security forces within regional combatant commands.

RECRUITING AND RETENTION STANDARDS

13. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what risks do you see in the Army's lowering of its standards for enlisted recruits, specifically, on the Army's lowering of standards for age, health, education, and criminal records?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Army pays close attention to the quality of the force. Without exception, every soldier enlisting in the Army is fully qualified for the job for which he/she is enlisting. We monitor the attrition rates by all the categories you've listed due to the inherent risks they potentially pose (higher attrition, less trainability, more indiscipline, et cetera). If negative trends are identified, the Army will make policy changes as required. The age limit is currently set at 42 in order to allow soldiers an opportunity to serve 20 years before the mandatory retirement age of 62. Our older soldiers have demonstrated their ability to perform their duties. In general, they are highly disciplined, motivated, and great leaders.

14. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, how has the lowering of standards negatively and positively impacted today's forces?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Army has made policy changes in recent years which have assisted in meeting our recruiting goals for fiscal years 2006 and 2007. Without exception, every soldier the Army recruits is fully qualified for the job for which he/she is enlisting. Although the numbers of waivers granted has increased in recent years, the impact appears to be minimal in terms of attrition, a key indicator. In fact, overall attrition for those enlisting with a waiver dropped from 18.4 percent to 15.1 percent from fiscal year 2005 to fiscal year 2006, and, on average, attrition rates were as good or better in every waiver category. For example, the 12 month attrition rate for medical waivers in fiscal year 2005 was 19.4 percent and dropped to 15.4 percent in fiscal year 2006. We will continue to closely monitor the impact of all policy changes and make adjustments as required.

15. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, how will it positively or negatively impact the force in 5-10 years?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. We have not seen a significant increase in attrition for those soldiers who have been granted waivers. Accomplishing our recruiting mission by accessing soldiers with waivers positively affects the future of the force by allowing us to continue to grow the Army. Soldiers who are accessed with waivers must meet Military Occupation Specialty qualifications the same as soldiers without waivers. The Army has numerous programs in place to assist all soldiers in improving their military and civilian education.

16. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, has there been a similar relaxation of standards for incoming officers?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Over the last 10 years, DOD and Army standards have remained unchanged. The Army is exploring innovative ways to attract exceptionally qualified and talented Americans to meet the high standards for becoming an officer. Applicants must possess the leadership attributes and technical skills required for success in today's challenging environment. Our ability to recruit in the current environment—which is unprecedented in the history of the All-Volunteer Force—requires innovation, as well as perseverance. We must recognize that those who volunteer to serve during these difficult times, have distinct qualities all their own.

17. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, why do you believe that junior officers are leaving in such significant numbers and what, other than offering retention bonuses, do you plan on doing to stop that loss?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The loss rates for junior officers are still lower than our historical average rate of losses over the past 7 years both across the Army Competitive Category branches and specialties, and in the specific grades of captain and major. However, we do have shortages because of the growth in authorized positions required to create modular formations and transform our force for the 21st century. We are addressing this challenge through both accessions and retention. Since 2004, the Army has increased officer accessions by 1,000 officers, called over 600 Reserve component officers to active duty, and transferred over 400

officers separating from the Air Force and Navy through Blue-to-Green interservice transfers. In addition, to facilitate these efforts we have:

- Increased cadet class size for U.S. Military Academy (USMA) and increased Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) scholarship options
- Increased ROTC stipends to retain cadets all the way to commissioning
- Doubled the capacity of the Green to Gold program for Officer Candidate School
- Streamlined NCO nominations for OCS
- Begun to appoint officers to the SELRES vice IRR, enhancing flexibility
- Increased the cap on Reserve component scholarship reimbursements

Our retention strategy is focused on near-term, mid-term, and long-term initiatives to meet growth requirements. We have implemented pre-commissioning incentives to allow cadets to select a branch of choice, post of choice or graduate school opportunity to extend their obligation by 3 years. This program was immediately successful in extending the obligations of 1,100 officers in fiscal year 2006 and 1,600 for fiscal year 2007. We will feel the increased retention effect in fiscal year 2010 and beyond when the original obligations of these officers would have lapsed.

We have also implemented a “Menu of Incentives” program to retain a maximum number of our highly experienced mid-career officers. This initiative currently targets most of the Army’s captains in year groups 1999 through 2005 by providing an opportunity to select a Branch of Choice, Post of Choice, Military School options, an Advanced Degree, or Critical Skills Retention Bonus in exchange for their agreement to serve 3 additional years beyond their active duty sendee obligation. We expect to retain an additional 1,800 officers above normal retention patterns between now and 2010 through this incentive.

18. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what does this development mean for the Army’s planned growth?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Army is trying to retain mid-level officers at higher than normal rates to help fill growing requirements caused by increased end strength and reorganization to a modular concept that requires more mid-grade officers. We have developed a menu of options that is available to officers upon promotion to captain and prior to their completion of their Active-Duty Service obligation. This menu provides officers a choice of incentives in exchange for 3 additional years of Active-Duty Service. Officers may elect to get their post or branch/functional area of choice; attend a military school or obtain language training; attend a fully funded graduate degree program; or receive a Critical Skills Retention Bonus.

19. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, as the Army’s responsibilities in Iraq lessen, do you foresee junior and mid-career officer retention improving?

Secretary GEREN. Yes. Our Nation has been at war for over 6 years. Our Army has been a leader on the front lines of this war and back here at home—protecting our people and securing our borders. Over time, these operations have expanded in scope and duration. Soldiers and families are stretched and stressed by the demands of lengthy and repeated deployments. This has tested the commitment of the All-Volunteer Force, and although they continue to serve and to excel in tough situations we must never take their service for granted. With congressional assistance we are continuing to improve the manner in which we sustain the Army’s soldiers, families, civilians, and wounded warriors. Through these improvements and by providing soldiers more time at home, we expect to see more of our highly-experienced officers extend their careers and continue serving the Nation from within the Army.

20. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, as the Army grows, do you anticipate it to be a one-for-one growth in comparison with units and capabilities the Army has now?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. In January 2007, the President approved an increase in Army end strength by 74,200 (65,000 Active component, 8,200 Army National Guard (ARNG), and 1,000 U.S. Army Reserve (USAR)). Approximately 51,200 of this growth is a one-for-one basis—an increase in the number of units providing existing or new capabilities. Approximately 7,400 of this growth is reflected in design changes to existing force structure to meet operational needs or to mitigate capability shortfalls in existing units. Additionally, 15,600 of the Active component growth is invested in the generating force and individuals’ accounts to improve capabilities in supporting the operating force growth and sustainment. The plan builds toward a total of 76 BCTs and approximately 227 support brigades with ena-

bling combat support and combat service support structure to improve the balance of forces across all three components and better meet the global force demand in an era of persistent conflict. This decision to expand the size of the Army reflects the clear recognition by the President, the Secretary of Defense, and Congress of the importance of joint ground forces to meet strategic requirements and the need to reduce stress on soldiers and families related to the increasing and enduring operational demands.

HARDWARE AND EQUIPMENT

21. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what sort of specific hardware currently in the Army's inventory, or that the Army is preparing to procure, best provides the Army with the capabilities to meet 21st century threats?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The core effort to meet the needs of the 21st century lies in the development and fielding of Future Combat Systems (FCS) BCTs, and FCS enabled modular brigades. We are ultimately working toward a force that is agile, globally responsive, and enhanced by modern networks, precision weapons, and platforms that are lighter, less logistically dependent and less manpower intensive. Current systems such as Stryker, Blue Force Tracker, and Warfighter Information Network-Tactical Increment One are moving us in the right direction.

Additionally, FCS precursor capabilities are deployed to theater today. These include: 18 Micro Air Vehicles, precursor Class I Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), with Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams; 3,700 deployed iRobot/PACBOT precursor Small Unmanned Ground Vehicles; and in 2008, 18 precursor Class I UAVs deploying with the 2/25 Stryker BCT in support of their operational needs statement.

Finally, FCS Science and Technology (S&T) efforts have also resulted in the deployment of improved fragmentary protection kits for High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV) and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles. While these efforts are beneficial to the soldier, fielding FCS BCTs and FCS enabled brigades remains our core effort in transforming to a force that meets the needs of soldiers in an era of persistent conflict.

22. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what kinds of hardware and equipment is the Army currently procuring that could be labeled legacy as opposed to transformational?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Each item the Army is currently procuring fills a requirement in transforming to a 21st century force. The organizational component of transformation is the conversion to modular brigade formations which requires us to draw heavily from current force systems. We are upgrading these systems as a primary element of our modernization strategy. For example: we are replacing aging M35 (2½-ton trucks) with the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles; we are upgrading Abrams and Bradley fleets to two variants across the force; and we are working towards a Patriot pure fleet and the fielding of Apache Block III.

23. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, do you believe that the Army, and DOD at large, is investing enough in transformational technologies?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Despite the demands of the ongoing global war on terrorism, the Army has been able to maintain its annual S&T funding requests at over \$ 1.7 billion in the past two budgets. We believe this level of investment will be sufficient to provide the transformational technologies needed to support the Army acquisition strategics in the future. Our main modernization program, FCS, has been cut by \$1 billion over the past several years, impacting our ability to invest in transformational technologies.

24. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what are the risks of investing too heavily in legacy platforms?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The risk in investing too heavily into current platforms carries an increasingly large operational and support cost burden. Current systems are limited in the level of increased capability that can be added due to the inherent design constraints of the system. As a result, we may have to send our soldiers into battle without the latest, technologically advanced equipment. For example, our current tactical wheeled vehicle fleet in Iraq and Afghanistan was not designed to be armored, nor were they designed to carry all the communications and intelligence/electronic warfare.

By investing in modern technologies we expect to realize significant savings in reduced life cycle costs compared to maintaining and upgrading current systems which require an increasingly large operational and support cost burden. For example, we expect to save \$66 million per year in sustainment, training, and manning costs for every heavy BCT that we reequip with the FCS. Upgrading our M1 tanks with FCS technologies would cost more than purchasing new manned ground vehicles.

These are some of the reasons why we must continuously modernize our forces to put our Cold War formations and systems behind us and to provide our soldiers a decisive advantage over our enemies. We will continue to rapidly field the best new equipment to our fighting forces, upgrade and modernize existing systems, incorporate new technologies derived from the FCS research and development, and soon begin to field the FCS themselves. We are ultimately working toward an agile, globally responsive Army that is enhanced by modern networks, surveillance sensors, precision weapons, and platforms that are lighter, less logistics-dependant, and less manpower-intensive.

25. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what are the risks of overinvesting in transformational technologies?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. All technology investments have degrees of risk to achieve desired outcomes. The Army S&T portfolio balances investments among the higher risk basic and applied research programs and the lower risk, more mature advanced technology development programs. The diversity of this portfolio is an appropriate balance between investment in technologies that have high potential for paradigm shifting, transformational capabilities and technologies that significantly improve performance in traditional capability domains.

FOREIGN AREA EXPERT OFFICER PROGRAM

26. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, are there plans to expand the Army's Foreign Area Expert Officer Program as the Army grows?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Over the last year, we have increased Foreign Area Officer (FAO) authorizations from 769 to 825. To meet future challenges, we have developed International Military Affairs (IMA) organizations. These organizations provide a capability for supporting warfighter requirements and developing multi-skilled FAOs to become future senior leaders. IMAs for United States Army Central, United States Army South, United States Army Pacific, and United States Army Europe will be fully established by 2010. These IMAs will initially provide us an additional 40 FAOs, along with a roadmap to add 30 more FAOs by 2012. We anticipate adding more FAOs in the future to meet requirements for homeland defense missions and the new United States Africa Command.

We continually balance Army requirements against planned capabilities and make adjustments within fiscal planning guidance. There is always a risk that our commanders will require more FAOs than we can provide. We are filling requirements now that were unforeseen several years ago—this causes us to pull FAOs out of other required assignments to meet emerging demands. We believe our IMAs will help relieve some of this turbulence, but we are continuing to develop alternatives. Our future is challenging, but the Army FAO program is healthier than it has ever been. We believe that our plans are on the right track, and that the only real risk we face is resources associated with the implementation of our plans.

27. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what are the risks of that decision?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. See answer to question 26.

RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (ROTC)

28. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, has the Army planned on increasing communication between the USMA and the Army ROTC program, so that rejected USMA applicants are targeted for ROTC scholarships? If not, why not?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Yes. The Army has significantly increased coordination between the USMA and USACC (ROTC) in the last 12 months. Applicant sharing is at the center of these coordination efforts:

- Marketing: All West Point marketing-related publications (brochures, catalogues, et cetera) and the West Point admissions website list ROTC as an alternate commissioning source and encourage candidates to apply.
- Candidate Surveys: The USMA Candidate Questionnaire asks candidates if they want to be considered for a ROTC scholarship, if they check yes, West Point forwards the information to Cadet Command electronically.
- Candidate File Sharing: West Point habitually sends ROTC candidate information at these dates:
 - 1st File (end of February). Criteria: Candidates who did not receive a nomination.
 - 2nd File (end of March). Criteria: Candidates with a nomination whose files are closed.
 - Qualified Not Selected (mid-May). Criteria: Candidates who are fully qualified but not offered admission to USMA.
- Monthly Two-Way File Sharing: Candidate file sharing became two-way in September 2006. USMA and ROTC exchange files monthly for candidates interested in both commissioning sources.

GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

29. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, how has global war on terror's focus on multinational non-state adversaries impacted the Army's PME?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Leaders now receive a doctrinal education in Stability Operations (SO) and COIN Operations, which includes programmed instruction, practical exercises, staff exercises and field training exercises. Scenarios and practical exercises portray the many real-world adversaries (insurgent groups, paramilitary organizations, private security organizations, criminal organizations, and non-governmental organizations) in a constantly changing full-spectrum environment. Tactical and technical lessons learned from operational deployments such as Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom augment classroom instruction. Leaders also receive instruction in Cultural Understanding, Escalation of Force, Every Soldier a Sensor (situational awareness), and Foreign Internal Defense.

JOB SKILLS

30. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, a November 17, 2007 Washington Post article described an Army General Officer promotion board that would emphasize the importance of nontraditional jobs and skills in promotion. Please describe those skills and jobs and compare them to what you would consider traditional jobs and skills.

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. We must continue to develop agile and adaptive leaders. Leaders in the 21st century must be competent in their core proficiencies; broad enough to operate across the spectrum of conflict—from humanitarian and peacekeeping operations through counterinsurgency to major conventional operations; able to operate in joint, interagency, and combined environments and leverage political and diplomatic efforts in achieving their objectives; at home in other cultures, able to use this awareness and understanding to support operations in innovative ways; and courageous enough to see and exploit opportunities in the challenges and complexities of our future operating environments. We recognize that the positions the Army must fill, both within and outside the Army, require individuals with different strengths, capabilities, and backgrounds. Regardless of an officer's area of specialty, the experience gained through deployments and in other challenging assignments prepares our officers to lead and train soldiers. It is important for officers to have the right mix of field and headquarters experience, training, and education to meet the current and future leadership requirements of both the Army and the Joint Force.

31. Senator KENNEDY and Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, as the Army's responsibilities in Iraq begin to dissipate, how will you ensure that lessons our military has learned in Iraq and Afghanistan remain relevant in Army training and education?

Secretary GEREN. By using Lessons Learned Integration—a collaborative network that connects approximately 20 observers in combat zones with analysts at every major institutional Army training organization and operational force in continental United States—we have significantly reduced “flash to bang time” for disseminating

best practices from the field and incorporating them into our training and education systems. More than 15,000 observations, insights, lessons and tactics, techniques, procedures have been pushed directly to Army schools and training centers over the past 12 months.

The Combined Arms Center (CAC) also manages lessons learned websites (classified and unclassified) that allow all servicemembers to search, download products, and request specific information. The CAC publishes over 100 lessons learned handbooks, newsletters, and studies annually. The Center for Army Lessons Learned has distributed nearly 1 million of these products to all branches of the military, joint headquarters, interagency organizations, coalition partners, and our allies.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DANIEL K. AKAKA

RECRUITING AND RETENTION STANDARDS

32. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, the Washington Post is reporting that the Army is again considering lowering its standards to allow in still more new recruits with trouble in their backgrounds, such as a criminal record. Can you confirm the report in the Washington Post?

Secretary GEREN. The Army will maintain the same standards for 2008 as we did for 2007.

33. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, is the Army considering reducing its standards again? If so, what changes are being considered, and why?

Secretary GEREN. The Army has not changed its recruiting quality benchmarks. These marks, 90 percent high school graduates (HSDG), 60 percent Test Score Category (TSC) I-III A, and no more than 4 percent TSC IV are established by DOD for all Services and our goal is to attain them. Although law prescribes much lower standards <20 percent CAT IV and >65 percent HSDG, Army focuses on meeting DOD quality marks. In 2007, we met our recruiting goal of 80,000, but fell short of attaining the quality mark for HSDG at 79 percent. We did meet the quality marks set for TSC I-III A at 60.83 percent and CAT IV at 3.97 percent. Every recruit must have a high school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED, home-schooled). Our focus for 2008 recruiting mission of 80,000 remains geared toward meeting or exceeding prescribed DOD quality marks.

34. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, what are the effects of changing the standards?

Secretary GEREN. Without a doubt, America continues to have the best Army in the world, and its capabilities today are unmatched by any other time in our Nation's history. Thus far, we have not noticed any negative trends associated with recent policy changes. These changes (age increase, weight allowances, tattoo policy, misdemeanors, et cetera) provide the opportunity for hundreds of individuals—who previously would not have been afforded the opportunity to serve—with the chance to volunteer to defend their Nation as part of America's Army. Additionally, these changes align Army policies to more closely reflect American society in general. The performance of these men and women during our Nation's protracted struggle to defeat global terrorism demonstrates that the quality of today's force remains on par with the generations of soldiers who have served from Valley Forge to the beaches of Normandy to the berms of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. In fact, the willingness that this small group of the eligible U.S. population displays by volunteering to serve their Nation in the Army is a quality that we should hope exists in all Americans.

35. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, have the impacts of these changes on the force been studied? If so, could you please provide us with the study. If not, how are you assessing whether or not to lower the standards?

Secretary GEREN. The Army will maintain the same standards for 2008 as we did for 2007. We continually check for any second-order effects of changes, such as declining trainability, good order and discipline, et cetera. So far, the Army has not seen any significant change in these soldiers' ability to complete training for their military occupational specialty (MOS). Every soldier enlisting is qualified for his/her MOS.

36. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, in your confirmation hearing responses to my questions for the record, you stated your belief that the Army could meet its commitment to increase its end strength with no increase in recruiting. You stated

that this could be done because of continued low attrition, and a 5-percent increase in retention due to special expiration of service bonuses currently being offered. Do you still believe that the Army can meet its increased end strength requirements without increases in recruiting? If so, can you meet the increased strength requirements without further erosion of the Army's recruiting standards? If not, do you need help from Congress?

Secretary GEREN. The Army is on track to grow end strength by more than 10,000 in fiscal year 2008 with 80,000 Recruiting Mission, 1.6K Active First accessions and 1.6K additional fiscal year 2008 ETS soldiers from the retention program. The Army will grow by more than 7,000 in fiscal year 2009 with ~80,000 U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) accessions and 8,000 in fiscal year 2010 with ~80,000 USAREC accessions. Recent initiatives and increased incentives have greatly aided in achieving over 161,000 accessions over the past 2 years. The Army expects to continue this success and meet its 80,000 recruiting mission in fiscal year 2008 while maintaining current standards. The continued support of Congress is critical in our efforts to growing the Army. One of our greatest needs is positive influences to encourage our Nation's youth to serve their country.

37. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, how much is the Army currently spending on recruiting and retention bonuses?

Secretary GEREN. In fiscal year 2007, the Army spent \$1.12 billion in recruiting and retention bonuses. This figure is composed of reenlistment bonuses (\$565.3 million), enlistment bonuses (\$472.7 million), and education benefits (\$80.9 million).

38. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, how much was the Army spending prior to September 11?

Secretary GEREN. The historical total spending in recruiting and retention from fiscal year 1997 to fiscal year 2001 is as follows: fiscal year 1997, \$98.9 million; fiscal year 1998, \$108.9 million; fiscal year 1999, \$178.6 million; fiscal year 2000, \$200.3 million; and fiscal year 2001, \$278.8 million.

The total funding for each year is the sum of the Selective Reenlistment Bonus and the Enlistment Bonus.

TRAINING

39. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, Government Executive.com reported on November 12, 2007, that "the reduction in standards has been modest. Pentagon figures show that although only 79 percent of Army recruits in 2006 had high school diplomas—down from a 90 percent level achieved in recent years—the percentage of soldiers who failed basic training has dropped. Instances of bad conduct, unauthorized absences, and desertion are unchanged." Can you explain why the percentage of soldiers who have failed basic training has dropped?

Secretary GEREN. We are witnessing positive effects from two fundamental modifications to the execution of Basic Combat Training. First, we revised the content of training provided to new soldiers by introducing warrior tasks and battle drills. Soldiers train with a heightened realism and receive more exposure to weapons training, combatives, and convoy live-fire training before departing basic combat training. Physical fitness training was redesigned to both improve performance and decrease injuries (injuries are highly related to attrition). This warrior focused training has created the most challenging and effective warrior-oriented basic training in the history of the Army.

Second, we changed the training philosophy of Basic Combat Training by introducing the Soldier Investment Strategy. We adjusted the Basic Combat Training approach to one of coaching, mentoring, and teaching. We changed the image of the drill sergeant to one of an authoritative and respectful role model charged with encouraging and leading young soldiers through the mastery of combat tasks and accomplishment of tough, challenging training.

We have increased the rigor and relevance of Basic Combat Training to produce fully trained soldiers who can immediately contribute to a unit in combat. These changes have resonated with our youth and allowed us to decrease Basic Combat Training attrition from 15 percent in 2004 to 6 percent in 2007.

40. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, have the standards for passing basic training been changed since 2000?

Secretary GEREN. Since 2000, Basic Combat Training has increased in rigor by updating training methods, equipment, and tasks to meet the needs of an Army at war. The Basic Combat Training program of instruction was completely revised in

October 2004 based on lessons learned in the operational environment. All soldiers receive challenging, focused training in Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills, crew served weapons, urban operations, convoy protection procedures, and all soldiers are certified as combat lifesavers. Soldiers now train, march, and shoot in full combat gear (helmet, pads and body armor) to replicate the tactical environment. This includes a weapons immersion program in which soldiers must carry and take care of their rifle from the first week of training until graduation.

The Basic Combat Training program of instruction and graduation requirements are under constant review and evaluation to ensure relevance to current and future combat operations.

41. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren, in your prepared statement, you stated that “We are growing the total Army by 74,000 and completing the transformation of the Reserve component from a strategic Reserve to an operational force.” You may recall that I asked you during your confirmation hearing whether or not we should maintain a “strategic Reserve.” In your response, you stated that “We no longer have the luxury of extended time periods for training after mobilization.” However, if we had maintained a strategic Reserve before September 11, we would have had 6 years to train them and bring them online, and we would not be stressing our troops with the operational tempo (OPTEMPO) we have today. We would also have troops available for any contingencies that emerge while we are engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan. In light of our current situation, do you think it may be appropriate to reconsider the Quadrennial Defense Review decision to operationalize the Reserve Components, and begin the development of a new strategic Reserve (even if it would necessitate a large growth in the Reserve component)?

Secretary GEREN. Transitioning the Reserve component to an operational force integrates the Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve into the Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN), and synchronizes planning, prioritization, and resourcing for sustainable force generation. Integration of the Reserve component into the ARFORGEN process better enables Reserve component employment as part of the Joint Force while preserving some ability to expand the scope by accelerating availability. The ARFORGEN will make available a continuous mix of ground capabilities with each component providing complementing units. The Strategic Reserves are those formations throughout the depth of the process, behind those deployed or next to deploy.

MILITARY CONTRACTORS

42. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren and General Casey, a bill has been proposed in the House that would require the rapid withdrawal of hundreds of armed security contractors who provide protective services for the State Department in Iraq. Specifically, the bill would phase out approximately 800 armed contractors who work for Blackwater, DynCorp International, and Triple Canopy in Iraq over the next 6 months, and requires them to be replaced with military or diplomatic security personnel or military police. Does the Army have the ability to meet the requirements of this bill?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Army does not have the ability to immediately replace these armed contractors. To do so would require a phased approach. Initially Central Command (CENTCOM) would have to replace the armed contractors with forces already deployed to the CENTCOM theater. This would potentially require CENTCOM to leave other theater requirements unfulfilled. The Army or any Services’ ability to replace armed contractors would depend on CENTCOM’s analysis of the armed contractor requirement which would result in either a Request for Forces or Joint Manning Document. CENTCOM’s analysis would include the desired rank, MOS, and level of training required. Once CENTCOM submits the requirements to the Joint Staff, all Services would conduct an analysis to determine their ability to meet the requirement and a feasible timeline to replace the armed contractors. For example, our Military Police forces are a highly demand asset but they are limited in supply. If CENTCOM’s requirement called for one of our highly demanded forces, it is highly unlikely the Army could immediately fulfill this requirement.

This challenge highlights one of the many reasons why we must continue to grow and transform our Army to meet the demands of the 21st century. We are over half-way through the largest organizational change since World War II, and we must continue to rebalance our capabilities by converting less necessary skills to those in high demand, and by shifting much-needed Reserve Forces into the Active component.

43. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren and General Casey, considering the difficulties that have been caused by the use of private security contractors (PSCs) in Iraq, is the Army considering any steps to eliminate the need for any agency to use security contractors in future conflicts? If so, what actions are being considered? If not, why not?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Currently, there are no plans to eliminate the use of PSCs. To date, there are approximately 20,000 to 30,000 DOD contractor personnel performing security services in Iraq. The Army estimates that it would take several years to assume the duties currently being performed by PSCs.

PSCs perform a number of functions, to include private security details for senior officers and civilians, working as static guards for Forward Operating Bases, providing site security on reconstruction projects, and accompanying contractor convoys of supplies.

The use of contractors is a force multiplier enabling the U.S. Army to keep soldiers engaged in core U.S. Army missions, such as combat operations. Reassigning soldiers to perform security support services would take them from critical warfighting activities.

44. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren and General Casey, is the Army paying either directly or indirectly (e.g., through the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program contract) for security contractor support in Iraq? If so, which contractors are providing support, what kind of support are they providing, how much support is being provided by each contractor in person-days per year, and what are the costs to the Army?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics advises that the Army has contracted for private security and transportation services with various vendors in Iraq. The total number of contract employees providing these services is 6,048 at a cost of \$690 million per year.

Additionally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has contracted for PSC services from Aegis Defense Services. Aegis provides 1,386 contractor personnel at an approximate cost of \$200 million per year.

45. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren and General Casey, please answer the same questions for Afghanistan and for any other major Army operations around the world.

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics advises that the Army has contracted for private security and transportation services with various vendors in Afghanistan. The total number of contract employees providing these services is 3,152 at a cost of \$18 million per year.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has contracted directly with a local Afghanistan-based firm to provide security services for U.S. personnel. The contract provides for 30 guards a day and 25 bilingual personnel a day for a cost of \$72,000 per month.

CHINA AND RUSSIA

46. Senator AKAKA. Secretary Geren and General Casey, the Chinese military has been experiencing double digit increases in its budget since the early 1990s. It seems pretty clear that China's intention is to build itself up into being a superpower. In addition, the administration's plans to deploy two anti-ballistic missile systems in Europe has led Russia to suspend its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. In addition, they are considering withdrawing from the 1988 treaty on short- and intermediate-range missiles. How do you think that China's military buildup or Russia's recent actions should affect the force structure for the Army going forward from here?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The nature of future conflict necessitates that we transform the Army for full spectrum capabilities. It is vital that our Army ensures that units and soldiers have the right capabilities to accomplish the wide variety of operations that we will conduct in the 21st century. Continuous modernization is the key to enhancing our capabilities and maintaining a technological advantage over any enemy we face.

PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE

47. Senator AKAKA. General Casey, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has nearly 50,000 documented cases of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) since the Afghanistan War began. This number far exceeds the 30,000 military personnel officially classified by the Pentagon as wounded in the conflicts. The discrepancy in these numbers support a view held by many health officials that troops tend to ignore, hide, or fail to recognize their mental health wounds until after their military service. As I noted during the hearing, a study conducted by Army researchers, released on November 13, found that the number of soldiers experiencing mental health issues may be between 27 and 35 percent. The study also concluded that soldiers are more likely to report mental health distress 3 to 6 months after returning from Iraq. I am very concerned that there may be a substantial number of our troops currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan who are suffering from mental health issues such as PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Moreover, I am concerned that we may be sending them back for multiple deployments while still suffering from these conditions, and that this could be exacerbating their condition. During the hearing, I asked you if the troops identified as having mental health issues are considered by the Army as being deployable or are they considered to be wounded. I specifically asked you to address this question relative to those who are found to be suffering from PTSD or TBI. Your answer was somewhat disconcerting. You replied that "it really depends on the severity of the injury." The reason your answer is disconcerting is that it seems that whether a person is wounded or not should have nothing to do with severity. They are either injured, or they are not. The severity is something one would expect to be considered during treatment. Is the Army deploying troops who are still suffering from PTSD and TBI incurred during previous deployments?

General CASEY. The Army does not deploy soldiers if they are incapable of performing their assigned missions. Our commanders, in consultation with medical health professionals, consider each soldier's fitness for deployment based upon their symptoms, responsiveness to treatment, what medical care is available in theater, the opinions of physicians, and the input from the soldier. We do not knowingly deploy any soldier who is suffering from a debilitating injury, whether physical or mental.

It is important to note that many people with mild TBI fully recover. We are accustomed to seeing athletes in contact sports suffer a concussion, recover, and then be allowed to play either later in the game or in the next game. Many of our soldiers who suffer a concussion/mild TBI experience a similar recovery pattern, and are thus, returned to duty.

48. Senator AKAKA. General Casey, what is the DOD or Army policy for deploying troops with mental health issues?

General CASEY. The Army does not deploy soldiers if they are incapable of performing their assigned missions. We medically evaluate and clear all deploying soldiers as part of our predeployment preparations. Medical professionals make recommendations to Commanders regarding each soldier's readiness to deploy. Soldiers who have fully recovered from mental health issues such as PTSD would likely be medically cleared to deploy. Soldiers who demonstrate persistent symptoms that interfere with their duties would not be cleared to deploy; rather, they would be further evaluated and treated for their condition. Commanders make the decision to deploy or not deploy a soldier based on the recommendation of our medical professionals.

49. Senator AKAKA. General Casey, how much recovery time is being provided to troops who have mental health issues before they are deployed again?

General CASEY. Soldiers are given as much time as they need to medically recover—we do not set a limit. The time period for recovery varies based on the type of illness, its severity, and its impact on an individual's level of functioning (for example, ability to do the job, get along with others, or take care of one's self). We will not deploy soldiers if they are incapable of performing their assigned missions.

50. Senator AKAKA. General Casey, what percentage of troops returning from Iraq have been identified as having TBI?

General CASEY. There are three levels of severity regarding closed TBI: mild, moderate, and severe. There are also penetrating TBIs, moderate, severe, and penetrating injuries usually result in the servicemember's immediate evacuation. Approximately 770 servicemembers have been evacuated from theater for moderate, severe, or penetrating TBI.

Based on self-reports from servicemembers during post-deployment screening, between 10–20 percent of soldiers returning from Iraq have suffered a concussion or mild TBI; however, not all of these soldiers have persistent physical symptoms beyond what they experienced around the time of injury.

51. Senator AKAKA. General Casey, both TBI and PTSD have symptoms that could be detrimental in combat. What are the potential impacts of deploying soldiers with TBI or PTSD on the soldier and on the soldier's unit?

General CASEY. As part of the Army's unprecedented chain-teaching program, we have trained over 750,000 soldiers to recognize the signs and symptoms of PTSD and mild TBI. It is important for soldiers and family members to have an awareness of PTSD and mild TBI and to seek treatment for these conditions as soon as possible.

PTSD and mild TBI may impair soldier combat effectiveness. They can lead to poor marksmanship, delayed reaction time, a decreased ability to concentrate, or other performance changes that last for several days or longer. Soldiers who have been injured in a blast or who have had a head injury from a vehicle accident, fall, or other injury are evaluated by a health care provider. The health care provider evaluates the soldier's symptoms and performance before making a recommendation to return the soldier to duty. Providers carefully evaluate soldiers to prevent any negative mission impact.

The Army recently issued Clinical Management Guidance to primary care providers with information and guidance on the evaluation and treatment of soldiers with mild TBI. Soldiers with PTSD, depending upon the severity of PTSD symptoms, can remain in theater and often complete their tour with their unit. However in cases of mild TBI or PTSD, a commander who feels the soldier is a risk to himself or the unit will refer the soldier to appropriate medical channels for an evaluation and treatment as required. In some cases it may be necessary to medically evacuate the soldier from theater for additional treatment.

52. Senator AKAKA. General Casey, during the hearing, I asked the following question, and you committed to responding in writing. Hawaii's 29th BCT has been notified that they will be deployed to Kuwait next summer which is only 2 years after returning from their last deployment in Iraq. This is far less than the goal of 5 years between deployments for National Guard and Reserves. By the time they return from this deployment, they will have spent 2 years deployed in the Middle East over the previous 5 year period. While they have a greater time between deployments, their OPTEMPO is still comparable to the tempo for our active duty soldiers in that it is 1 month home for every month deployed. Has the 29th BCT been given adequate time to reset its equipment and complete its training requirements in time to meet the deployment schedule?

General CASEY. The deployment schedule is achievable. The Army National Guard and 1st Army will ensure the 29th BCT is well-trained, properly equipped, adequately resourced, and fully prepared to meet mission requirements when it deploys next summer. As the 29th BCT prepares for its second wartime mission, pre-deployment unit training will be conducted at Schofield Barracks to ensure the unit's readiness meets the same high standards set for every Army unit—whether Active or Reserve.

The 29th BCT is 1 of 15 Army National Guard brigades deploying in fiscal year 2009. All of these brigades have between 20 and 40 months of dwell time. Admittedly, the dwell time does not meet our ultimate goal of a 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio. It is in keeping, however, with the dwell time of other brigades being called upon for deployment.

Meanwhile, the Army is providing \$14 billion worth of new equipment to the Army National Guard over the next 2 years to reduce equipment shortages. We will ensure that critical equipment items are available to support Hawaii's pre-deployment training through a cross-leveling of equipment within Hawaii and with other States and territories.

53. Senator AKAKA. General Casey, have any training requirements been modified, reduced, or accelerated in order to meet the deployment schedule, and if so, what are the potential impacts on the unit?

General CASEY. The 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) will have the training needed to be successful in its mission. State/territory Adjutants General have certification authority for pre-mobilization training. The Director of the Army National Guard has validation authority for this pre-mobilization training that was once the responsibility of First Army. In early November, the National Guard Bureau hosted a conference in Dallas, TX, for all BCTs and States/territories deploying

in the next 3 years to synchronize the pre-mobilization training efforts. The 29th IBCT and the Hawaii National Guard were in attendance. The National Guard Bureau is working to finalize coordination for the 29th IBCT, to ensure their success at their mobilization station training and performing their mission overseas.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EVAN BAYH

JOINT LIGHT TACTICAL VEHICLE

54. Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what is the status of the ongoing Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Study currently being undertaken by the Army?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Senator, the study you reference in your question is called the Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Strategy, which was presented to the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) on November 15, 2007. The Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Strategy addressed how the Army will use a mixed-fleet approach to balance the protection, performance, and payload requirements necessary to protect the soldier while achieving mission goals.

55. Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, when is the study expected to conclude?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. It is not a one-time effort. Instead, the Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Strategy will be continually refined to account for changes that occur in the global operating environment and variations in funding. Additionally, the strategy will be adjusted to reflect vehicle performance and capabilities captured by soldier feedback, such as feedback on the performance of the newly fielded MRAP vehicles.

56. Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren and General Casey, has the Army established requirements for the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV)? Is there sufficient fiscal year 2008 funding available to support the program?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Army is currently in the midst of a comprehensive study, the Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Strategy, which will inform requirements across the range of Tactical Wheeled Vehicle fleets, to include JLTV. It would be premature to provide specific numbers until that study is complete. There is sufficient fiscal year 2008 funding available to support the program.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

57. Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren, can you provide more detail on the Army's PTSD and TBI initiatives as they related to both the warfighter and their families that is mentioned in your testimony?

Secretary GEREN. The Army is committed to ensuring all returning veterans receive the behavioral health care they need. Army leadership is taking aggressive, far-reaching steps to provide an array of behavioral health services for soldiers and their families to help those dealing with PTSD or TBI. Specific initiatives include the Post-Deployment Health Assessment and Post-Deployment Health Reassessment; used to screen, identify, and refer for intervention those soldiers at risk for PTSD and the other mental health effects of war. We are now performing baseline cognitive assessments on all deploying soldiers using the Automated Neuropsychological Assessment Metrics. The Army also initiated numerous new training programs such as "Battlemind" for soldiers and spouses. Provider Resiliency Training, and updated Combat and Operational Stress Control training. As part of the Army's unprecedented Chain Teaching program, over 750,000 soldiers and family members have been trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of PTSD and mild TBI. We have also developed instructional DVD/CDs for Families such as "Mr. Poe and Friends" and "Military Youth Coping with Separation: When Family Members Deploy."

In addition, several Army and DOD websites contain easily accessible information regarding TBI and PTSD:

- The Deployment Health Clinical Center, <http://www.pdhealth.mil/TBI.asp/#eat>;
- Army Behavioral Health, <http://www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/chainteaching/index.html>; and
- Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, <http://www.dvbic.org/>.

58. Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren, the Army has published several Broad Agency Announcements in fiscal year 2007 for research into both PTSD and TBI. What fur-

ther efforts does Army plan to make in fiscal year 2008 to continue and further investigate ways to prevent and treat these conditions?

Secretary GEREN. In fiscal year 2008 the Army will continue to emphasize the importance of treating and preventing PTSD and TBI. The fiscal year 2007 war supplemental will fund studies to be identified from fiscal year 2008 through fiscal year 2013 that will focus on the key gaps in knowledge for PTSD and TBI prevention, detection and intervention. The PTSD/TBI Research Program's Clinical Consortium award is designed to introduce new, cutting edge PTSD and TBI focused (including PTSD/TBI overlap) clinical studies at multiple study sites, over a 5-year projected period. This was designed to provide a means for a continual influx and evaluation of potential novel treatments and/or interventions. Additionally, it provides an ongoing means of expedited fielding of successful treatments and interventions. Another extension of this fiscal year 2007 funding program is to facilitate collaboration with the congressionally mandated DOD PTSD/TBI Center of Excellence.

The Millennium Cohort Study (MilCohort) will continue to follow more than 148,000 U.S. military personnel during and after their military service for up to 21 years. The Army began funding MilCohort in 2001 for the largest epidemiological cohort study in military history to determine how military occupational exposures affect long-term health by demonstrating a method for establishing the long-term health risks and benefits to mental and physical health associated with military service.

In fiscal year 2008 the Army will continue evaluation studies assessing the impact of Battlemind training on soldiers' mental health status. A spouse version of Battlemind was also developed last year with validation studies underway in fiscal year 2008. The Battlemind Training System was developed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and represents the only scientifically validated resilience training program in the military. The research on post-deployment Battlemind Training found that it is an effective method of reducing mental health concerns compared to standard stress education briefings soldiers typically received.

59. Senator BAYH. Secretary Geren, how will Army ensure that the best ideas from private industry and university researchers are considered as it further examines the best ways to address both PTSD and TBI needs?

Secretary GEREN. The U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command (USAMRMC) actively engages private industry and university researchers to capture their creative and innovative approaches to help solve current and future challenges in the form of research proposal submissions. The well established process utilized by USAMRMC to execute our core programs and the fiscal year 2007 War Supplemental funded PTSD/TBI Research Program ensures that proposals are solicited worldwide from industry, academia, and Federal entities.

The USAMRMC uses external scientists to review the Army's medical research programs and proposals to ensure they are state-of-the-art and of high quality. Following protocol submission, the proposal evaluation and selection consists of an unbiased two tier review process, which requires that all proposals undergo both scientific (peer) review as well as programmatic review. The peer review panel is comprised mostly of external scientists that are experts in their fields. The programmatic review panel, consisting of representatives from the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services, conducts programmatic review and makes funding recommendations.

The Army executes the DOD Executive Agency for the Prevention, Mitigation, and Treatment of Blast Injuries (Blast EA). The Blast EA has and will continue to survey the needs and programs from all the Services. It coordinates current and planned research efforts and programs future research needs to expand the President's Budget to support PTSD and TBI research in civilian universities, private industry, and the military Services. One example of both academic and military involvement is a drug study for treating anxiety after a TBI which is taking place in hospitals from each of the Services and the VA. Imaging technologies are being evaluated by several universities such as the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Pittsburgh.

NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAM

60. Senator BAYH. General Casey, you discuss the four imperatives to restore depth and breadth to Army capabilities, including preparing forces to succeed in the current conflict. That preparation should include sufficient instruction in the languages and cultures of the regions in which they will serve. The National Security Education Program (NSEP) is helping to educate U.S. personnel who will be sta-

tioned in regions critical to U.S. national security interests. What are your plans to expand the teaching of language and culture carried out through NSEP, particularly in critical areas such as the Central Asian Languages, so that the entire array of personnel, from infantry to commanders, are adequately prepared to function in these locations?

General CASEY. The NSEP is not an Army program. Recently however, NSEP engaged with the Defense Language Office (DLO) to provide ROTC cadets the opportunity to study critical languages and cultures. NSEP established four programs in fiscal year 2007, including Indiana University's Central Asian Language program where 24 Army ROTC cadets participate. The Army will continue to work with NSEP, the DLO, and Army ROTC detachments to expand NSEP programs to universities with large concentrations of Army ROTC cadets. In addition to NSEP, the Army continues to pursue a wide range of programs to ensure that soldiers receive instruction in the languages and cultures of the regions in which they will serve.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

61. Senator CLINTON. Secretary Geren and General Casey, the United States Army met fiscal year 2007 recruitment goals by allowing more recruits to enter active duty with a moral waiver; allowing more recruits to enter active duty without a high school diploma; providing shorter and more lucrative enlistment contracts; and increasing the maximum age of recruits from 35 to 42 years. What additional measures will the United States Army take in order to meet recruiting goals in fiscal year 2008 given the increased end strength goals assigned to its recruiting mission?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. The Army should be able to meet its end strength objectives while maintaining a recruiting mission of approximately 80,000 per year. The current policies, initiatives, and incentive packages should be adequate to meet those recruiting missions. Although we are facing the most difficult recruiting environment since the beginning of the All-Volunteer Force, the Army recruited over 80,000 individuals to serve in the active Army in each of the past 2 years.

62. Senator CLINTON. Secretary Geren and General Casey, will the quality of the force and future readiness suffer as a result of the lower recruit entry standards?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. While the Army met recruiting quality marks mandated by law, we did fall short of the DOD recruiting standard to have 90 percent of our new recruits enter with a high school diploma. There are troubling trends that challenge the recruiting market: the National average for high school graduation is 80 percent with urban areas less than 50 percent and 36 percent of our contracts come from the southern region with those lower graduation rates. The Army looks at quality as more than DOD quality marks and therefore each soldier we enlist with a waiver is thoroughly screened before being approved for entry. We have seen increases in waivers over the past few years and remain vigilant in our screening process. Our 2007 study of waived recruits, as compared to non-waived recruits from 2003 to 2006, showed these soldiers performed, by several standards, better than non-waived recruits. We do not envision the quality of the force or future readiness of the Army suffering, but it is a matter that requires constant vigilance.

63. Senator CLINTON. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what efforts will the United States Army take to mitigate potential morale and discipline problems arising from this recruit demographic?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. There are no indicators demonstrating recruits coming into the force are creating adverse morale and discipline problems. Each recruit coming into the Army is fully qualified for his or her duty and expected to perform as a soldier within a unit according to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. A recent study was conducted to see if they were attrition differences between applicants coming in the Army with a moral waiver and those without a moral waiver. The study showed that there were no significant differences between the recruits entering the Army with a moral waiver compared to the recruits entering the Army without a moral waiver in terms of adverse action discharges (fiscal years 2003–2006 cohort data).

READINESS

64. Senator CLINTON. Secretary Geren and General Casey, in General Casey's testimony, a concern was raised that the United States Army is currently "consuming readiness faster than it can be produced." This is a critical indicator that the current OPTEMPO is having near-term and long-term readiness effects. What specific readiness is being consumed faster than it can be produced?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. General Casey's written testimony stated that "overall, our readiness is being consumed as fast as we can build it." This is because the current demand for our forces exceeds the sustainable supply. We are fully consumed with meeting the demands of the current fight and will be challenged to generate ready forces as rapidly as necessary for other potential contingencies. Current operational requirements for forces and limited periods between deployments necessitate a focus on counterinsurgency training and preparation to the detriment of preparedness for the full range of military missions. Units and equipment are stressed by the demands of lengthy and repeated deployments with insufficient recovery time. Equipment used repeatedly in harsh environmental conditions is wearing out at 5–8 times the peacetime rate.

To address long-term readiness concerns, we are acting quickly in order to meet combatant commander needs, restore balance to preserve our All-Volunteer Force, and restore necessary depth and capacity for the future. In the near-term we continue to deploy units that are fully manned, trained and equipped for their theater assigned mission. Our units that have just returned from a deployment will initially have lower readiness due to personnel turnover and equipment shortages. We dedicate timely resources to increase each unit's readiness by providing the soldiers, equipment, and training required to perform its assigned mission. Currently, the demand for trained and ready units exceeds our ability to provide enough soldiers and equipment to units during reset, the first 6-month period of a unit's return from deployment. With full, timely and predictable funding, we will be able to provide units more of their required equipment, earlier in the process rather than just-in-time for their next deployment. This will also help us restore the Army's strategic depth and increase our flexibility to defend the Nation.

65. Senator CLINTON. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what current equipment re-set programs are being impacted by these cited to consumption OPTEMPO rates?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. Currently, no equipment reset program is being impacted by the higher OPTEMPO rate; however, the delay of supplemental funding in fiscal year 2008 may limit the Army's ability to reset all equipment in a timely manner. For the past 6 years, the Army has ensured that every deployed unit has had the necessary equipment to accomplish its assigned mission. To support the increased OPTEMPO for the surge in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army extended units in theater and accelerated the deployment of units.

To reverse the effects of combat stress on the equipment, the Army is resetting its equipment at an unprecedented rate. Army reset ensures that when units return from combat their equipment is restored to the desired level of combat capability commensurate with future mission requirements. Thanks to past congressional support, the depot production in 2007 was the highest output since Vietnam. The depots have adequate capacity to meet the Army's needs. The Army has sustained operations in Iraq and Afghanistan for 6 years with equipment serviceability readiness at greater than 85 percent for ground equipment and greater than 75 percent for aviation equipment.

To sustain equipment readiness, the Army requires timely and adequate funding. Cash flowing the Army's reset operation and maintenance requirements with the base budget funding places other programs at risk. Without the \$10.6 billion requested for procurement in the fiscal year 2008 global war on terror request, the Army will not be able to purchase replacement equipment for battle losses, Army prepositioned stocks, and theater provided equipment. For each day that funding is delayed, the delivery of essential systems to soldiers is delayed. Continued support from Congress will ensure that the Army maintains the equipment readiness to support the warfighter and start restoring the Army's strategic depth.

66. Senator CLINTON. Secretary Geren and General Casey, what impact are these consumption OPTEMPO rates having on force protection for deployed soldiers?

Secretary GEREN and General CASEY. There are no force protection impacts as a result of the current high OPTEMPO rate. The Army is fully committed to providing force protection for our deployed soldiers and has considered OPTEMPO rates in its force protection equipment procurements, fielding, and reset plans.

Since the start of war the Army, with congressional support, has substantively increased the amount and level of force protection. For instance:

- The in-theater truck fleet, all of which are armored, will be filled to 100 percent of the requirement in January 2008. The light truck fleet is already filled to 100 percent, and our medium and heavy truck fleets which are filled to 99 percent of requirements are scheduled to be completed in December 2007 and January 2008 respectively. Due to high OPTEMPO demands, these fleets undergo a rebuild process in Theater, as well as battle loss and battle damage replacements from new production.
- The Theater Armored Security Vehicle (ASV) requirement is filled to 100 percent and production will support replacement of destroyed ASVs.
- The Improved Outer Tactical Vest (IOTV) replaces the previously fielded outer tactical vest and is being issued to all deploying soldiers, Army civilians, and other attached personnel. The IOTV production rate of 25,000 per month will support the unit rotation plan.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARK PRYOR

JOINT CARGO AIRCRAFT

67. Senator PRYOR. General Casey, with roots in a genuine decision of jointness, the Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA) has been a hotly debated platform for intra-theater airlift. As an example of joint teaming between the Services, this aircraft was validated in the Joint Capabilities Integration Development System process, approved by the JROC, managed by a Joint Program Office (JPO), and produced a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) cosigned by the Vice Chiefs of Staff of the Army and the Air Force. Have you had a discussion or do you plan to have discussions with General Moseley regarding the necessity of the JCA as a viable weapon system in a service organic role for the Army and the roles and mission debate that has surrounded this issue?

General CASEY. The Army and Air Force have been in agreement on the roles and missions of the JCA for quite a while, an agreement recognized by the signing of an MOA on 20 June 2006. General Moseley and I continue to discuss a variety of topics to include the JCA. In the upcoming Army and Air Force Staff Talks, we will discuss how to better support the JCA program to the benefit of both Services, but there is no intent to readdress roles and missions on the JCA. The Army does not have interest in taking on responsibility for intra-theater airlift with the JCA, nor was the JCA ever intended to compete with the Air Force's C-17 or C-130 aircraft roles and missions. Our focus is to modernize our cargo fleet of aircraft with a better, modern, more capable aircraft that will conduct the same organic, direct support missions the Army has been conducting with airplanes and helicopters for decades. The JCA is a complementary system that fills a gap at the tactical (as opposed to operational or strategic) level. That gap is the movement of time sensitive, mission critical cargo and key personnel from the Initial Staging Base or Port of Debarkation (POD) to the BCT and below. This is sometimes described as "the last tactical mile" of the end-to-end distribution system. These BCTs and smaller units are often deployed to austere locations across the noncontiguous battlefield. So, the JCA is a multifunctional aircraft that enables the JFC to achieve full spectrum dominance through the application of focused logistics.

LIGHT UTILITY HELICOPTER

68. Senator PRYOR. General Casey, the Operational Test and Evaluation (OT&E) Report for the UH-72A Lakota, dated July 2007, concludes that this light utility helicopter (LUH) may not meet prescribed performance criteria to support homeland defense initiatives, and in particular has shown a vulnerability for various avionics failures while operating in hot environments. As the Army plans to field 322 LUH aircraft over the next 8 years, what are your plans to remedy the shortfalls identified in this report?

General CASEY. The LUH program is successfully executing the Army's transformation strategy. We are continuing to move forward with full rate production to procure 322 aircraft to return UH-60 Blackhawks to the warfight and replace aging UM-1 and OH-58 aircraft. The LUH fielding is on schedule and on budget and meets or exceeds the Joint Staff approved key performance parameters (KPPs).

The two issues identified in the Director, OT&E report stating the aircraft was "not operationally suitable" and "not operationally effective" in certain environments were the cockpit/cabin heat and the medical evacuation of two critical patients. Both

issues have been resolved. The Army Research Lab recently tested and evaluated the improved ventilation kit and concluded that the system is operationally effective, suitable, and safe, even in hot environments. There have been no equipment failures from excessive cockpit heat and the “fixes” that have been incorporated into the aircraft will preclude any equipment failures in the future.

To address concerns over operations in the MEDEVAC LUH, a medical evacuation kit, consisting of medical evacuation equipment mounts, ceiling rails and additional lighting, has been evaluated and approved. It allows for a cabin configuration that will facilitate the accomplishment of medical attendant tasks. The LUH is not required to transport more than one critical patient at a time.

In terms of lift performance the LUH exceeds its KPP to lift 906 pounds out of ground effect. It is important to note that in all atmospheric conditions LUH exceeds the lift performance of the aged UH-1 and OH-58 aircraft it is replacing.

In summary the LUH Program is successfully meeting all cost, schedule and required performance targets specified in the acquisition strategy. To date, the Army has purchased 42 UH-72A aircraft and 16 of these have been delivered to units in the field.

DEPLOYMENTS

69. Senator PRYOR. Secretary Geren, I am concerned that the repeated deployments of our Active Army Forces for extended periods of combat (boots-on-the-ground extended from 12 to 15 months) is having a detrimental impact on the retention of some of our most experienced junior officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs). Extended deployments with reduced dwell time must be creating tremendous stress on the families. What are your plans for reducing the length of combat deployments?

Secretary GEREN. The interim Army Deployment Policy deploys soldiers for not more than 15 months with at least 12 months of dwell before being deployed again. We made the recommendation to the Secretary of Defense to go to the 15-month policy for three reasons: one, to support the needs of the commander in the field; two, to give us more predictability for our soldiers and families; and three, we needed 12 months at home to ensure that the soldiers deploying were adequately prepared. The 15-month policy was always intended to be temporary and we will come off of that as soon as we can. The Army is growing capacity to help achieve a rotation model of 12 month deployments followed by at least 12 months at home station. The continued goal of the Army is a sustainable unit deployment to dwell ratio of 1:3 in a steady state security environment (for example, 9 months deployed, 27 months home), or 1:2 in a sustainable surge environment.

70. Senator PRYOR. Secretary Geren, what do you consider an acceptable period of dwell time for soldiers deployed for 15 months?

Secretary GEREN. The continued goal of the Army is a sustainable deployment to dwell ratio of 1:3 in a steady-state security environment (for example, 9 months deployed, 27 months home), or a ratio of 1:2 in a surge environment. In the near-term, the Army is growing capacity to help achieve a model of 12 month deployments followed by at least 12 months at home station.

71. Senator PRYOR. Secretary Geren, why is the Marine Corps able to continue sustained operations with 7 month deployments while the Army had to extend deployments from 12 to 15 months?

Secretary GEREN. Both the Army and the Marine Corps are rotating their combat forces at slightly less than a 1:1 deployment to dwell ratio. Army combat units currently spend up to 15 months overseas, with at least 12 months to reset and prepare. In other words, soldiers are deployed 15 months out of 27 months. Marines deploy for 7 month rotations with only 6 months back, and, over two rotation cycles, that represents 14 months deployed out of 26 months. We are currently unable to sustain shorter deployments because of the volume of Army forces required.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

72. Senator PRYOR. Secretary Geren, what data are you tracking to assess the impact on the force? For example, retention rate of junior officers and NCOs; divorce rates; suicide rates; number of medically non-deployed soldiers; equipment availability rates; equipment operational rates.

Secretary GEREN. The data tracked by the Army covers a full spectrum of readiness indicators to include personnel and equipment. From a personnel readiness

perspective, the Army looks at deployable individuals within the total force for mission requirements. Many factors influence the available population, to include medical and legal issues, professional schooling requirements, and job qualifications. To monitor stressors on the force, the Army has, for several years, tracked recruiting; first term attrition; and the retention of enlisted soldiers, noncommissioned and commissioned officers. We closely monitor other behaviors such as divorce rates, suicide reports, alcohol and drug abuse statistics as well as general misconduct and attrition rates. We monitor equipment readiness by tracking equipping levels and operational readiness of the Army's fleets, weapons, and other essential equipment.

REAL PROPERTY

73. Senator PRYOR. Secretary Geren, I'm sure you are aware that the Department has the authority to transfer real property to community redevelopment organizations at no cost if those communities agree to reinvest land sales and leasing revenues back into job creation and infrastructure development. It would be my hope that the Army disposal plans for these closing installations balances both public auctions with these no cost and other public benefit transfers. We have many financial challenges in executing Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) projects, but it is important to me that communities are not left without resources to cope with the economic recovery they face and some of this property should be considered for open space and other important public uses. Can you assure this committee that the Department will implement a balanced approach to property disposal and grant broad deference to community reuse plans the way the law intended?

Secretary GEREN. Yes, the Army will implement a balanced approach to property disposal and grant broad deference to community reuse plans as the law intended. We are following the property disposal process as directed by law. By law, Local Reuse Authorities are responsible for State, local, and homeless screening and for producing reuse plans that consider the needs of homeless service providers and other state or local requests for property for public benefit. The Army will seek fair market value for BRAC property, and properly conveyance actions can include economic development conveyances at fair market value, or under certain circumstances, at no cost. In cases where the Army markets properties for sale, we will work with the Local Reuse Authorities and market the property in a way that is consistent with their reuse plans.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR SUSAN COLLINS

READINESS

74. Senator COLLINS. General Casey, as ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I am very concerned about the Federal use of our Nation's National Guard soldiers. During the last Congress, Senator Lieberman and I worked together on the committee, investigating many of the problems that plagued the Government's response to the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans. I am concerned however, that 2 years after Hurricane Katrina, our National Guard forces may not be ready to perform their critical domestic missions, because either the personnel or equipment have been deployed overseas. A September 2007 Government Accountability Office (GAO) study found that the Army National Guard has less than one-third of their required equipment available. The study also found that DOD has not fully reassessed its equipment, personnel, and training needs and developed a new model for the Reserve component that is appropriate to the new strategic environment. The GAO study adds that the Army has begun two transformation initiatives to enhance Reserve unit's ability to conduct 21st century operations. These initiatives are significant, but the extent to which they will alleviate equipment and personnel challenges is unclear. What reassessment, if any, is being done by the Army to determine the appropriate equipment, personnel, and training needs of the Army Guard and Reserve, based on the new strategic environment?

General CASEY. The Army is conducting an assessment of the requirements to transition the Reserve components from a strategic to an operational Reserve. This is part of transforming an Army to meet the demands of the 21st century, an era of persistent conflict. Our assessment includes a review of pre- and post-mobilization training requirements and the associated resources.

We are continuing to rebalance the force across all components to ensure we have the right types of units and soldiers with the skills that are in the greatest demand—infantry, engineer, military police, military intelligence, and Special Oper-

ations Forces. This is a collaborative process. We are working closely with the Army Reserve, National Guard Bureau, the Adjutants General Force Structure Committee, and others within the Department of Defense to address the right mix of capabilities and the balance between the Active and Reserve components.

We have committed an unprecedented level of resources to address Reserve component equipment needs. For example, we are fencing \$27 billion for Army National Guard procurement through 2013, and we have fielded new Abrams Integrated Management tanks, howitzers, and communication equipment to the National Guard. The Reserve components are receiving our best night vision equipment, GPS receivers, battle command equipment, and trucks.

Given the National Guard's role as both an operational force and the States' first military responder for homeland defense and civil support, the Army is committed to resource the Army National Guard consistent with those roles. We have fielded more than 11,000 pieces of critical equipment to hurricane States, and we have worked closely with the National Guard leadership to identify "dual use" equipment in their "essential 10" capabilities.

The Army Reserve remains among the Nation's first title 10 responders to provide assistance in serious natural or manmade disasters, accidents, or catastrophes that occur in the United States and its territories. To ensure that they can meet these responsibilities, we have fenced approximately \$3.9 billion for Army Reserve procurement in fiscal years 2005–2011.

Thanks to congressional support in fiscal year 2007, we have been able to provide units more essential equipment earlier in their training cycle to better facilitate pre-deployment training.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE

75. Senator COLLINS. General Casey, during the Army's annual budget posture hearing last winter, then Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter Schoomaker, testified that 55 percent of the total Army force was made up from the National Guard and Reserves. I was surprised and concerned about that figure and had the opportunity to ask General Schoomaker whether he was comfortable with that ratio, that is only 45 percent of the total force being made up of active duty soldiers and 55 percent being National Guardsman and reservists. He stated that he was not. I next asked him that if he were designing the total force from scratch today, or had a magic wand, what portion would be Active Duty and what portion would be Guard and Reserve Forces. General Schoomaker answered that he believed that the Active Forces were too small and that he would be more comfortable if there was something more on the order of 60 percent Active and 40 percent Reserve. I would be very interested in your views in this regard. Do you believe that the ratio proposed by General Schoomaker, that is 60 percent Active Duty, 40 percent National Guard and Reserve, is the correct one?

General CASEY. In the current environment, 60/40 is a more appropriate ratio. We have congressional authorization to increase the Army's size by 74,000 soldiers over the next 5 years. The Army plans to accelerate the growth in the Active component and the Army National Guard (ARNG) to fiscal year 2010. This will bring the Army's end strength to 547,400 Active component soldiers; 358,200 ARNG; and 206,000 Army Reserve. This growth will also change the ratio of Active component/Reserve component to 49/51.

As I testified on November 15, I believe the 547,000 that we're building in the Active component is a good milestone, but probably not big enough. This growth will allow us to revitalize and balance our forces, reduce deployment periods, increase dwell time, increase capability and capacity, and strengthen the systems that support our forces. As we get close to 547,000, we will need to have a discussion about whether the Army needs to be bigger, and if so, a discussion about whether we are prepared to provide the resources to make it the quality of force that we need. Creating a large but unresourced and "hollow" Army is not what we need.

"DON'T ASK/DON'T TELL" POLICY

76 and 77. Senator COLLINS. General Casey, this morning you described the Army as being strained and stretched. This is a concern that I share and that I think every member of this panel shares. During the past few years, we have seen longer deployments and more waivers granted to recruits with criminal records. In fact, the DOD recently granted an extension of the age limit for recruits. The DOD continues to have difficulty in filling specialty positions such as for linguists, which are obviously very important in Iraq and Afghanistan. The DOD has said that 85 linguists,

of which 14 were Arabic trained, have been discharged from our Armed Forces since the “don’t ask/don’t tell” policy was instituted. In addition to the loss of translators, more than 9,000 other servicemembers have been separated since “don’t ask/don’t tell” policy was instituted by President Clinton back in 1993. Last spring I met with a retired admiral in Maine who urged me to urge the DOD to reexamine the “don’t ask/don’t tell” policy. In your view, should Congress reconsider this policy? Would you welcome reconsideration of this policy?

General CASEY. “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” is a political, not military, policy (10 U.S.C. § 654). As Chief of Staff of the Army, I am focused on my title 10 responsibilities of preparing and sustaining an Army at war. My job is to ensure your Army abides by the Nation’s laws and policies concerning homosexual conduct and military Service, not to make them. Your Army will continue to do this with fairness to all concerned, as we did with the policy that preceded “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” and the policy that may someday replace it.

DOD SPENDING

78. Senator COLLINS. Secretary Geren, all of the Services are facing tight fiscal constraints and they have to make the hard choices between equipment and people. In some instances, we can reduce the amount of people through the implementation of technology. This however, has its own costs associated with it. Over the last decade, the total percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spent on defense has steadily declined. This year the total amount is around 4 percent of GDP. In order to adequately meet the requirement to grow the Army and Marine Corp personnel while at the same time ensuring we recapitalize all our forces, including naval shipbuilding and aircraft for the Air Force, do you believe that the Congress should increase the top line budget dollars for the DOD?

Secretary GEREN. While I am aware of the budget issues facing the other services, I am only able to comment on the Army’s budget issues. We need increases and the funding, in fact, does increase in fiscal year 2008 and over the Program Objective Memorandum.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR SAXBY CHAMBLISS

LAKOTA HELICOPTER

79. Senator CHAMBLISS. General Casey, I have heard about some of the problems associated with the Army’s new Lakota helicopter. I understand the purpose of these LUHs is for homeland security and disaster relief missions within the United States or other non-combat zones. Critics say the nature of the problems are three-fold: excessive heat in the aircraft cockpit and cabin; the aircraft does not meet prescribed performance criteria for internal and external loads; and the aircraft is not effective for medical evacuation of two litter patients requiring critical medical care. Although the aircraft meets certain performance criteria, and the Army has identified potential work-arounds for what appears to be deficiencies in the helicopter, can you explain the Army’s plan to continue full production and acquisition of the remaining helicopters when DOD’s Office of OT&E judged the UH-72A Lakota to be “not operationally suitable” and “not operationally effective?” I would appreciate your response to these findings, and your explanation of what the Army is considering in terms of moving forward to mitigate any identified problems.

General CASEY. The LUH (UH-72A) Program is successfully executing the Army’s transformation strategy. We are continuing to move forward with full rate production to procure 322 aircraft to return UH-60 Blackhawks to the warfight and replace aging UH-1 and OH-58 aircraft. The LUH fielding is on schedule, on budget, and meets or exceeds the Joint Staff approved key performance parameters (KPP’s). The two issues identified in the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation (DOT&E) Report stating the aircraft was “not operationally suitable” and “not operationally effective” in certain environments were the cockpit/cabin heat and the medical evacuation of two critical patients. While the evacuation of two critical patients was never a key performance parameter for this aircraft, the Army has pursued an improvement to the Medevac configuration to address concerns raised in the OTE. Both have been resolved. The Army Research Lab (ARL) recently tested and evaluated the improved ventilation kit and concluded that the system is operationally effective, suitable, and safe, even in hot environments. No equipment failures have resulted from excessive cockpit heat.

A medical evacuation kit, consisting of medical evacuation equipment mounts, ceiling rails and additional lighting, has been evaluated and approved. It allows for a cabin configuration that will facilitate the accomplishment of medical attendant tasks. The LUH is not required to transport more than one critical patient at a time.

In terms of lift performance the LUH exceeds its KPP to lift 906 lbs. out of ground effect (OGE) in any of its variants. It is important to note that the LUH far exceeds the lift performance of the aged UH-1 and OH-58 aircraft it is replacing in all atmospheric conditions.

In summary the LUH Program is meeting all cost, schedule and required performance targets specified in the acquisition strategy. To date, the Army has purchased 42 LUH aircraft with 16 delivered.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

80. Senator CHAMBLISS. General Casey, over the past several months, there have been a number of troubling incidents in which Afghan civilians have been killed or injured in encounters between coalition forces and al Qaeda. It is my understanding that the rules of engagement actually restrict the use of non-precision weapons due to the sensitivity to civilian casualties. Field commanders in both Afghanistan and Iraq have submitted two Operational Needs Statements citing the urgent need for a precision fire capability organic to our infantry BCTs to enable them to effectively engage enemy targets and minimize the risk to noncombatants. This requirement has also been a top priority for the Infantry School at Fort Benning for some time. The capability in question is the Precision Guided Mortar Munitions (PGMM), a program that the defense appropriations bill indicates merits support and funding. It is my understanding that the Army's analysis identifies PGMM as the best solution for meeting the operational need as well. Given the operational need and the importance to both the Afghan leadership and the U.S. forces of minimizing civilian casualties, what is the Army's plan to field PGMM within the next 12 months, and will you send Congress a reprogramming request as suggested in the National Defense Appropriations Bill?

General CASEY. The field commander's Operational Needs Statement (ONS) identified an urgent need for a precision guided 120mm mortar munition with a low Circular Error of Probability (CEP) with both the Global Positioning System (GPS) and Semi-Active Laser (SAL) guidance system capabilities. To date, the PGMM has not met the requirements in the ONS as it demonstrated a low CEP with only a SAL guidance system.

The Army is mitigating its operational needs capability gaps in Afghanistan with the deployment of the M777A2 Howitzer, which is capable of firing the 155mm Excalibur round. The Army recognizes that the M777A2 and Excalibur are not organic to an Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), but the howitzer is regularly deployed to join an IBCT in a reinforcing role. In Iraq, a similar capability is already available from many static locations across the country. The IBCT commander can also request precision munitions from long range missile or aviation assets in either the area of operations.

The Army is considering restoring the PGMM program. If a decision is made to restore PGMM, a reprogramming action to support fiscal year 2008 funding requirements will be required.

The Future Combat Systems (FCS) program provides precision fires capability through its Non-Line-of-Sight Cannon (NLOS-C), Non-Line-of-Sight Mortar (NLOS-M), and Non-Line-of-Sight Launch System (NLOS-LS). The NLOS-C is also capable of firing the Excalibur 155mm, GPS-guided round with a range of 23 kilometers. The FCS Brigade Combat Team (FBCT) is designed with the additional capabilities provided by the NLOS-M and the NLOS-LS. The NLOS-LS platform provides 15 precision munitions with a range of 40 kilometers that have the ability to be fired and forgotten or guided in flight. Through the use of these three platforms, the FBCT is able to mitigate the risk of not having PGMM in the future force.

ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

81. Senator CHAMBLISS. Secretary Geren, acquisition reform is never far from the front line of the defense world. In fact, a panel led by a former Under Secretary for Defense Acquisition recently made a number of recommendations for Army acquisition aimed at ultimately reducing contracting waste and fraud. One of the findings was that the acquisition workforce is understaffed, overworked, undertrained, and undersupported. I understand you are considering the panel's recommendations

right now. In terms of acquisition, what are your thoughts on the panel's findings relative to the Lakota helicopter and some of the concerns with the aircraft that have recently come to light?

Mr. GEREN. The Army is appreciative of the thorough and candid assessment the Gansler Commission Report provides. The post-Cold War cuts to the Army acquisition budget were a contributing factor in today's undersized acquisition workforce. The workload in contracting actions has increased more than 350 percent in the last 12 years, yet the Army's contracting-oversight has almost been cut in half. Furthermore, of those tasked to provide oversight, only 36 percent in Iraq and Kuwait are certified.

The contracting-oversight workforce has not been adequately expanded, trained, structured, or empowered to meet the needs of the warfighter. Further, an emphasis on expeditionary contracting is essential, as the needs of the operational commander are often immediate. This is not a problem limited to the Army, but is systemic throughout the Federal Government, which is short approximately 1,500 to 2,000 contracting officers.

The procurement of the LUH is a sterling example of a streamlined acquisition process, utilizing a Commercial Off the Shelf (COTS)/Non-Developmental Item (NDI) to meet Army requirements. The UH-72A Lakota (LUH) is a military use of a widely used commercial helicopter within the U.S. for medical evacuation, law enforcement, media use and VIP transport. It has proven itself as a general purpose helicopter. The use of this COTS/NDI aircraft saved hundreds of millions of dollars in research and development costs and years of time. In just over two years, the Lakota has gone from requirements approval to full rate production.

The Lakota program was a "full and open competition" and the selection of the UH-72A was a "best value" for the government. The program fielding is on schedule, on budget, and meets or exceeds the Joint Staff approved key performance parameters. More importantly, the performance of the UH-72A far exceeds that of the aging UH-1 and OH-58 aircraft it is replacing and returns UH-60 Blackhawk aircraft to the warfight, specifically for the Army National Guard.

Key findings from the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation report regarding cockpit/cabin heat issues and the medical evacuation of critical patients have been resolved. The Army Research Lab recently tested and evaluated the improved ventilation kit and concluded that the system is operationally effective, suitable, and safe, even in hot environments. Additionally, a medical evacuation kit, consisting of medical evacuation equipment mounts, ceiling rails and additional lighting, has been evaluated and approved.

As the LUH program moves forward I am confident the Lakota will continue to exceed our expectations.

82. Senator CHAMBLISS. Secretary Geren, what can Congress do to support the Army as you work to eliminate shortcomings and make improvements in your acquisition workforce?

Secretary GEREN. The Gansler Commission Report identified numerous concerns and issues related to the acquisition workforce. The Army is reviewing the findings and recommendations and intends to submit legislative proposals to eliminate the identified shortcomings and to make improvements in our acquisition workforce. The following is a representative list of improvements that may require congressional support:

- The Army and the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) do not have sufficient numbers of contracting officers and contracting administrators to handle the significantly increased workload that we are confronting in the high tempo contingency operating environment.
- Certain civil service provisions also may require amendment to ensure that contracting officers who volunteer to go into a war zone have insurance parity with the military.
- Continued support for increased stature, quality, and career development for contracting personnel, military as well as civilian, particularly for expeditionary operations. Funding for entry level trainees to make their service competitive with industry, including hiring and retention bonuses, and funds to defray the cost of relocation.
- Support for the restructuring of the organization and responsibility to facilitate contracting and contract management.
- Support for legislation, as well as regulatory and policy changes to increase contracting effectiveness. This support is crucial in expeditionary operations.
- The Army and DCMA also will need support as they take significant steps to improve oversight by implementing the following steps:

- Funding to increase the number of military contingency contracting officers and our deployable civilian workforces as COR and ACOs. CORs that need training are typically from the technical or customer communities.
- Reexamine our utilization of CORs and ACOs to make them more effective by ensuring their availability for and subsequent placement where requirements are most acute.
- Implementing new regulations or policy that improves oversight of contract services by requiring all requiring organizations to maintain a cadre of trained CORs who have the function in their performance standards.
- Expanding the number and types of in theater services contracts for which ACO will be responsible.

[Whereupon, at 12:44 p.m., the committee adjourned.]

