

## House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel Holds Hearing on FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Budget Request on Military Personnel Overview

### [LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS AND WITNESSES](#)

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DAVIS:

Good afternoon. The meeting will come to order. We're happy to have everybody here.

Today the subcommittee will hear testimony on the fiscal year 2010 national defense budget request for military personnel.

Each of your written statements makes clear the heartfelt commitment by DOD and the services to protect and enhance the programs that support service members and their families. You can be sure that the subcommittee shares your view that the men and women who serve our nation in uniform are deserving of the highest praise and our best efforts to protect the programs that are the foundation for their quality of life.

I was pleased to observe that Admiral Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, feels as strongly as we do that personnel programs must be protected. In a speech at the Brookings Institution on Monday this week, the admiral indicated that tighter budgets will put increasing pressure on leaders to reduce programs that sustain people and that those leaders, including him, needed to resist the temptation to make those cuts.

The admiral did note that health care and other personnel-related costs were growing and that more needed to be done to control such costs because the rate of growth associated with personnel programs was not sustainable over time.

We have all felt the budget pressures increasing in recent years. For example, the ongoing cuts to recruiting and retention are understandable so long as the military continues to attract and retain quality people. However, the cuts must be structured so as not to preclude our ability to respond when the economy begins to recover.

Other less prominent indicators of budget pressures are more troubling. For example, the Navy's freeze of permanent changes of station for the remainder of the year is causing hardship for many of our families.

There are rumors of funding cuts to programs such as the Army Knowledge Online that is so important to communication within the Army and the Virtual Army Experience that is important to understanding the recruiting of a new high-tech generation. We now know that the Marine Corps Reserve

will for the third consecutive year not achieve its authorized end strength during fiscal year 2009. And the Air Force, the one service most reliant on retention, continues to struggle to achieve certain goals.

Our purpose today is to better understand how those budget pressures will be translated to fiscal year 2010 and how those pressures will impact end strength, recruiting, retention, force structure, compensation, and service member, retiree, and family morale and welfare.

Once again, thank you all for being here. We look forward to your testimony.

And I want to turn to Mr. Wilson for his opening remarks.

WILSON:

Thank you, Chairwoman Davis.

In many respects, the military personnel systems today reflect a degree of success that would have been questionable three to five years ago. In large part, that success is due to the efforts of the witnesses who will testify today.

I want to particularly single out Lieutenant General Michael D. Rochelle, the Army G-1, and Lieutenant General Ronald S. Coleman, the Marine Corps Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. This likely will be their last appearance before this subcommittee. Each will complete more than 30 years of exceptional service before retiring. Both men are directly responsible for successfully directing the personnel programs of their respective services through an extraordinarily difficult period.

I personally want to thank you for your service to this nation and wish you both well in your future endeavors. And I particularly know of your success, having the privilege of representing Fort Jackson, representing Parris Island, the Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, and Naval Hospital at Beaufort. So thank you both for your service.

With regard to the fiscal year 2010 military personnel budget request, I have three areas of concern.

The first is the \$800 million reduction in the services' recruiting and retention budgets. While I know that the downturn -- downturn in the economy has made recruiting and retention somewhat easier, the experience of this subcommittee is that reductions in recruiting and retention funding inevitably prove to be too deep. So I am interested in hearing the personal assessment of each of the service personnel chiefs as to where risk exist in the proposed cuts to recruiting and retention resources.

My second concern focuses on the number of non-deployable personnel in the Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve. Clearly, the fact that there are at least 27,000 non-deployable personnel in the active Army and at least another 21,000 non-deployables in the Army Guard and Army Reserve must have a range of effects on these components. I would like to hear more about those impacts and how the Army believes they might be mitigated.

The third area of concern relates to recent testimony by the service chiefs, particularly those of the Marine Corps and Army, that dwell time will not be significant -- will not significantly increase in the foreseeable future. I would like to understand why, with increased end strength, there will not be a significant change in the dwell time for the active and reserve components.

Madam Chairwoman, thank you for holding this hearing. And I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

DAVIS:

Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

I now want to introduce our first panel.

Ms. Gail McGinn, acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, thank you very much. Welcome back to the hearing. And I had an opportunity to see you this morning as well in talking about balloting for our military personnel overseas. And I appreciate your doing that as well.

Lieutenant General Michael D. Rochelle, deputy chief of staff (G- 1) Headquarters of the U.S. Army. And General Rochelle, we had an opportunity to meet earlier, and I wanted to wish you your -- the very best as you retire this summer. This probably is your final appearance before this subcommittee, and we wish you well. We thank you so much for all of your dedicated service.

ROCHELLE:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

DAVIS:

Thank you very much.

Vice Admiral Mark Ferguson III, chief of naval personnel, deputy chief of naval operations of Total Force, thank you very much for being here, admiral.

Lieutenant General Ronald S. Coleman, deputy commandant for manpower and reserve affairs, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. And, General Coleman, we know that you also will be retiring this summer. And this was probably your final appearance as well. And, again, I thank you for your dedicated service. Thank you very much.

And Lieutenant General Richard Newton III, of the U.S. Air Force, deputy chief of staff manpower and personnel, Headquarters, U.S. Air Force. Thank you for being here.

Please, we will start.

Ms. McGinn?

MCGINN:

Thank you.

Chairwoman Davis, Representative Wilson and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on the overview of the department's programs, policies and budget dedicated to taking care of our most precious resource: our people.

As our data shows, we are largely succeeding in attracting and retaining the best and brightest young people. The Department of Defense has set high standards for the quality for the all-volunteer force. And the payoff is evident in the performance of this force in the field, which has been truly remarkable.

It is vital to our national defense to maintain this highly skilled and motivated force. We must continue to ensure that we provide the right combination of pay, benefits and compensation. We want to continue to work with you to ensure that we make the best use of every dollar authorized.

We are still sending our service members in harm's way and to face serious conflicts abroad. And for those service members who have returned from these operations wounded and injured, the department is committed to doing everything we can to make sure they receive all the necessary medical care and non-medical assistance to return to full duty status or successfully transition to the next phase of their lives.

We are grateful to you for giving us the authority and resources to make significant progress in restructuring the disability and compensation systems, enhancing case management, and hiring additional recovery care coordinators. However, we know that the work is not done. And this budget is a testament to the fact that the department will continue to devote our energy and resources to our wounded ill and injured.

Furthermore, we understand the sacrifices made by not just the service members but their families. These brave men and women cannot do what they do without the support of their loved ones. And to enforce the ongoing support of these family members, the department increased the F.Y. 2010 baseline for family assistance by shifting funds from the overseas contingency operations budget to the baseline to ensure continuity in program delivery. This is a step in the right direction.

I do have a statement I submitted for the record. And I would just like to thank you for the opportunity to discuss these important issues with you today. And I look forward to your questions.

DAVIS:

Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

General Rochelle?

ROCHELLE:

Chairwoman Davis, Ranking Member Wilson, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I appear before you on behalf of the 1.1 million men and women serving here and abroad in peace as well as most violent environments. This combat-seasoned force is resilient and professional. Yet it is strained.

More than one million of its nation's finest citizens have deployed over the past seven years into harm's way. And we realize very well that there are costs and effects associated with this conflict, both visible and invisible effects.

Our current programs to relieve stress on the force are vital to maintaining a healthy, balanced and prepared Army. These programs help us defend our nation against some of the most persistent and wide-ranging threats in our nation's history. The success of these programs, due in part -- in large part, I might add -- to the support of the Congress and specifically this committee. This committee has given us numerous programs that we have instituted to keep America's Army strong well into seven-plus years of war.

First and foremost, you have given us the means to recruit and retain an agile Army and, I might add, the best trained, the best led, and the best equipped Army in the world. As a result, for the past two years we have met or exceeded our recruiting and retention goals for the total Army. This is a step in the right direction to get our personnel, our people, back in balance.

We continue to transform our force into one Army that consistently uses the talents of our active, Reserve, and National Guard soldiers as well as our teammates, our civilian workforce. This Total Force approach is key to restoring balance within our ranks and our -- and in our homes.

This Congress has embraced our needs, and we are very, very grateful. You have given us the means to improve the quality of life for our soldiers and their families. Soldiers are remaining in the Army because they see it's a good environment in which to serve and raise a family, thus making us the employer of choice.

The Army continues to face challenges which we will be -- which will be directly in front of us for the next several years. Armed with lessons learned, it's our intent to stay in front of those challenges, anticipate them, develop strategies and programs, and keep them from becoming problems in the future.

One of our largest challenges is the eligible population to serve in our armed forces today. That number continues to drop, thus creating what I believe is a national dilemma, a national problem. The Army will continue to work hard to attract and retain the best, but we need your help in taking on this larger issue, this larger problem.

The challenging environments that our soldiers serve in demand that we maintain the standards as set. And we must remain ever vigilant that our force is manned with both physically and mentally fit and qualified soldiers, as it is today.

I have described a challenging environment to you here today. I'm confident, however, that with the operational and institutional agility America's Army has developed over the past eight years, we will meet all of the challenges that will come our way.

It is easier to commit to a plan of action when we know that Congress -- the Congress supports us. Your leadership and support have been unwavering. I have appreciated the discussions we have had over the years concerning the health of this great Army. And I look forward to taking your questions today. Thank you for your support.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

Admiral [Ferguson](#)?

[FERGUSON](#):

Chairwoman Davis, Representative Wilson and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to review our budget request on behalf of the Navy Total Force and their families.

During my previous testimony in March, I discussed end strength and our successes in recruiting and retention. Since that time, recruiting and retention have remained strong, and we continue to achieve our enlisted and officer goals across both the active and reserve components.

Our fiscal 2010 active and reserve budget request supports our ability to attract, recruit and retain a highly skilled naval force in support of our maritime strategy. I would like to briefly highlight the principal themes contained in our budget request.

First, it includes an increase of our authorized end strength to a level of 328,800. It sustains the reserve force at an end strength of 65,500. This increased end strength above our 2009 levels supports the demand for individual augmentees for the Joint Force and demonstrates our commitment to sustaining our current deployment dwell times to minimize stress on the force.

Our request sustains the recruiting successes we achieved last fiscal year where we met medical goals for the first time in five years, and this year we met nuclear Zone A retention goals for the first time in over 30 years.

While the budget reflects a slight decrease in advertising expenditures, it increases the amount for enlistment bonuses and sustains our recruiting force in the field at their current levels to support our projected accessions.

The budget request also supports our stabilization strategy to balance the force in terms of seniority, experience and skills while safeguarding the careers of our top performers. We have adjusted incentives and bonuses in response to sailor behavior. And this request sustains our enlistment bonus programs at 2009 levels.

The budget request also includes increases for selected medical recruiting programs. Your support for these programs is essential as we continue to target our investment in critical skill areas and, I might add, your support has been critical to our successes in the past.

The budget request also increases funding for family support programs in our Safe Harbor wounded ill and injured program. It also supports our efforts to build resiliency and foster a culture that encourages sailors to seek help in response to stress.

Finally, our request balances our education and training requirements with growth in important mission areas such as cyber warfare, language and culture.

Last week I had the opportunity to visit our naval personnel overseas in Europe and the Middle East. Your sailors today are positive, enthusiastic and performing extraordinarily well in meeting the demands of the Joint Force and of the nation. I could not be prouder of their efforts that they do every day in service to the country.

And so on behalf of all the men and women in uniform who sacrifice daily and their families, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the committee and the Congress for your unwavering support for our Navy.

Thank you. And I look forward to your questions.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

General Coleman?

COLEMAN:

Chairwoman Davis, Congressman Wilson and distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to discuss Marine Corps personnel. I would like to thank both the chairwoman, Ms. Davis, and Congressman Wilson for (inaudible). It's been an honor to serve this great nation.

I would like to make a few key points.

First, in regard to our end strength, the Marine Corps is now building on our success in fiscal year '08 and will reach our 2002 (sic) goals this fiscal year, two years ahead of schedule. We owe this success in large part to our recruiters, who continue to meet all accession goals while maintaining the highest quality standards. Thank you for your continued support of our enlistment incentives which make -- which help make this achievement possible.

Secondly, our active duty component retention continues to be successful. In fiscal year '08 first term retention was 36 percent. We're building on that success in fiscal year '09, having already achieved our fiscal year mission.

We thank you for your support of our selective reenlistment bonus program. It will remain a foundation of our retention efforts as we move from growing our force to shaping it so that we maintain vital Marine Corps leadership and critical skills.

Third, I want to reiterate that a top priority of the commandant of the Marine Corps is caring for our wounded warriors and for the families of all Marines. Our wounded warrior regiment is diligent at work implementing a new and holistic approach to wounded warrior care, which makes thriving, not just surviving, the expectation of our wounded Marines.

Likewise, our family readiness programs have undergone a host of significant improvements, which continue to this day. They were made possible in large part through the generous funding that you have provided.

I want to personally thank you, Chairwoman Davis, for your recent introduction of a House resolution that recognizes the work of our family readiness volunteers. As you mentioned, they are a crucial part of the family care and military readiness equations.

In closing, I want to thank you and the other members of Congress for your support and partnership. They have been central to the strength that your Marine Corps enjoys today. They will continue to be essential as we work to shape the Marine Corps of the future so that we always remain the most ready when the nation is least ready. Thank you.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

General Newton?

NEWTON:

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member Wilson and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss our efforts as they relate to the fiscal year 2010 budget to ensure we attract, recruit, develop and retain a high quality and a diverse fighting force.

Airmen are the focal point for providing the critical capabilities that the Air Force contributes for winning today's fight. And while the Air Force has innovative technologies and equipment, it is the hard word of our dedicated men and women in uniform and our civilians who underscore our success. Without a doubt, the tremendous talent of our Total Force airmen and civilians is the backbone of the United States Air Force, and our budget proposal recognizes this fact.

These dedicated volunteer servants are our most important asset. Without them, our organizations and equipment would not function. Our operations would grind to a halt. Therefore, we must ensure we have the proper end strength to meet current, new and emerging missions.

For F.Y. 2010, our active duty end strength will be 331,700 airmen, with 69,500 airmen serving in Air Force Reserve and 106,700 airmen in Air National Guard. This stops previously planned Total Force end strength reductions.

We will also grow our civilian population to a little over 179,000, which includes 4,200 contractor-to-civilian conversion. Simultaneously, we will continue to reshape the skill -- the set of our workforce with particular emphasis on stress career fields and missionaries that need our attention, such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, aircraft maintenance, acquisition, cyber operations, nuclear deterrence operations and sustainment.

For instance, in F.Y. 2010, our manpower investment includes increasing our nuclear relay (ph) personnel by 2,500 and adding 200 acquisition professionals.

The growth in end strength goes hand in hand with an increase in our recruiting efforts, and it goes beyond finding the right numbers. We must also ensure that the right quality and the right skills are present in our potential candidates. And despite the weak economy, we expect F.Y. 2010 to be a critical retention environment for several reasons: an increased need to retain specific skill sets and certain specialties, previous end strength decreases and corresponding decreases in accessions, increased operational demands, and new and emerging missions.

Our commitment includes continued support for special paying allowances to address recruiting and retention concerns in our health professional skills and our most critical war fighting skills, such as pararescue, combat control, tactical air control party, and explosive ordinance disposal.

Finally, we are committed to take care of airmen and their families to include our wounded warriors, to whom we have a never ending obligation. Over the past year, we tackled important issues for Air Force families, such as expanding childcare capacity, increasing childcare support for Guard and Reserve families, improving financial readiness, and providing opportunities for children of airmen, whether they relied on our military installations or on our civilian communities throughout the United States.

The Air Force is leaning to -- is leaning forward to be all in. Your continued support of our missions to attract, develop and sustain talented and divers airmen and their families is mission essential, and it's

also most appreciated. Our efforts to effectively manage end strength, to recruit, and retain, train, develop and care for airmen and their families will enable us to fly, fight and win in air and space and cyberspace.

Thank you for your unfailing support of the men and women and the families of the United States Air Force. And I also look forward to your questions.

DAVIS:

Thank you very much.

Thank you all for your presentations.

You've all mentioned end strength. And let's talk about that a little bit, because we know that there's been an increase in end strength in excess of the 2009 authorization. And what I think we're interested in is your assurances that the numbers, the dollars, will be there as we move into 2010, given the fact that there is likely to be a bow from those higher end strength numbers.

What can you tell us about those concerns, and do we have that -- that all together? I think I would just turn to the service chiefs initially and start with you.

COLEMAN:

It's not often they let me go first, ma'am, as I'm the junior guy, but I'll just jump right up.

Ma'am, I think we're well, we in the Marine Corps, right now. But we do expect that the -- that the funds will go down. We -- we can handle that somewhat.

It would be a discredit to you if I came in right now and said we have -- we have made our -- our retention goal already this year. We are two years ahead of schedule on our enlistments. But my fear, our biggest fear is that if funds are taken away to allow the critical MOSs to reenlist and to bring in those critical MOSs, then -- then there would be -- would be great concern.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

<FERGUSON>:

From the Navy perspective, there are several challenges that we uniquely face and -- and share with some of the other services.

From a shared perspective, changes in entitlements as the bill goes through the Congress can affect our ability to execute.

Second, we receive cost increases throughout the execution year for housing allowances, subsistence allowances, and so those changes in rates greatly affect our ability to execute. We feel that the money put into the budget adequately programs and covers the cost of the end strength that we have.

In the Navy, unique case because we received authority the secretary to over-execute at end strength this year. In the '10 request, you will see part of our end strength is funded in supplemental. And it covers 4,400 individuals in the overseas contingency operations to allow us to provide joint enablers to the Joint Force where we provide almost 14,000 to the force. And so for our funding in '10, OCO and supplemental covers a portion of our end strength.

ROCHELLE:

The Army, Madam Chair, is in a fairly unique position, not too dissimilar from my brother in the Navy, in the sea service here, in that we were funded below the 547,400, which we have grown -- which is the number we've grown to two years ahead of schedule.

As a result, we have a \$1.6 billion shortfall in '09, which we are hopeful will be covered in full in the OCO request. And, now, I realize that's here under deliberations by this body. But that is key for us if we are in fact to be fully funded across the fiscal year, fiscal '10, entering '10 in a balanced way.

NEWTON:

Madam Chairwoman, you and the committee members are certainly aware of we were on a glide path down to 316,000 active duty end strengths. We have -- are going to make amends to that. And we're going to actually -- as I mentioned in my opening remarks, we'll be active duty end strength at 331,700.

And so we have programmed and budgeted for that. And so we are absolutely committed to make sure that we uphold both from a funding standpoint but also as we go out to recruit and retain, particularly in those critical skill sets, that we maintain what we have programmed and budgeted for. We feel that we are certainly adequately positioned to do just that throughout the POM.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

I know that -- Admiral <Ferguson> you mentioned the supplemental. And so do -- do any of you have -- you mention you're OK. I think there is a concern that some of that we might need to look to an additional supplemental to help those numbers be able to support the increased end strength that you have.

Is that not a concern for anybody else?

<FERGUSON>:

From the Navy perspective in the current supplemental for fiscal year '09, the House Appropriations Committee added in their mark of the bill \$350 million to support the Navy end strength in this year. And that's under consideration in the Senate.

So for this fiscal year in execution that will help us to alleviate both the permanence change of station issue you addressed in your opening as well as the -- get us through and cover the end strength for the year.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

I think, you know, the big question for all of us is there anything in this that would suggest that you have reduce some accounts, and are there impacts on the family and welfare accounts that might be felt in 2010?

ROCHELLE:

I go back to the \$1.6 billion MPA shortfall for -- for Army. And that would put us -- and, again, the marks as they make it through the House and the Senate will determine the answer to the question you just posed. It's pretty significant for us.

DAVIS:

All right.

COLEMAN:

Madam Chairwoman...

DAVIS:

Yes, General Coleman?

COLEMAN:

... for '09, we -- we feel good. But you speak to '10...

DAVIS:

No, we're talking about 2010. That's our...

COLEMAN:

Yes, ma'am. So we're -- we're -- we're -- we are concerned that a large cut in '10, especially in recruiting and retention and in our family readiness programs, that would be -- that would be brutal to us, ma'am.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

My time is up. I'll turn to Mr. Wilson, and we'll start the round with the panel.

WILSON:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Again, thank all of you for your successes. And right in line with discussing some budget cuts, recognizing that there's been a cut in the recruiting and retention of nearly \$800 million -- and I indicated my concern about that in my opening statement.

I'm interested in hearing your assessment, all of you, as to where the risk may exist in the proposed cuts in recruiting and retention, and in your own view, does the budget request cut too deeply in 2010?

ROCHELLE:

Well, let me start, if you will, Representative Wilson.

First of all, you're familiar with my experience in the recruiting world directly. And my concern would be that we are -- we are funded adequately in '10. However -- however, we must be careful that we don't yo-yo the -- across the POM -- we don't yo-yo the resourcing of the recruiting initiative. Frankly because it's imperative that we have a fairly steady stream and predictable stream of resourcing to resource both recruiters, advertising and all of the associated support structure that day to day helps our recruiters be successful.

As a matter of fact, hours before I came to the Hill, the new commanding general of U.S. Army Recruiting Command paid a visit on me, and we had this very discussion. The discussion centered on the fact that we are in a very positive place today relative to where the Army was in 2005, the year I left

Recruiting Command. A very different place, largely because of the economy, but there are already signs that the economy is beginning to make a slight turnaround.

And so we must think strategically about recruiting in that new environment and not be lulled into a false sense of security from where we are today.

MCGINN:

I would just say that we are very aware of the risks involved when you cut the recruiting account and believe that we have taken a prudent risk here with this particular cut because of the status of recruiting and retention and the overall status of the economy.

But my colleagues and I watch recruiting data monthly. They probably watch it more frequently than I do. And so we need to be very vigilant in terms of keeping an eye on what is happening both in the economy and with the recruiting endeavors so that if there's something to be corrected we can correct it.

COLEMAN:

I say again, sir, our concern in Marine Corps is more drastic in the reenlistment bonus, the retention side of it, than the initial accession of it.

So too large a cut would be -- because you can't -- you can't make that up when there's -- when there's critical MOSs and critical Marines that fill those MOSs. And when they go out, you can't -- you can't get a seven-year veteran by someone coming in the front door.

So I think it's imperative that -- that we maintain our selective reenlistment bonuses, sir.

<FERGUSON>:

With respect to Navy, we did a minor reduction in advertising, where we felt that was a prudent risk to take in balance. But yet we increased our accession bonus program, and we kept the number of recruiters in the field to sustain. We figured that's the strength of our program in bringing in new sailors.

NEWTON:

Let me also add from perhaps a different approach, the pool of talent in America youth that we can go after -- I know we've discussed this previously in other hearing is a challenge for all the services and particularly for the Air Force.

As you go about trying to find specific critical skills, not only from a recruiting standpoint but from a retention standpoint as well, because even though we're in a slight down -- or a slightly downturn of our

economy, many of those skills that airmen bring to the fight are skills worthy that a lot of employers in -- in the commercial sector put the eye on the prize as well.

And so there is a -- there's no letup. There should not be any letup. In the same effort we -- either in a downturn or an upturn, as General Rochelle describes, you know, the strategic effort ought to still be maintained.

WILSON:

Well, I appreciate all of you all.

And I want to point out I appreciate Chairwoman Davis visited with me at Fort Jackson, the recruiting and retention school last year. And that was extremely a rewarding experience to me to see the dedicated personnel. But it reinforced my concern over budget cuts in that, General Rochelle, you all have helped create an extraordinary technological base. It's -- it's really -- it makes you feel really good to know of the capabilities that are used to recruit people for the opportunity of military service.

Thank you very much.

DAVIS:

Thank you, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Murphy?

MURPHY:

Thanks, Madam Chairwoman. And thank you -- and thanks to the -- to the -- all the briefers today for continued service to our country.

And I especially want to highlight General Rochelle and General Coleman. Thank you for your great service to our country. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. And we are very proud as a nation and as a Congress for all that you've done.

Part of my questions, frankly, were already addressed by the opening statements and also by the questions. So let me ask and try and draw down a little bit.

General Rochelle you mentioned about -- and as did General Newton just a second ago -- about the eligible population to join the military is declining, and that's a nation issue. You all have physical fitness standards, you have a great leadership model, how to get your folks in tremendous shape. What advice do you give the Congress? What do you think we should do?

I know this is kind of probably out of the box. You probably didn't prep for this. But what would advise the Congress of the United States? What do you think we should be doing to inspire the American people to follow your lead?

ROCHELLE:

I'll defer to the junior member of the panel.

(LAUGHTER)

COLEMAN:

Thank -- thank you, sir.

If we could just continue as a nation to emphasize physical fitness. It's -- it's -- it's a lot easier, I think we all would say, to stay in shape than it is to get in shape. So I think if we can -- if we can -- you know, and I think you probably know this, sir, having served, there's a large percentage of the population that is not physically fit. And that's -- and that's -- that's deplorable when you think about what it was when we were growing up when you had to take gym, and now you can -- you can opt out of gym. And you can't regain those -- those muscles in a short period of time.

So if we could -- if we could stress -- and I don't mean just for a day, but if we could stress physical fitness. And I think the -- a healthy body leads to a healthy mind. So if -- if as a -- as a Congress, as a nation, if we could stress physical fitness, I think we'd be on the right track, sir.

MURPHY:

Thank you.

Go ahead, please.

NEWTON:

If I may add, Representative Murphy, it's also -- to add to what General Coleman said -- it's a call to service as well. It's -- it's -- it's one that I believe, let's say our generation has seen a, you know, a more fit lifestyle, a more fit approach, certainly as I've gotten into my fifties, is -- is planning for the future as well.

This is a national challenge we have, one of the largest challenges we have with regard to being able to reach into America's youth and much less to entice them to come into the service but is because of the obesity issue we have among American youth. And so that is -- I think it behooves us who are perhaps more senior, regardless if you happen to be a member of Congress or serving in the military, you bit fit to

fight, as we say in the United States Air Force. And so we have to walk the walk and talk the talk and show our commitment and resources and so forth.

But I believe it's a -- it's a significant call to service that somehow if we can fill that gap.

ROCHELLE:

Sir, first of all, I'd like to thank you for your very gracious comments about General Coleman and my service. And I would simply add that not unlike all of our great soldiers and Marines and airmen and sailors who serve, it's our families who really deserve the credit.

To your question, and just to add onto what my wingman said here about obesity, the larger issue is high school completion and the declining rate of high school completion. A couple of data points: If you look at -- and I'll try to do this very quickly -- if you look at high school graduation rates nationally and segment those rates by race, ethnicity, levels of poverty and then the general population, you see some pretty alarming trends. Only one out of three -- anywhere in the nation, regardless of race and regardless of the level of income for the family -- will graduate.

Oops, I beg your pardon. I said that incorrectly. Thirty percent will not graduate.

If you now add -- if you now add the level of income at or below the poverty level, that number who will graduate, irrespective of race or ethnicity, drops to 50 percent. Add one more layer of segmentation, and we're now looking at race, poverty level in general, and 70 percent will not graduate on time.

I mean, I've -- and I've walked this a number of different times in various committees on the Hill. It really is a national tragedy. And for us to think that we can remain strategically competitive -- not to mention a strong defense -- with those types of trends is -- is foolhardy.

MURPHY:

Well, it can -- I know my time's up, but I do -- I thought that President Obama's speech at the State of the Union when he -- when he talked to the American public and looked them in the eye, and he says, when you graduate -- if you drop out of high school, you're not just quitting on yourself, you're quitting on your country. I thought that exactly the right tone, and putting the burden back on not just the teachers, but it starts at home, education. And we need that accountability, that responsibility.

And I yield back the balance of my time. Thank you very much.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

Dr. Snyder?

SNYDER:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wanted to ask -- as you may know, another subcommittee here is doing a study of professional military education -- that's in- residence professional military education.

In fact, General Coleman, I now understand why when I was at the Marine Corps University yesterday I was the only one eating doughnuts, and the Marine officers were not at all.

(LAUGHTER)

It becomes clear to me now.

But I wanted to ask two questions and have you each respond. The first one is regard to faculty at the in-residence PME schools and the second one is regard to students.

The first one is how are faculty selected for the in-residence PME programs, both how they are selected and then what does that mean for them down the line? I won't tell you which service, but we heard from a couple people yesterday that said they were told by all their friends, "Don't take the position." It was a dead end for them to be assigned as a faculty member at one of the schools.

And then second with regard to the students: How are students assigned these schools? And how are decisions then made with regard to what their next assignment -- you know, when and how is that process as far as their next assignment after the school?

General Coleman?

COLEMAN:

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

As far as the faculty, faculty is selected both by the head of our MMOA -- that's the Manpower Management side of it -- in conjunction with the president of the university. So his or her jacket, record jacket, is screened, goes to the school, and the school has say -- the Marine Corps University -- in yes, this -- this person should or should not be a -- be a -- be an instructor.

SNYDER:

But what are the criteria by which you make the decision to send those to the school to be -- to be looked at?

COLEMAN:

Sir -- sir, this is -- this is a -- probably one of the first things would be promotability.

I'll -- I'll use myself as an example. When I was an instructor at our Amphibious Warfare School, which was a company grade school, 12 members of the faculty, seven of us were selected to general officer.

So in the Marine Corps, if you go to be an instructor at a school, you know that you have been selected. Now, to net down whether it means you have all As or all Bs, I don't think we -- we -- we do that. We look at the jacket. We look at IQ. We look at personal appearance. We look at physical fitness. We look at the whole man or whole woman concept.

And then the president of the university still has some say -- maybe not the final say, but he or she does have some say in that -- in that person coming through -- coming through the school.

As far as the students, there's a board that convenes -- just like a promotion board. And I would say for some schools, like our top level schools, your chances of making colonel are better than they are at getting selected to school. So it's a -- it's a hard -- a hard nut to crack from -- from -- from where I sit, sir.

<FERGUSON>:

From the student perspective, when naval officers go through -- I'll speak about the unrestricted line.

When they go through their screening boards at the 05 and the 06 level, generally, if you're in the upper half of the group that screens, and you're assigned a code that makes you eligible to go to a senior war college. And then the distribution process will allocate those among National Defense University, the War College, the various seats that we have to fill.

So for an unrestricted line, they're screened by a board and then assigned a code. It generally represents the top half.

We're driven in those pay grades primarily by command opportunities. And so we don't ascend them right away. It's adjusted based upon when their command tour is of a fighter squadron, let's say, or submarine or a surface shift.

With regard to the faculty, the faculty are generally senior officers 06 at the Naval War College who've had prior master degrees. Most have had a prior tour. But they're nominated by the bureau personnel to the president of the War College for selection.

ROCHELLE:

Army's procedures are not terribly dissimilar from those of the Marine Corps and the Navy, of the sea services.

However, for our intermediate level education, I believe you know, sir, that that is universal -- universally offered to all officers at a certain grade level. Whether it's done in residence at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, which is our flagship intermediate level education institution, or whether it's done in a distributed fashion at one of several installations across the -- across the United States where you can get the same level of training and education, but it is broken up into segments, and it -- some of it is done via distance learning. It is universal intermediate level education.

Your question about faculty -- make no mistake about it, the Army is challenged right now to ensure that we have the very best faculty in place in our institutions of higher learning and training. The demand for that very best talent from theater and elsewhere around the globe is enormous.

However, having said that, as my fellow witnesses have stated, the leaders of each of these institutions has a voice in whether or not an officer is acceptable to be on the platform. Let me go to the -- to the next level, the Army War College.

First of all, for that level of education and training, the capstone if you will for most officers, that is a board selection process: best qualified. The availability of the officer to attend, however, is somewhat impacted by the level of demand on the Army today.

And one final point, if I may return to the intermediate level education. Two years ago, we launched a pilot program, which I coined the phrase "Leader Development Assignment Panel." The Leader Development Assignment Panel was designed to take a look at are we, in fact, sending our very best and our brightest to our intermediate level education in-resident training? With a view toward, where I think your question is -- is heading, with a view toward are we making the appropriate investments for the future, for the next global war on terror or down range?

And for two years we've received very, very positive feedback from the panel members. And we have adjusted -- we have indeed adjusted as a result of those pilots -- we will do another one, a third one this year -- whether individuals are sent to fellowships, whether they are offered an opportunity for a graduate level education or the resident intermediate level education, all of the above are on the table.

NEWTON:

Sir, just briefly, similar process in terms of selection, both for our faculty and our students.

Our faculty are -- first we look at their professional credentials as well as their academic credentials, and also their desire to serve as instructors, particularly at our Air War College and Air Command and Staff College.

I can also tell you from a student selection standpoint, those for intermediate development education or senior officer development education, again, those are board results. We take generally our 15 -- top 15 to top 25 percent. The actual selection and where they attend school could be at Air Command and Staff

College or Army Command and Staff, and so forth. I actually chair that board every fall and identify which students will go to what particular development education from that point on.

But it's, again, it's one that we put a lot of attention to, because as we are trying to not only develop in them certain professional qualities, it's also how they go about in their strategic thinking. How are they beginning, again, now to become those strategic thinkers and those strategic leaders as early on as we possibly can to impact their professional development?

COLEMAN:

Can I add one more thing, sir, please?

And I should've started off with this. If you're not what we call PME complete, so if you haven't -- if you haven't attended or haven't completed the schooling for your grade, then you do not get promoted.

SNYDER:

Thank you.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

Mr. Loeb sack?

LOEBSACK:

Thank you, madam chair.

Thanks to all of you for being here.

And also in particular, General Rochelle and General Coleman. It's my third year in Congress, and I've gotten to know you some, and I'm going to miss you. But hopefully I'll see you in other contexts in the future.

Just to follow up on some of the earlier comments that were made and questions asked. Well, while Mr. Murphy is out with the baseball team preparing for the big game in June, I normally go -- go out running. And I go over by the Armory, go out into the RFK parking lot along the river there, and I cross over the Anacostia and go into the park on many days. And I see a lot of -- lot of the folks, you know, from the services who are, you know, over there working out, doing their tests, running, that sort of thing.

And I -- I, you know, I wish I could stop and talk to them and encourage them to continue to do it and all the rest, but of course they're running and I'm running, and that's not possible. But I think it's -- it's -- it's absolutely fantastic. And I think if we take kind of a lifelong approach to this, too, I think that's really the way to do this.

Also, on the education front and the high school dropout issue, there are at least two of us on this subcommittee who are on the Education and Labor Committee. And the dropout factor rate problem is a huge one across the country at high schools where there are disproportionate numbers of folks who drop out and don't graduate. And we're trying to address that on the committee.

I actually have legislation myself trying to deal with that issue as well. So we're going to continue along those lines, and that's where we can cross over as far as committees are concerned, I think.

But along those lines, what if anything is being done by services as far as encouraging -- I mean, it's a problem -- but encouraging folks to stay in school and helping folks to get their high schools degrees?

COLEMAN:

For us, sir, that's a recruiting tool. And we look at every Marine as a recruiter.

But as our recruiters visit schools, I think that's the best way we can -- we can do it. And I would say that most Marines would never pass up a chance to go speak to a school or to children in any -- in any part or any fashion. But it's one of those things that you have to be accessible, and they have to allow you in it. But I think that's the key.

LOEBSACK:

When the recruiters -- if I might follow up -- when the recruiters go to a high schools, they also then obviously encourage students to stay in school and -- and, you know, for a variety of reasons they can praise that, of course. But is that something they do as well?

COLEMAN:

Yes, sir. And that -- that service and also DOD directed because of the propensity of a high school grad to do well in the service and stay. So, yes, sir.

<FERGUSON>:

Some of the other services -- the Navy NJROTC program in the high schools. We have 75,000 students. Most are diverse and in lower privilege areas. But when they complete through to graduation, 65 percent go on to higher education, and 45 percent come into the service.

That is a real strong program for us, and we have over 600 units around the country.

ROCHELLE:

Sir, I'd add one thing that we're very proud of.

First of all, every -- every soldier encourages young people, whether it's in his or her community or on a military installation in the high school resident on that installation, encourages young people to stay in school. And that's especially true of Army recruiters as well.

But since we are at such an epidemic state on this, and you obviously know quite well that it's -- it's epidemic, the Army has launched an Army Prep School at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. And the Army Prep School is our effort, with DOD support -- I recall having several conversations with Dr. David Chu about this, and he was very supportive.

But as a result of those efforts, in 2009, 1,500 -- almost 1,600 young persons who would not have received a high school diploma did so through the Army Prep School. Now, it is a -- it's an equivalent today. But working with the governor of South Carolina, we expect that before the end of fiscal '09, it will indeed be a certified high school diploma.

That's a small effort. But it is -- it is a start.

LOEBSACK:

Thank you.

NEWTON:

Sir, just as a -- as a short follow-up, we also see our airmen as role models in whatever communities they serve.

There's a Total Force aspect of that from those who are serving in active duty, but Guard and Reserve as well almost see that as a responsibility that they have as wearing the uniform.

I would also add that it's not just the student themselves, but to go after the influencers in communities. And that could be found in the school. It could be found in a variety of organizations throughout.

The last point I would raise in terms of the challenges that we have with regard to recruiting whereby perhaps we focused on -- on high school, 11th to 12th grade, perhaps we are now being compelled and -- to again reach into lower grades as well to begin -- because of the challenges that we've already discussed here.

LOEBSACK:

Well, thank you all.

Yes, sir?

ROCHELLE:

Sir, may I -- may I please edit numbers? I -- the 1,600 are the numbers who are entered into the program. The number of graduates is 1,376.

LOEBSACK:

Thank you.

ROCHELLE:

Thank you.

LOEBSACK:

And, Madam Chair, if I could, I'd like to submit a question for the record also on access to family services, especially for the reserve component, OK?

DAVIS:

All right. Thank you.

LOEBSACK:

Thank you all.

DAVIS:

Ms. Tsongas?

TSONGAS (OFF-MIKE):

(Inaudible)

(LAUGHTER)

Thank you very much for your testimony. I would love to hear more at some other time about (inaudible). Is it South Carolina specific?

ROCHELLE:

Yes, ma'am it is, because of the support from the governor of South Carolina.

WILSON:

But students are across -- from across the country?

ROCHELLE:

That's correct. I beg your pardon. I didn't understand that was your question. They are across -- from across the country.

(OFF-MIKE)

TSONGAS:

(Inaudible) General Rochelle and General Coleman.

... you hear me? Now, OK, now it's better.

General Casey mentioned at the Army posture hearing last week that we can expect the operational tempo to increase through fiscal year '09 and into '10. This is despite the fact that both the Army and the Marine Corps are projected to achieve their programmed end strength increases by the end of this fiscal year.

How soon can we see a reduction in the operational tempo and an increase in dwell time for Army and Marine Corps combat and support units?

ROCHELLE:

First of all, let -- thank you for your question, ma'am. And let me -- let me elaborate on what the chief said and say it in the way that I would articulate it.

Before we see a net reduction in demand, we are probably looking at 12 months to 18 months into the future. And that's if everything goes according to plan with responsible drawdown in Iraq and buildup to some level -- acceptable level of forces in Afghanistan.

It's a little bit like an analogy, if I may, of having an aircraft carrier battle group replace an aircraft carrier group in the middle of the Pacific. For a period of time, the chief of naval operations has two equivalents of battle groups tied up that he can't do anything with until one recovers -- the one being relieved recovers. It's no different for a brigade combat team. It's no different for a combat aviation brigade replacing another combat aviation brigade.

If that demand eventually at the end of 12-18 months does begin to diminish, and we see a net reduction -- and, by the way, history suggests that demand continues to rise. Yesterday in testimony in the other body, I used the analogy if the past is indeed prologue, then we may be headed for trouble.

But, optimism -- if we see the demand reduced, then we will be able to see also an equivalent reduction in the current dwell time, which for the active army is one year deployed for every 1.3 years at home. That's unsustainable -- completely unsustainable.

For the Army Reserve and National Guard, the dwell is one year deployed for less than three years at home. Even at the rate for a -- at that rate, for an operational reserve, that's way too high.

So the answer -- long answer to your question: 12-18 months from now if all goes according to plan.

TSONGAS:

And let's assume that, for a moment, that things don't go according to a plan and, in fact, there's a need for increased -- overall increases. What kind of planning and thinking is taking place to respond to that?

ROCHELLE:

We are actively considering -- and this is a discussion we're having inside the Army at this point and will soon have at the Department of Defense level -- we're actively considering whether or not in order to mitigate the risk that you're articulating, ma'am, if we shouldn't look at other means of having a temporary wartime allowance. But that's internal discussion at this point.

TSONGAS:

General Coleman?

COLEMAN:

Yes, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am.

At this time, with our -- with our group, we have seen improvement in our dwell time. Our average, overall average now, where it was -- and unlike the Army, the Marine Corps is seven months out, seven months back. And our goal is 3:1.

We're -- we started off -- we're at 1:1.8. We're now at 1:2.4. So almost two-and-a-half of cycle back. With the drawdown in Iraq, with the increase of a -- of our -- to our 202K, I would suggest to you that during -- during fiscal year '10 we would conceivably get to where -- to where we want to be.

But, again, as General Rochelle says, that's contingent upon things coming down out of Iraq in a way we think, and things depending on what happens in Afghanistan. But I -- but we have seen an increase in our dwell time.

TSONGAS:

Thank you.

I think my time has run out. Thank you.

DAVIS:

Thank you very much.

Ms. Bordallo?

BORDALLO:

Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman.

And good afternoon to all our witnesses.

I would like to ask you General Rochelle, or Ms. McGinn, a question about the Army National Guard's end strength. I represent Guam, where the National Guard and Reserve personnel outnumber per capita any state in our nation. And our ranking member, Mr. Wilson, will attest to that because we attended a ceremony where these records were revealed.

The Guard is authorized for an end strength of 352,600 according to your reports here but is currently at an end strength of over 368,000. Given that the Commission on the National Guard and Reservists indicated that the National Guard is a highly cost effective means of national defense and that the National Guard has demonstrated through innovative means that it can meet end strength goals, can you describe the benefits of permanently increasing the National Guard's end strength to 371,000? And I want to also add to that, keeping in mind that they have a domestic role to play.

Ms. McGinn?

MCGINN:

I think that's a good question.

General Rochelle may have a better answer, but I think I would need to consult with my colleagues back at home to give you that for the record so that I can give you a thoughtful response to it.

BORDALLO:

Thank you.

General?

ROCHELLE:

It's a very good question.

First of all, let me say that the Army National Guard -- and I know it's true for the Air National Guard as well -- is an extraordinary force, more so today than ever in the past, because it has migrated from the strategic reserve context to a much more relevant context, that of an operational reserve. And we are asking a great deal of our Army National Guard and Air National Guard soldiers, airmen and leaders.

However, an operational reserve -- first of all, let me say that 358,200, which is the current authorization, is sufficient in my estimation to cover down on both operational reserve demands in the global war on terror today as well as to address the needs of governors across the -- across the United States and Guam.

Whether or not we would -- it would be efficacious to grow the Guard beyond that should be based upon operational demands, either -- and in the state or operational -- an increased demand that we see for forces, Army forces and Air forces, in the current environment. And I think it would be a prudent move at that -- with that to look at it strictly from the perspective of the demand for those forces. There -- there remains some reshaping that we may need to look at for the Guard in terms of structure, what's in -- in those forces at 358,200.

But I'd like to conclude by simply echoing once again Lieutenant General Clyde Vaughn, who you may know -- great, great leader who will retire on the first of June -- is both my next-door neighbor and dear, dear friend. And he deserves many of the same accolades that the chairwoman and others have bestowed upon General Coleman and myself. Our Guard, the Army Guard in particular, is awesome.

BORDALLO:

If I could just add to that. What are the potential benefits of creating a trainees or holdees and students account for the Guam National Guard?

ROCHELLE:

Actually, I would -- I would expand the -- my answer to your question.

Creating a TTHS account for the Guard and the Army Reserve would be a very prudent move. Very prudent.

BORDALLO:

Very good.

And one other question, Madam Chair, just a short question. I think Ms. McGinn would probably be the best to answer this. This is for my own information.

What are the percentages of members of the military personnel -- now, this is the active military personnel -- who continue in the military service, make it a career, as opposed to those who leave the military service? Do you have any numbers? And that would include all the branches.

MCGINN:

I think it would vary by branch.

The Marine Corps has had -- and General Coleman could speak to this -- Marine Corps has had higher turnover of first-year Marine -- or, first-term Marines than the other services. And so I think that we'd have to get you those numbers by -- by branch.

BORDALLO:

Good. I would appreciate that. And I -- I don't want to go into all the branches here, but just overall what the retention is.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

I want to turn to a discussion about those service members who are unavailable to deploy -- we call them non-deployables -- but who are not able to deploy with their units for whatever reason. General Chiarelli mentioned recently -- the general Army vice chief of staff -- that the number of Army service members who are non-deployable has become a burden on the force that threatens the Army's ability to deploy units to required levels -- to fill deploying units to required levels and to achieve its objectives to reduce operation tempo and increase dwell time between deployments.

It sounds like that active, non-deployable population is around 27,000 -- is that correct? -- as of April 2009. And I wonder, General Rochelle, if you could comment, then. Given this current number, was the Army forced to give up the brigade combat teams going from 48 to 45 as a result of that? Is that at play here, that the additional end strength for manning those levels couldn't be achieved at the higher level?

Where -- where does that come into play? I mean, obviously the shift from 48 to 45 BCTs has an impact in a number of ways for the ability to carry on the operations.

ROCHELLE:

An excellent question, Madam Chair.

And let me say at the very outset that the move from -- or the shift from 48 to 45 brigade combat teams, as has been testified in the past by both the secretary of the Army and the chief of staff of the Army, and I think the vice chief as well, was intended to give us the ability to thicken our forces. In other words, we weren't chasing those -- that additional structure with -- or inside a 547.4 end strength, which would've stretched us even a little bit more.

So it was a -- it was a prudent move. But it remains to be seen over time relative to demand.

To your specific question, 26,936 non-deployables, temporary as well as permanent non-deployables, were indeed reported through our unit status reporting process in the month of April. On any given -- and I want to emphasize that it's a moving target. A soldier who is non-deployable for a temporary reason this week may be fully deployable next week, and vice versa. So it's -- it moves fairly substantially.

But I'll bring it into focus at the brigade combat team level. The Army G-1 tracks through rib (ph) attachment reporting for our next-to-deploy brigades what the non-deployable rate is inside that brigade. Frankly, because it's a measure of how -- of whether or not we're going to meet our very, very critical gates in terms of operational manning for that deploying unit.

And we are committed to ensuring that deploy, as I said in my oral statement, the best trained, the best equipped and the best led. And that includes the best manned.

The last 14 brigade combat teams, as we looked at their average non-deployables, averaged 11 percent. Which is up, I might add, from over a year ago prior to the surge, where non-deployable rates were trending between 8 percent and 10 percent. As we look at the most recent brigades -- five -- to deploy, of that 11, we saw an uptick to 12 percent.

Now, that's -- that's somewhat alarming for two reasons. I think it -- it illustrates the cumulative effect of seven-plus years of war. It represents the impacts of too-short dwell: 1.3 years at home for every one year deployed. And it is cumulative. And we're learning, we're gaining some tremendous insights as a result of that.

To your questions, however we are able to deploy today the best trained, the best manned, the best equipped and the best led soldiers downrange to do the nation's bidding. My concern would be if we -- back to the question of risk in terms of the future -- my concern would be if we cannot bring that dwell down, then we will begin to see other problems in addition to the ability to meet the manning levels.

DAVIS:

Others? General Newton, would you like to comment on that?

NEWTON:

Other than the fact that, again, we try to focus on our expedition Air Force and our expedition airmen to make sure that their contribution to the fight that they're ready, they're trained for whatever the joint war fight may take us well.

DAVIS:

Admiral <Ferguson>, or General?

<FERGUSON>:

The Navy population of limited duty or medically not able to deploy is relatively small, roughly in the 2 percent to 4 percent range in the enlisted force. So it's not a significant problem. And our Safe Harbor wounded warrior program has about 400 individuals, for example. So for us it's not as significant an issue.

DAVIS:

General Coleman?

COLEMAN:

Yes, ma'am. For us the non-deployables -- and we have, and I would believe that all the services have what we call P2-T2 and that's the training and transient, patients and prisoners. So once you -- and that's an everyday occurrence, and every day that -- that -- that changes.

But when you take that away, and you're talking about combat units deploying, the Marine Corps will not deploy a unit. Infantry battalions deploy at 100 percent, so we are -- now, what that means is that a unit deploying has 100 percent, but the unit back home may not be at 100 percent because we stole from Peter to pay Paul.

DAVIS:

And I guess we end up with more individual augmentees as a result of that, too, which creates some additional problems. Is that correct?

COLEMAN:

Not in infantry battalions, ma'am. We -- we...

DAVIS:

Not...

COLEMAN:

... when you go -- when you go to infantry battalion, you have -- for the Marine Corps anyway -- we have a six-month buildup. So when you deploy, you've been with that unit for six months before they deploy.

DAVIS:

OK. Thank you.

ROCHELLE:

In our case, because we are committed to eliminating stop loss, the challenges I just articulated makes the mountain that we have to climb just a little bit higher.

DAVIS:

OK. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson?

WILSON:

Actually, the brigade combat teams question, the number reduced from 48 to 45, was my interest. So I appreciate that that's been discussed.

And so I would be happy to defer to Dr. Fleming.

DAVIS:

Dr. Fleming?

FLEMING:

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Well, first of all let me say that I thank you for being here today to testify. And on the issue of personnel, that is in my opinion, and I think the committee as a whole, to be the most important asset that we have in armed services. So I appreciate your focus on that.

More specifically, Ms. Guinn (sic), in your testimony you mentioned that DOD is looking at altering the meritorious award system, medals, based on the new realities of the war on terror. Can you elaborate on that some?

MCGINN:

Yes. As a result of action from the Congress, we have new medals now for the Iraqi Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, and the like.

And so what we have been doing is systematically going through our records of and policies for awards of medals and meritorious citations. And we're updating our policies on that to reflect the new kinds of decorations that we have for now.

FLEMING:

Right. Thank you.

(OFF-MIKE)

Oh, good question. Is there any change in the Valor award criteria?

MCGINN:

That I don't know. I'll have to get back to you.

FLEMING:

Anyone else on the panel have any input?

ROCHELLE:

Sir, let me comment on that, if I may.

I was a member of the panel -- a member of the board, if you will -- working that issue in Department of Defense. And almost unanimously -- I believe it was not unanimous -- but I want to mention something here that I think is very important. Each of the service senior enlisted advisors were present on this matter of valorous awards. And to a person, they felt that we should not change the valorous award criteria -- and I concurred with that and supported it -- while we are in our current conflict.

FLEMING:

OK.

I'll ask a totally unrelated question. You know, there's been this problem or issue with two wars that have gone on longer than we would've liked at levels that are more intense than we would like. I'd love to hear from the panel, whoever would like to step up on this one, what is the sustainability of that? You know, we have a very active Reserve -- they're not a reserve Reserve in the classic sense any longer. And some people who've been in the Reserves have had several deployments, have been more active duty than they have not active duty.

So I'd love to hear comments from the panel on this.

MCGINN:

Can I just say that if you look at the retention statistics from the services, where just about every retention goal has been met, it tells you that the all-volunteer force is working. The Gates Commission that was the commission that recommended the all-volunteer force had predicted that in a time of prolonged conflict it wouldn't stand up. But it is doing very, very well thanks to the work of my colleagues here.

And thanks to your help, because what's very critical are the bonuses and the funding for recruiting and retention that -- and so we're sustaining very well at this point.

FLEMING:

Yes, I -- go ahead.

NEWTON:

Sir, if I may, just to briefly chime in. I -- it is certainly a Total Force effort, not only for, you know, from an active duty Guard and Reserve standpoint but also the aspect of how we as the United States Air Force contribute to that joint fight.

I would also mention to you that for 2009, we've dedicated it a Year of the Air Force Family. And the reason I say that is because, you know, the balance of effort and resources and so forth is -- it's important to us not only on our men and women in uniform, regardless of active duty Guard and Reserve, but also our family members as well that we emphasize their value, their service and their commitment.

FLEMING:

Anyone else?

ROCHELLE:

Sir, for the Army it's about dwell. It's -- it's the whether or not we will have the ability, as predicted, to have a slightly less demand or a substantially less demand that would allow us to get to the optimum levels of dwell, -- time home for time -- against time deployed, for the active component as well as the Army Reserve -- Army Reserve and National Guard components.

And the current level, as I said earlier in my testimony, the current levels of dwell are unsustainable.

FLEMING:

OK.

Yes, sir.

<FERGUSON>:

In our survey data of members and their families throughout the conflict, what we've seen is that the support of the Congress in terms of the compensation, health care is extremely important and access to it, the family support programs.

We have had to expand our own health care programs' providers as well as well as family support programs, and that's been the biggest ability that we've demonstrated, I think, to support families and has kept morale high.

COLEMAN:

Thank you, sir. Sir, I would say that for the Marine Corps, we are doing extremely well.

Our reenlistments rates are higher amongst those Marines that deploy than those that do not deploy -- that deploy, excuse me. I believe our families, thanks to you all, our families are being taken care of much better than ever before. And as importantly, the American people support the military to a higher degree.

MCGINN:

Can I throw one more thing into the mix?

When -- with the things that we're doing now, it's really a new initiative, is building a civilian expeditionary workforce so that our civilian employees can step up to do some of the missions that our military personnel have to do right now, particularly in the Phase IV post-conflict operations, stability operations, humanitarian missions. We are asking civilians who would be willing to come forward and volunteer to be sent on those kinds of assignments to identify themselves. And we have a few thousand in the mix.

And it's a brand new initiative. So, very small right now, but hopefully it will pay off in the future.

FLEMING:

Madam Chairman, if I could just close the loop on this very quickly.

Let me say that a all-volunteer force is an expensive force, but I think it's a great investment.

I think it's worth every penny of it. My understanding is that the active duty member today is likely to have a family, as opposed to in previous years. And it would be my sense that they can perform much longer overseas in harder conditions if they know their families are well taken care of, which I think is such a high priority today.

And so I thank you in your efforts in doing this.

I yield back. Thank you.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

Ms. Tsongas, to question?

TSONGAS:

I hate to pick on you, General Rochelle, but since you mentioned stop loss, I just am curious, again, do you think that you could achieve the timetable that's in place? And is it subject, really, to the dynamic of how we are able to bring down soldiers in order to responds to the needs in Afghanistan?

ROCHELLE:

It is -- it cannot be done in isolation from the challenges of -- of deployers, non-deployers, et cetera. It -- it exacerbates the challenge.

But we can do it. We can absolutely do it. But we will -- we will be challenged.

TSONGAS:

So the timetable, you still feel confident, or...

ROCHELLE:

I do.

TSONGAS:

You do.

And then the follow-up question is, in terms of the sustainability and the issue of dwell time being so key, General Chiarelli, I think, recently testified of the enormous mental strains that are currently -- that our soldiers are currently experiencing, and the need we have for mental health care professionals, chaplains, and I think he said substance abuse counselors.

So as you face many questions, really, around how quickly you're going to be able to address the issue of dwell time, knowing the great strains that are going to continue to be placed on our soldiers, how -- how are you responding to that in terms of the need for these professionals?

ROCHELLE:

Well, we've actually had much help from the Congress and help, even, from OPM on addressing health care professionals, the ability to do direct hire for civilians, which has helped us a lot in isolated areas -- the ability, if you will, to bypass some of the merit-based hiring practices that are extraordinarily cumbersome.

For the Congress, we've been given the authority to offer very attractive bonuses, and for individuals going through the health professional scholarship program, to offer them additional incentives as well. So we've received support in both.

MCGINN:

Can I jump in on that from the DOD-wide perspective?

We have been aggressively pursuing more mental health providers in our health care system. We actually have since 2007, I think, 1,900 more in our military treatment facilities and about 10,000 more in our contracted TRICARE operation.

We have expanded the number of confidential counseling sessions you can have with our military OneSource, which is also a call-in support line we have for our families. And we've provided for confidential mental health counseling under TRICARE.

Today I think we rolled out a major mental health campaign called "Real Warriors," which is a marketing campaign designed to do away with the stigma of showing up for help if you have a mental health problem, and to reinforce the fact that leaders should encourage their service member subordinates to seek help for that just as they would seek help for anything else. So we've been working very closely with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, established a center of excellence on psychological health and traumatic brain injury. And we've been moving very, very aggressively toward solving the mental health problem.

TSONGAS:

Who'd like to comment?

It seems as though we have made great strides. And I know that Congress wants to be a partner with you but that we just can't seem to keep up with up, that even General Chiarelli said, "I need more, and I don't know where I'm going to get them." So I think it's an ongoing challenge that we all have an obligation to face...

(CROSSTALK)

MCGINN:

It is. It's a national problem in terms of the shortage of mental health provider.

ROCHELLE:

If I may follow up, ma'am.

The one thing we -- one of the things we're learning is that our basis of authorization for mental health providers was designed, if you will, in a Cold War environment. And it's inadequate for what we are facing and what our soldiers are experiencing today.

And I would especially mention the fact that, in addition to what Ms. McGinn, I fully agree with that there is a challenge nationally to grow the mental health providers, health care providers in general, that we need. It's especially acute in our ability to find individuals capable of donning the uniform and providing those services to our soldiers in Afghanistan, at Shirana, and you name the combat outpost.

DAVIS:

Thank you, Ms. Tsongas.

And it's really interesting, because I think that almost every discussion that we have lately we turn full -- full toward -- full way, really, towards mental health issues. I mean, we end up talking about them. We will be having a hearing solely on mental health issues -- PTSD, TBI, really the -- and the impacts on family as well, because we want to highlight those issues, and we know it's critical.

I'm delighted to hear about the program that's being unveiled. And we know that the issue of stigma is an important and a critical one.

I wanted to turn quickly, Ms. McGinn, to an issue that is going to, you know, hit us in the face here pretty soon. And we are seeing the first concurrent receipt legislative proposal offered by the administration. And it is a very welcome shift. I think we all feel that way in the current receipt landscape, which will really set a precedent for future initiatives.

It does provide -- the president's budget request does provide sufficient mandatory offsets to support the legislative proposal. But none of those offsets are within the Defense accounts and therefore not within the management reach of the House Committee on Armed Services.

And I'm wondering, Ms. McGinn, what the department's position on the offsets is. And will the department and the Office of Management and Budget assist the committee in identifying some offsets that are most likely to be available for inclusion with the provisions in the National Defense Authorization Bill?

MCGINN:

Well, Madam Chairman, I wasn't part of the conversation around the offsets. So I will have to get back to you on that point and get a good answer for you.

DAVIS:

OK.

What it does is limit our ability to act in some other areas. And while we welcome it, we really are interested in how you all are going to be handling it as well. So that would be of help to us.

I know that there are a number of family initiatives that you have been speaking and are considering. I would like you to just let us know what initiatives that you're really most proud of that will result from a 2010 funding request. What are -- are you hoping that this is new, provides additional services to our families that we might be able to follow and evaluate in the future?

COLEMAN:

Ma'am, I say for us -- unless you were going to Ms. McGinn first?

DAVIS:

No, it's OK. You start. Go ahead.

COLEMAN:

You don't want to pick up on that?

DAVIS:

Go ahead, General.

COLEMAN:

All family ready -- the money that this Congress has allowed us to work with as far as family readiness, it's allowed us to -- to -- to hire folks. Rather than a key volunteer or someone working with and for the families on an all-volunteer basis, we have been able, thanks to you all, to hire folks to do that.

So the funding -- I don't know that there's anything more important than the funding that Congress has given us to take care of our families. Nothing more. And as long as we maintain that -- because a Marine or any service man or woman that deploys and knows that his or her family is taken care of is a much better serviceman or woman.

<FERGUSON>:

I would offer, too, is the important support of the Congress on recruiting and retaining medical personnel -- dental, nurses, medical service corps, mental health practitioners. Those bonuses are very important to us, and to protect those is important.

In terms of the programs for the Navy, we've rolled out what we call the "Operational Stress Control." And we've introduced this training to up 16,000 service members, everyone going in the theater, coming out, and then also expanding it to the whole force. And the budget request supports us expanding that, essentially education awareness of service members and how they react to stress, and be able to remove the stigma that -- I think that's an important program that you'll see from us in the future.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

MCGINN:

I think that a lot of what is in the budget is an expansion of the important things we were already doing, childcare being principal among them, to try to meet the unmet demand for childcare.

There are a couple of things -- obviously there was a litany of them in my testimony -- the spouse career accounts, where we provide funding for spouses to get certification for careers, and we can start to build a career base for our spouses, I think. Spouse employment is incredibly important.

And I also think that the Yellow Ribbon Program, where we reach out to the reserve component upon their deployment and their coming home, working with their families and easing the stress of the deployments for the Reserves is another very important.

ROCHELLE:

I would echo Ms. McGinn's opening comment, which is that much of what you see in the F.Y. '10 budget is a continuation of the wonderful programs that the Congress has authorized us to have and to offer primarily to our families.

I would echo the words of General Creighton Abrams, a former chief of staff of the Army, who said that the Army -- the Army isn't about people, it is people. And that's very, very true. It's perhaps even more true today than it was then, if that's possible.

I would highlight one particular area that's fully funded in the budget that is vital, with those two previous comments in mind. One, and that is the Family Readiness Support Assistants, which the secretary of the Army and the chief of staff of the Army two years ago carved out of existing authorizations and the

existing funded -- funds to resource down to the brigade and battalion level in order to address what they clearly recognized as the fragile of that family readiness in repeated deployments. Once again, dwell being at one year for every 1.3 year back at home, and for our National Guard and Reserve the same.

NEWTON:

Madam Chairwoman, as I mentioned earlier that 2009 is the Year of the Air Force Family. And as we move forward into the F.Y. '10 through '15 budget areas, we are also continuing to make a deep investment in our families.

There is a balance in terms of our men and women in uniform and our civilians, but also our family members as well. As we look on as we -- I believe Dr. Fleming had talked about the ops tempo and so forth, the previous discussion -- the stress on the families is significant. And we are anticipating it to remain significant.

We've taken great steps through the support of this committee in support of resources to narrow down our open child care spaces from over 6,400 nearly down to zero by F.Y. '11 and so forth as we continue to make sure that, again, we take care of what we are mission critical efforts for our Air Force families as well.

And I'll just close on this point, that we hosted a Year of the Family symposium over -- it lasted two or three -- two days, where we looked at a number of initiatives that we're going to follow through, not necessarily just for F.Y. '09 but for the out years as well, from family support and Guard and Reserve support, school support. The challenges that children have on average moving five, six, seven times -- I was an Air Force kid. I moved 13 times in 12 at school, and so forth.

I brought my wife Jody with me today, and she's -- I think we're on our 18th or 19th move. But can you imagine that has on a lot of our -- all the service men and women? That will continue to remain.

Thank you.

DAVIS:

Thank you very much.

And thank you, Jody, for being here. We appreciate it. We know that you sacrifice a great deal and are a great support. And thank you very much for both for being here for being part of this.

Mr. Wilson?

WILSON:

Admiral <Ferguson>, a few minutes ago you mentioned Navy JROTC, and I want to give you a first line report.

Saturday, I went to a -- an awards dinner at Chapin High School, Chapin, South Carolina. There were nearly 400 people there. And Colonel Buddy Slack, Chief Charlie Cooke, the personnel you have there, it was just really uplifting to me. My wife and I were just so impressed by the young people serving, the families. We've known so many of the families over the years, and to see these young people -- what an extraordinary opportunity. And they will have a great future.

On another issue you mentioned was individual augmentees. And I'd like to know what the status in the Navy as to individual augmentees and what the Navy's doing for families that have had individual augmentee deployments.

<FERGUSON>:

That's a great question. Presently there are about 11,000 on the ground in Central Command, Navy personnel. And on any given day, there may be more personnel on the ground than there are at sea in the waters off Iraq.

And so about last October, the chief of naval operations designated a four star, Admiral Greenert down at Fleet Forces Command in Norfolk, to be the lead executive agent for individual augmentee support and family support. We have formed a federated council -- the chief of the Reserves, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Admiral Robinson, Admiral Greenert's deputy, myself, and we form together and look at all the ways to support families and do that.

And so having a four star in charge of that with us as a council to help him has provided that to the families, where we do following; we assign mentors for them; we track them, and provide assistance where we can.

WILSON:

Well, it's really -- and, again, inspiring to me to know the talented people serving in the Navy who have volunteered to serve around the world as sand sailors. Much of them trained at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

<FERGUSON>:

That's correct.

WILSON:

Thank you very much.

<FERGUSON>:

That's correct.

DAVIS:

Thank you.

Before we close -- and I certainly appreciate everybody having been here. I know that members have committees to go to today.

But I -- one of the areas that we speak about often are the critical need areas that we have in the services. And I wondered if you believe that we should open up some ideas about how we might have more commissioned officers who don't necessarily always come from the ranks of citizens that perhaps have green cards, have talents, have abilities that we might look to for help in the services. We have some opportunities with our -- with the Reserves, and also with the enlisted, but not with commissioned officers.

Any thoughts about that, and whether or not that's an area that we ought to -- ought to explore more?

ROCHELLE:

I'd like very much to offer a thought, Madam Chairwoman.

First of all, a little background to get to your question. Several years ago when I was the CG of Recruiting Command, I was called to the Pentagon and asked if we could launch a program to recruit Middle-Eastern-born individuals, primarily in Dearborn, Michigan, area, which was where it began. That program was -- is called, and it still exists, the Zero Nine Lima Interpreter Program.

It broke the mold a little bit, because these indeed -- these indeed are citizens in many cases, but they were unable to pass the standard Army -- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. A few years later -- last year to be precise, fiscal '08, if my memory serves correctly -- we launched the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest program -- in fact, it may have only been this year, this fiscal year -- which was targeted toward green card holders who are not -- I beg your pardon, which targeted to visa holders -- toward visa holders.

And what we saw is that we were able to attract a much better educated individual -- nothing wrong with the Zero Nine Lima Interpreters, but we opened up a whole new vista. And that program has proved very, very fruitful for the Army. I've not tracked so closely the other services' accessions in it.

To your specific question, I believe because of the challenges we face, of which we've talked about today, many in terms of health care professionals, scientists and individuals with very highly specialized skills, that it is time to ask the difficult question: Should we indeed change Title 10 United States Code to

allow us to commission individuals in a military accessions in skills vital to national interest style? I believe it is.

DAVIS:

Anybody else want to comment on that? Well, it's a discussion, perhaps, that we need to have in the future. And I appreciate the fact that sometimes when one is retiring you can bring up some issues that...

(LAUGHTER)

NEWTON:

Not retired yet.

DAVIS:

Might've been tougher earlier on, but...

ROCHELLE:

No, Ms. McGinn just said my opinion hasn't changed.

DAVIS:

Hasn't changed. It's been there. Right. Well, I appreciate that.

And we always really encourage people to speak out on issues which may not always be easy but have certainly some merit as we move forward, because people are critical. And being able to reach out and really engage Americans, people who are in our country productive and contributing, is always an important issue for us.

And so I want to thank you very much again.

General Coleman and General Rochelle, thank you for your dedicated service. We will miss you at these hearings, but we wish you well.

And thank you to all of you for being here.

ROCHELLE:

Thank you once again for your very kind comments, Madam Chairwoman.

DAVIS:

The meeting's adjourned.

CQ Transcriptions, May 21, 2009

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## List of Panel Members and Witnesses

### PANEL MEMBERS:

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REP. VIC SNYDER, D-ARK.

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MARINE CORPS LT. GEN. RONALD COLEMAN, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS

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