

**HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY IN REVIEW OF  
THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST  
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009 AND THE FUTURE  
YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM**

**Tuesday, February 26, 2008**

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, Hon. Carl Levin, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Members Present: Senators Levin [presiding], Kennedy, Lieberman, Reed, Akaka, Bill Nelson, Ben Nelson, Webb, McCaskill, Inhofe, Sessions, Collins, Chambliss, Graham, and Thune.

Committee staff members present: Richard D. DeBobes, Staff Director, and Leah C. Brewer, Nominations and Hearings Clerk.

Majority staff members present: Michael J. Kuiken, Professional Staff Member, Gerald J. Leeling, Counsel, Thomas K. McConnell, Professional Staff Member, Michael J. McCord, Professional Staff Member, Michael J. Noblet, Professional Staff Member, and William K. Sutey, Professional Staff Member.

Minority staff members present: Michael V. Kostiw, Republican Staff Director, William M. Caniano, Professional Staff Member, David G. Collins, Research assistant, Gregory T. Kiley, Professional Staff Member, David M. Morriss, Minority Counsel, Lucian L. Niemeyer, Professional Staff Member, Diana G. Tabler, Professional Staff Member, and Richard F. Walsh, Minority Counsel.

Staff assistants present: Fletcher L. Cork, Ali Z. Pasha, and Brian F. Sebold.

Committee members' assistants present: Bethany Bassett, assistant to Senator Kennedy, Jay Maroney, assistant to Senator Kennedy, Frederick M. Downey, assistant to Senator Lieberman, Elizabeth King, assistant to Senator Reed, Christopher Caple, assistant to Senator Bill Nelson, 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, Todd Stiefler, assistant to Senator Sessions, Mark J. Winter, assistant to Senator Collins, Clyde A. Taylor IV, assistant to Senator Chambliss, Andrew King,

assistant to Senator Graham, Lindsey Neas, assistant to Senator Dole, Brian Polley, assistant to Senator Cornyn, Jason Van Beek, assistant to Senator Thune, and Erskine W. Wells, III, assistant to Senator Wicker.

## OPENING

### STATEMENT OF HON. CARL LEVIN, U.S. SENATOR FROM MICHIGAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody.

Today, Secretary Geren and General Casey testify before the Armed Services Committee on plans and programs of the U.S. Army in review of the fiscal year '09 budget request, the war supplemental request, and the future years defense program.

We last had the Secretary and Chief of Staff update us on the state of the Army a little over 3 months ago, in November. We welcome you both back. We thank you for your service. And, as always, we ask you to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the men and women of the Army and their families, who have given so much of themselves in their service to this Nation in a time of war.

Over the 3 months since Secretary Geren and General Casey last testified, the Army has begun redeploying the surged troops from Iraq, and, according to current plans, will complete that redeployment this summer. However, we're now hearing that General Petraeus will recommend a pause in further redeployments while he assesses the security situation. President Bush's public comments indicate he will follow General Petraeus's recommendations.

This also means that we will continue to have an Army which is way overstretched. The stress on Army forces from—the stress on Army forces from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan continues to build. Our Army troops continue to face multiple tours of 15-month duration, with only 12 months or less at home between rotations. Nine and ten officers, according to a recent survey, say that the war has stretched the military dangerously thin. These levels of deployment without adequate rest for the troops and repair and replacement of equipment simply cannot be sustained.

General Casey has said that, quote, "Today's Army is out of balance," and that "the current demand for our forces exceeds the sustainable supply." Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has echoed those concerns, saying that the ground forces, quote, "remain under tremendous strain."

According to press reports, Admiral Mullen, meeting with Army captains at Fort Sill last year, found that 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, quote, "We have soldiers that have spent more time in combat than World War II. Is there a point where you can say you've served enough?"

The heaviest burden in this war has fallen on the ground forces and on their families. General Casey has said, "We are consuming readiness as fast as we build it." Well, one way or another, we must find a way to bring the Army back in balance.

Other evidence of strain on the Army can be seen in recruiting and retention patterns. In fiscal year 2007, only 79 percent of Army

recruits were high-school-diploma graduates, only 61 percent of new recruits scored above average on the Armed Forces qualification test. So, the 2007—fiscal year '07 represents the fourth consecutive year of decline in one or both of those two indicators.

The Army recruited 3200 category-4 recruits, the lowest acceptable measure of aptitude, which is the DOD maximum of 4 percent in this category; an increase in the number of medical and misconduct waivers being granted—this is fiscal year—in '07—nearly one in five new recruits required a waiver; and more than 50 percent of graduates of the U.S. military academy are separating from the Army as soon as their obligations expire.

The impact of the wars has affected the Army in many ways. In order to sustain the necessary readiness level in our deployed forces, the readiness of our nondeployed forces has steadily declined. Equipment and people are worn out. Multiple deployments and extended deployments result in higher rates of mental health problems for our soldiers, and also takes a toll on their families. The number of wounded and injured soldiers in our Warrior Transition Units continues to climb. Most 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 substantially increased risks, should those forces be required to respond to other requirements of the National military strategy. The surge of additional forces to Iraq last year put even more pressure on an already strained readiness situation. Subjecting this Nation to that degree of risk is unacceptable.

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 so doing, we must not fail to capture the lessons learned since the end of the cold war, and apply them to building that force of the future.

Although it appeared somewhat fashionable to question the relevance of ground forces prior to 9/11, 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 in counterinsurgency operations of the last few years. The answer is not one mission or the other; the Army must be prepared to do both and everything in between.

The reality right now and for the foreseeable future is that soldiers need to be warriors at sometimes, then, at other times, need to be acting as builders, city managers, humanitarian relief workers, and dispute arbitrators. Given the post-surge level of 15 Army brigade combat teams and supporting troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, Army officials have been telling members and staff that the Army will need \$260- to \$270 billion a year through fiscal year 2011 in order to meet its requirements.

The 2009 base budget request provides the Army with \$140 billion. The Department of Defense requested 70 billion in bridge supplemental funding. In an answer to a question at the DOD posture

hearing, Secretary Gates said that the best guess, at the moment, is that the remainder of the '09 supplemental would be about \$100 billion. That means that the Army will have to receive \$120- to \$130 billion, out of a \$170-billion '09 supplemental total, to meet its annual requirement of the \$260- to \$270 billion. That would be somewhat doubtful; in which case, we need to understand, fully, the implications for the Army. We need to understand what needs to be done to ensure an Army that is ready for all its potential missions, both today and in the future. The Army and the Congress owe nothing less to the soldiers, their families, and the American people.

Senator Inhofe?

**STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE, U.S. SENATOR FROM OKLAHOMA**

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The—and I agree with all of the problems that are there—the—it wasn't as if we didn't see 'em coming. We are very proud of the Army. I remember when Senator Akaka and I were in the—on the House side, we were active in the House Caucus—Army Caucus, and there wasn't one over here, so we started one here. And I think that people are more aware now than they ever have been anytime in the history about the significance of the Army. And with all the problems that the chairman mentioned, I can't think of two people that are in a better position to handle those problems than General Casey and Secretary Geren. So, I appreciate your dedication.

I can remember, back in the '90s, when the drawdown was taking place, and I was chairman, at that time, of the Readiness Subcommittee. And, I remember, several times, going to the floor and talking about the fact that this is all fine, and—assuming that we don't have any real serious problems coming up. But, you know, guess what happened? We have serious problems. And all of that happened at a time it couldn't have been worse; it was when we were at our all-time low, after we had drawn down from 18 to 10 divisions. And so, we're demanding more and more, and I look at this in—at the big picture, and think, you know, we've just got to rebuild, that's all. The timing couldn't have been worse. I—every time I go over there, I'm more and more proud of this all-volunteer service. I was a product of the draft, and it took me quite a number of years to realize that the quality is so good now that—and these young people, men and women, are, just, doing a great job. I'm also real proud that we have 2,600 of the Oklahoma 45th deployed over there right now. I recall, on their last deployment, that they were active in training the ANA, in Afghanistan, to train their own military.

So, they're all doing a great job, and the—most of the problems, frankly, are on this side of the table; and so, we're going to have to do the—I often say that you're doing a great job with the hand you're dealt, but you need to be dealt a better hand. Hopefully, we can do that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Inhofe.  
Secretary Geren?

Let me, before you start, alert everybody—I think we know it up here, but, for you folks out there, including our witnesses, we have five roll-call votes stacked. We—basically, what we call “back-to-back”—starting in about 10:20 or 10:15, we believe. And we’re going to try to continue to go right through those votes somehow, but there may be a number of interruptions and adjournments that we’re going to have to call, at the call of the Chair, during the question period.

Secretary Geren?

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

Mr. Geren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Inhofe, and members of the committee. It’s an honor for General Casey and me to appear before you today to discuss our Nation’s Army, an Army that’s been built by the partnership between our Army, led by our Commander in Chief, and this Congress. It’s a partnership older than our Constitution, and affirmed by it.

The President’s budget for 2009 is before the Congress, \$141 billion for our Army. As is always the case, the Army’s budget is mostly about people, and operations and maintenance to support people. The personnel and O&M budget makes up two-thirds of our Army budget.

Creighton Abrams reminded us often, people are not in the Army, people are the Army. And the Army budget reflects that reality.

Today, we are an Army long at war, in our seventh year in Afghanistan; next month, March, will be five years in Iraq. This is the third-longest war in American history, behind the Revolutionary War and the Vietnam war, and it is the longest war we’ve ever fought with an All-Volunteer Force.

Our Army is stretched by the demands of this long war, but it remains an extraordinary Army. It’s the best-led, best-equipped, and best-trained Army we have ever put in the field, with Army families standing with their soldiers as those soldiers serve and reenlist. It’s an Army of volunteers—volunteer soldiers and volunteer families.

We currently have 250,000 soldiers deployed to 80 countries around the world, with over 140,000 deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq. Our 140,000 soldiers in harm’s way are our top priority, and we will never take our eye off of that ball. This budget and our supplementals ensure that our soldiers have what they need when they need it.

And today and over the last 6 years, our Reserve component, Guard and Reserves, have carried a heavy load for our Nation. Since 9/11, we have activated 184,000 reservists and 270,000 guardsmen in support of the global war on terror, and they’ve answered the call for Katrina, Rita, other storms, for forest fires, brush fires, other domestic crises, and they are in support of operations on our Nation’s border.

And we are one Army. The Active component cannot go to war without the Reserve component. The challenge before us, and addressed in this budget, is our continuing effort to transform the Reserve component into an operational Reserve, match the orga-

nizing, training, and equipping with the reality of the role of today's Guard and Reserves. This budget continues the steady investment in new equipment in our Reserve component.

Although we will not complete the recapitalization of the National Guard until 2015—we are not where we need to be, but it's important to acknowledge the progress that has been made in equipping our Guard.

Looking at just a few pacer items:

In 2001, the Guard had 290 FMTV trucks; today, the Guard has over 9,000. In 2001, 41,000 SINGARS radios; today, over 82,000. Night-vision goggles, in 2001, 53,000; today, nearly 120,000. And this budget includes \$5.6 billion for Guard equipment and \$1.4 billion for the Reserves. And over the next 24 months, \$17 billion worth of equipment will flow to the Guard, over 400,000 items over the next 2 years.

And the strength of our Army—Active, Guard, and Reserve—comes from the strength of Army families. Our Army families are standing with their soldier loved ones, but this long war is taking a toll. We owe our families a quality of life that equals the quality of their service.

Over half of our soldiers are married, with over 700,000 children in Army families. Today, nearly half—48 percent—of all soldiers who go to theater leave behind a—children aged 2 or under. When a married soldier deploys, he or she leaves a single-parent household behind, and all the challenges of that family dynamic. When a single parent deploys, he or she leaves behind a child in the care of others.

In our 2009 budget, we are doubling funding for family programs. We're adding 26 new child development centers to the 35 that Congress funded for last year. Over the past year, with your strong support, we have expanded the availability of childcare, and we have reduced the cost. We have asked much of the volunteer network of spouses that has carried the burden of family support programs since 9/11, a burden that grows heavier with each successive deployment. But, they need help.

Our 2008 and this 2009-year budget provides much-needed support. We are hiring over 1,000 family readiness support assistants and nearly 500 additional Army community service staff to provide full-time support to our spouse volunteers and to Army families, and we are fielding 35 new Soldier Family Assistance Centers at major installations across the country. The Yellow Ribbon Program you authorized will provide much-needed support for our guardsmen and reservists upon their return from deployments.

In the late '90s, Congress launched the Privatized Housing Initiative, an initiative that has replaced Army housing with Army homes, that has built neighborhoods and vibrant communities on our Army posts. This budget builds on the great success of your initiative. Our budget for Army homes, new and refurbished, in this budget is \$1.4 billion. And for single soldiers, we're modernizing existing barracks. Over 2009 to 2015, with your support, we'll reach our target of 150,000 soldiers in modernized barracks.

And this budget continues the programs at the Department of Defense, the VA, and the Congress, and the Army have made in meeting the needs of wounded, ill, and injured soldiers. In your au-

thorization bill, you gave us additional authorities to hire needed medical personnel, to provide better healthcare to our wounded, and provide more help to family members who are supporting their loved ones. You gave us new authorities, resources, and the flexibility to allow soldiers and Army civilians to build and adapt a new outpatient care system to meet the ever-changing challenges of taking care of those who have borne the battle.

This budget continues to advance those initiatives, continues to address personnel shortages, improve facilities, and work to accomplish the seamless transition from DOD to VA for our soldiers returning to civilian life, and we will continue to grow our knowledge and improve the care and treatment of the invisible wounds of this war—PTSD and TBI—and better meet the needs of soldiers who suffer these wounds, and better support their families. The generous support of Congress last year has provided us resources to make great progress on this front, and we have much to do.

In 2008 and 2009, we will continue to transform Army contracting, under the leadership that we've received from the Gansler Commission. And in this budget, we've looked to the future; we never want to send our soldiers into a fair fight. This budget continues our investment in the programs of tomorrow, our highest modernization priority, the Future Combat System, which will shape the Army of the future. It's spinning out technologies into today's fight. The armed reconnaissance helicopters, UAVs, the light utility helicopter, and the joint cargo aircraft are all part of that future, and we thank you for your support.

This budget makes a major step forward in ensuring the long-term strength and health of our Army by moving the cost of 43,000 Active Duty soldiers from the supplemental into the base budget, and we have accelerated the 64,000-man growth in the active Duty Army from 2012 to 2010, with a commitment that we will maintain recruit quality at no lower than the 2006 levels.

We are a Nation long at war, facing an era of persistent conflict. Our soldiers and families are stretched. We are an Army out of balance. And we are consuming our readiness as fast as we build it. But, our Army remains strong. It's stretched, it's out of balance, but it's resilient. Those who seek parallels with the hollow Army of the late '70s will not find it. 170,000 young men and women proudly join our Army every year, 120,000 proudly re-enlist every year. They're volunteer soldiers, they're volunteer families, they're proud of who they are, and they're proud of what they do. We all are inspired by their service and humbled by their sacrifice.

Mr. Chairman, members of this committee, thank you for your support, your ongoing support of our soldiers and their families, for the resources and authorities that you provide us every year. And thank all of you for traveling all over this globe to meet with soldiers, express your appreciation to them for the job they're doing; that means a great to them. Thank you for your partnership in building this great American Army.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [The prepared statement of Mr. Geren follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Secretary Geren.  
General Casey?

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL GEORGE W. CASEY, JR., USA, CHIEF  
OF STAFF, ARMY**

General Casey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Inhofe, members of the committee.

The chairman mentioned the fact that the Secretary and I were here in November; and, really, with the exception of some of the returning surge forces, not much has changed in the last 90 days. That said, I'd like to re-emphasize some of the themes that the Secretary and I highlighted, but do it in the context of the fiscal year '09 budget that we're presenting today.

As has been said, our country is in our seventh year of war, and our Army remains fully engaged on all fronts, both abroad and at home. I testified, in November, that I believed the next decade would be ones of persistent conflict, a period that I described as a period of protracted confrontation among state, nonstate, and individual actors who are increasingly willing to use violence to achieve their political and ideological objectives.

I also described to you some of the global trends that I think will exacerbate and prolong this period: the double-edged swords of globalization and technology, doubling populations in developing countries, competition for resources, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and safe havens in ungoverned spaces. I said that our Army must be versatile enough to adapt rapidly to the unexpected circumstances that will result, and that we are building an agile, campaign-capable, expeditionary force that we need for this uncertain future.

I also said that the cumulative effects of the last 6- plus years at war have left our Army out of balance, consumed by the current fight, and unable to do the things we know we need to do to properly sustain our All-Volunteer Force and restore our flexibility for an uncertain future.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I wrestled hard to find the right words to describe the state of the Army, because, as the Secretary said, it remains a hugely resilient, professional, and combat-seasoned force, but I think we all acknowledge that we are not where we need to be.

I said that we have a plan that will, with your help, restore balance to our force, and that we've identified four imperatives that we must accomplish to put ourselves back in balance: sustain, prepare, reset, and transform. Let me just say a few words about each.

First and foremost, we must sustain our soldiers, families, and Army civilians. They are the heart and soul of this Army, must be sustained in a way that recognizes their quality of service. The Secretary mentioned some of the initiatives we've taken. They will continue, with your support.

Second, prepare. We need to continue to prepare our forces for success in the current conflicts. We cannot flinch from our commitment to provide them the training, the equipment, and the resources to give them a decisive advantage over any enemy that they face.

Third, reset. The harsh environments that we're operating in, and the frequent deployments, are taking their toll on our soldiers and their equipment. Reset is about returning our soldiers and our equipment to appropriate levels of readiness for future deploy-

ments and contingencies. In fiscal year '07, you provided us the resources to begin properly resetting the force, and, as a result, we've made significant strides in restoring systems and capabilities to the force. In my mind, recess—resources for reset are the difference between a hollow force and a versatile force for the future.

Lastly, transform. Even as we work ourselves—work to put ourselves back in balance, we must continue to transform our Army into the agile campaign-capable expeditionary force that can meet the security needs of the Nation in the 21st century. For us, transformation is a holistic effort to adapt how we train, modernize, develop leaders, station forces, and support our soldiers, families, and civilians.

To guide our transformation, we are releasing, this week, a new version of our Capstone Doctrine. Here's a copy of it, Mr. Chairman. You'll be getting one of these from me. This is the first revision of our Capstone Doctrine since 2001. It describes how we see the future security environment and provides a framework for Army forces to operate and succeed in that environment. It has five significant elements:

First, it describes the complex and multidimensional operational environment of the 21st century, where we believe we will increasingly operate and fight among the people.

Second, the manual elevates stability operation to the level of offense and defense, and describes an operational concept for full-spectrum operations, where Army forces simultaneously apply offense, defense, and stability operations to seize the initiative and to achieve decisive results.

Third, it emphasizes the commander's role in battle command and describes an intellectual process of developing solutions to complex challenges our forces will face.

Fourth, it emphasizes the importance of information superiority in achieving success in modern conflict.

And, fifth, it recognizes that our soldiers remain the centerpiece of our formations and our ultimate asymmetric advantage.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that this doctrine will provide us a great start point from which to build on the experience of the past 7 years and to shape our Army for the future.

So, that's our plan: sustain, prepare, reset, and transform. The last 2 years, you've given us the funding to begin the process of putting the Army back in balance. This budget before you, the war on terror supplemental that will accompany it, and the balance of the fiscal year '08 war on terror supplemental, will allow this process to continue. We appreciate your support, and I'd like to give you a few examples about how we've worked hard to put the resources you've given us to good use.

First, we've made great strides in the Army Medical Action Plan to provide better care for our wounded soldiers.

Second, we've initiated an Army Soldier Family Action Plan to bring life to our Army Family Covenant to improve the quality of life for soldiers and families.

Next, we are over 60-percent complete, the modular conversion of our units. This is the largest organizational transformation of the Army since World War II. We're also over 60-percent complete with our conversion of our 120,000 soldiers from skills that were

needed in the cold war to ones we need for the 21st century. We've reset over 120,000 pieces of equipment. We've privatized more than 4,000 homes, bringing the total of privately managed homes to over 80,000. And our—the depots in our Army Materiel Command had been recognized by commercial industry for efficiency 12 times. There's a Shingo Award that industry gives for efficiency, and our depots have won 12 of those in the last year. So, as you can see, with your help we're not sitting still, and we're moving out to give the Nation the Army it needs for the 21st century.

Now, let me just close with a thought—with some thoughts on quality.

I was in Alaska right before Christmas, and I was asked to present a Distinguished Service Cross to Sergeant Greg Williams. Sergeant Williams was on a Stryker patrol in Baghdad in October of 2006. His patrol came under attack from three directions and with a formed—explosively formed penetrator array. Those are those very lethal armor- penetrating IEDs. He was knocked out. He awoke to find his Stryker on fire, to find his legs on fire, his eardrum burst. He put out his flames, and his first reaction was to grab the aid bag and start treating his fellow soldiers, under fire. He realized that the lieutenant was still on the burning vehicle. He went back in the burning vehicle and dragged the lieutenant to safety. Continuing to fire at the enemy, he realized that no one was manning the 50- caliber machine gun on top of the Stryker. He returned to the burning vehicle a third—a second time, a vehicle that still contained over 30 pounds of explosives and detonating cord. He got on the 50-caliber, brought the weapon to bear on the enemy, and broke the ambush, and the squad was extracted.

That's the kind of men and women that we have in your Armed Forces today, and you can be extremely proud of the job that they're doing all around the world.

That said, it will require more than the courage and valor of our soldiers to ensure that our Army can continue to protect this country in an era of persistent conflict. It will require recognition by national leaders, like yourselves, of the threats and challenges that America faces in the years ahead. It will also require full, timely, and predictable funding to ensure that our Armed Forces are prepared to defeat those threats and to preserve our way of life.

Thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, General.

Let's try a 5-minute round of questions. It's very short, but we've got five votes coming up, and it's, I'm afraid, necessary to hop, skip, and jump a bit. So, let's give that—a first round of 5 minutes.

According to the current model for planning the rotations of units into and out of Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army's assertion is that it can reduce the time deployed, from the current 15 months, as was necessary to support the surge at the beginning of last year, back to the pre-surge 12 months per rotation. Let me ask you, Secretary or General, either one, When are you going to return to the 12- months deployment? And what assumptions, relative to draw-down, do you make in the answer which you give to that question?

Mr. Geren: Let me begin, but then I'd like to ask General Casey—we've been working on this together, and I think that he could provide more details on the analysis.

We can't say, with certainty. It is a top priority for our Army. We know 15-month deployments are too long, and we know that we cannot continue to sustain the readiness that we need to build in this Army if we aren't able to extend the dwell time. So, we are all—everyone in the Army understands this challenge, the importance of it, and we're working to shorten the deployment times and lengthen the dwell times. It'll depend on—

Chairman LEVIN. And what is your goal? I mean, do you have a goal for when you're going to reach 12 months, in terms of deployment, and what you need to do, in terms of deployments, draw-down of deployments, in order to achieve that goal? You must have a goal.

Mr. Geren: We have a goal, but we so much depends upon the—

Chairman LEVIN. Is there a timetable for it?

Mr. Geren:—the demand from theater, and we don't control that, obviously. But, we would like to see—this summer, we'd like to see us be able to put ourselves on track to get our deployments and our dwell time in a one-to- one ratio.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay, now what would have to come from the theater, in terms of drawdown, in order for you to reach 12 months. And, by when? Give us—

Mr. Geren: Yeah. General Casey, would—

Chairman LEVIN. Just in—

General Casey: Yeah, thanks.

Chairman LEVIN.—put it in shorthand for us. You know, you have to—

General Casey: I think the—

Chairman LEVIN.—draw down to what level in order to get—

General Casey: Senator—

Chairman LEVIN.—to 12-month deployment.

General Casey: In shorthand, Senator, if General Petraeus is able to execute the announced plan of getting to 15 brigades by July, it would be our goal, at that point, to return to 12-months versus 15-month deployments.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. And if you—if that pause that he says he favors continues, say, for 6 months, would you be able to continue that 12-month deployment?

General Casey: You asked what assumptions we make. If the—  
Chairman LEVIN. Yes.

General Casey:—troop levels—the brigade levels stay at 15 brigade combat teams—

Chairman LEVIN. Right.

General Casey:—we believe it will still be possible, even with a pause, to go from 15 brigades to 12 brigades. That's our goal.

Chairman LEVIN. Fifteen months.

General Casey: I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Chairman LEVIN. Yeah. Fifteen months.

General Casey: Fifteen months to 12 months. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. And that's regardless of the length of the pause.

General Casey: Yes. That—we do not—as long as we get to 15 brigades, we'll be able to—we'd—our goal will be to execute—

Chairman LEVIN. Even if we stay at 15 brigades.

General Casey: Even if you stay—

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

General Casey:—we stay.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, what—how many—I want to talk about stop loss—how many soldiers do you expect that the Army's going to retain under stop-loss authority at the end of fiscal '08?

Mr. Geren: We currently have around—a little less than 8,000 on stop loss today. Our goal is to get rid of stop loss as a force management tool. That also will depend upon what happens in theater. But, if we get down to 15 brigades, you know, every brigade that is reduced, we're able to reduce stop loss further. The Department, the Department of State, and the leadership of the Army all committed to utilizing stop loss as seldom as possible. Right now, it's roughly—it's less than 8,000. And, without some remarkable change, it'll probably be around that at the end of the fiscal year.

Chairman LEVIN. And if we stay at 15 brigades?

Mr. Geren: It might get as low as 7,000, but we don't expect it to go much lower than that over the course of this fiscal year.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. The—last October, General, the Army requested \$123 million to build Warrior Transition Unit and Soldier Family Assistance Center facilities. Our authorization conference fully funded that request. Now, the Army has identified requirements for a substantial increase in the number of, and the funding required for, such facilities for fiscal year '09, but there's no funding in the budget request for those facilities, and there's no request for assistance for wounded warriors or families on the unfunded requirements letter that you've provided to us. And I'm wondering why that is true. General?

General Casey: We have made great use of the funds that you've provided there, in building 35 Warrior Transition Units around the country. I visited on in Alaska, here, last week, and am very impressed with the quality of what we're doing.

As for the additional funding in the '09 base program, I was under the impression that we did have money in there for Warrior Transition Units. I don't—the exact number escapes me right now, but I do believe that was one of the things that we—

Chairman LEVIN. Well, it's our—my understanding is, there isn't. We will—if there isn't, should there be?

Mr. Geren: We have used the supplementals to respond to many of the wounded warrior needs, Senator, and, looking—those—that is among the areas where we're looking to move those into the base budget, ultimately; but, right now, the supplementals, since they are wounds of war and they are a response to the casualties of war, we are funding much of that in the supplementals, and that is—when we look at programs that we're going to need to move from the supplemental to the base, that is one of them.

Chairman LEVIN. So, we can expect that's going to be part of the supplemental request—

Mr. Geren: Yes, sir.

Chairman LEVIN.—if it's not in the budget? Thank you.

Senator Inhofe?

Senator Inhofe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I neglected to put Senator Warner's statement in the record, and would ask that it go in the record immediately following your opening statement.

Chairman LEVIN. It will. Thank you. [The prepared statement of Senator Warner follows:] [COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator Inhofe: Secretary Geren, you and I were both serving together in the other body of there in the House in 1994, when—and you’ve heard me make this statement before about the witness that appeared before the House Armed Services Committee and projected that, in 10 years, we’d no longer need ground troops. That was 1994. I think what that does is emphasize that, no matter how smart we are and how many smart generals we have around us, if you try to project out 10 years, you’re going to be wrong. And so, I’d like, just, to—right now, you’re holding on, we’re negotiating a war, you’re doing it, having started after we reduced the number of divisions, the resources that we had. And it looks like what you’re saying in your testimony this morning is that what we’re—this budget is going to allow us to do that. Now, is that your feeling now, that you can hold on with this budget and also address the four things that you mentioned, General Casey, the sustain, prepare, reset, and transform?

Mr. Geren: I think we would agree, today, that we cut the Army way too much. This Army is about 40 percent the size that it was 35 years ago. And in this budget and in—over the POM, we’re not only growing the Army, but in this budget we’re growing the Army faster than we planned. But, our plan is to add 74,000 soldiers to the Army—Active, Guard, and Reserve, 65,000. And with this budget, we’re moving the growth of the active component up to—from 2012 to 2010, so we’ll have completed that growth by then. So, we’re going to have more soldiers. And, as the chief mentioned, it’s not just a question of more soldiers, it’s moving soldiers from low-demand, high-density MOSs to high-demand, low-density. And we are in the process of moving 120 soldiers out of their old MOSs into new MOSs. Example, in the Reserves—the Reserves are getting 1,000 new soldiers under this grow-the-reserves plan, but they’re going to, at the end of their transformation, have 17,000 more soldiers that are going to be available to the operational Army. So, it’s growing the Army, but it’s also transforming the Army, making sure that we’ve got soldiers that can do what the demands of the future require.

Senator Inhofe: And, General Casey, when you used your—for example, sustain, repair, reset, and transform—you weigh ’em all about the same, don’t you? Equal emphasis?

General Casey: Senator, I would weight “sustain,” taking of and retaining our soldiers, as a little heavier than I would the others, but the others are—

Senator Inhofe: Well, I mean—

General Casey:—equally important.

Senator Inhofe:—I guess what I’m getting at is, the problem normally is, if it isn’t—whatever is bleeding the most is going to get the most attention. That usually leaves transformation out, or moves it back. And I’m very proud that you’ve been able to keep that where it is. I’d like to look at the—have you both comment on the current status of the Future Combat System and how optimistic you are that you’re going to be able to stay on schedule with that system.

Mr. Geren: Well, the cuts that we have taken in the program over the last 3 years will result in a delay. We're estimating now that it'll delay the program 7 months. NLOS cannon, we had expected to build eight this year, we're going to build five this year, three the next. So, the changes in the FCS budget have affected the calendar, but we do believe that we're going to be able to stay on track and bring this program into the service of our soldiers.

There's been a lot of questions about its affordability, but if you look at the \$160 billion over the life of the FCS program, at no point does it get to be more than a third of our RD—R&D and acquisition budget. A third. So, in the—our R&D budget's a fourth of our Army budget. So, at no point does it get more than a twelfth of our Army budget. We believe it's affordable, and we believe it's an investment that we have to make.

Senator Inhofe: General Casey?

General Casey: If I could, thank you.

You know, you mentioned in your opening comments about some decisions that were made in the '90s that resulted in the force that we had on September 11th. And, if we think back to the '90s, we were looking at what we thought was going to be a very peaceful future.

Senator Inhofe: Yeah, well, I remember the peace dividend, yes.

General Casey: And so, I mean, the lesson that I take from that is, you have to continue to look for the future. And we believe that the Future Combat System is exactly the full-spectrum system that we need for our future. In fact, it's—when you look at this manual, you'll see that the things, like precision intelligence- collection abilities and precision effects that are required in full-spectrum operations in the 21st century, are exactly the kind of systems that will—the Future Combat Systems will bring to us.

If I just could—

Senator Inhofe: Uh-huh.

General Casey: This year is the year that people—you will be able to see some of the things that, up to now, you've only seen on slides. And I—last week, I visited Fort Bliss, Texas, where we have an Army brigade that is actually testing some of the initial components of the Future Combat Systems. And there will be a limited user test this summer. And you will also see the first prototype of the man-ground vehicle in June. So, this is going to go from the slides to reality, here, and I think you've be able to see them, and see the power of what we're trying to create.

Senator Inhofe: Well—and I appreciate that. My time's expired, but I'm—you know, I have this very strong feeling, as I talk to people, just, around the country, that there is this—expectations that if our kids are going to go to war, they ought to have the best there is out there. And currently, they don't have. I mean, they're—we are deficient in some areas. You mentioned the NLOS cannon. And that's one area where, it's my understanding, there are actually five countries, including South Africa, that make a better NLOS cannon than we have. And that's something we want to correct, as difficult as it is while we're negotiating war, and I applaud you for your being steadfast in that area.

Mr. Chairman—

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much.

Senator Inhofe:—I'm going to walk down and vote first—

Chairman LEVIN. The votes have begun. That'd be great. Senator Reed is next, and then I would ask Senator Reed, when he's done, to—whoever's here, to identify them, if you would. Senator Lieberman, if you'll take this overall charge.

Senator Reed [presiding]: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your service.

Last Sunday, I think many people woke up and read a very intriguing article in the New York Times magazine about a battle company of the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Afghanistan. And one of the things that struck me is a passage which I'll read, "One full-moon night, I was sitting outside a sandbag-reinforced hut with Kearney"—Captain Dan Kearney—great young company commander, airborne—"when a young sergeant stepped out, hauling the garbage. He looked around in the illuminated mountains and dust and rocks, the garbage bins. The monkeys were screaming. 'I hate this country,' he shouted," then he smiled and walked back into the unit—into the hut. 'He's on medication,' Kearney said quietly to me. And then, another soldier walked by and shouted, 'Hey, I'm with you, sir.' And Kearney said to me, 'Prozac, serious PTSD from the last tour.' And another one popped out of the HQ, cursing and muttering. 'Medicated,' Kearney said. 'Last tour, if you didn't give information, he'd burn down your house. He killed so many people, he's checked out.'"

I find it disturbing that we have soldiers that are suffering—and, again, this is a snapshot of one unit in one very difficult situation—but soldiers appear to have serious psychological problems, that are taking antidepressants and are in combat operations on a daily basis. Does that undercut a lot of this rhetoric about how we're doing great, the Army's fine, we just need a little more resources?

General Casey: Senator, I don't think either the Secretary or I said that everything's great and the Army's fine. I mean, I think, just to the contrary, we said that we are stretched. And I think what you're seeing is the impact of repeated tours in a brutal combat environment. And I think we are—we all understand the impact and the toll that that takes on our soldiers and on our leaders.

Now, I trust our junior leaders to—and supported by their medical health professionals—to make individual judgments about the soldiers in their units. And clearly what you read there is troubling.

Senator Reed: Well, I can recall, we were both in—commanded companies, and I—frankly, in a much—in a benign environment, was not faced with those types of leadership challenges, as portrayed here, of significant and multiple situations of young soldiers who have serious mental health problems. And it seems to be that, you know, this is not a reaction to their first exposure to combat. As you point out, General, this is because they're being repeatedly cycled through combat. I think, in other circumstances, these young men would have been evacuated, or certainly not sent back into the zone. That, I think, underscores the—what you've said is not only overstretched, but, in fact, stretched, in some cases, beyond the capacity of individual soldiers.

General Casey: Yeah, Senator, I don't know the specifics of this particular unit, but I think you know that we have started, last

summer, a very concerted effort to reduce the stigma that people attach to seeking assistance for PTSD and other mental health problems, and to inform our subordinate leaders so that they can help in diagnosis. And we have trained over 800,000 of our soldiers in that, and we are seeing a great—one, we're starting to see a reduction in the stigma and people willing to come forward and get treatment, because, as our research has shown us, the sooner we get soldiers into the system, the more likely they are to make a full recovery.

Senator Reed: There's another quote I think is important in this article by Sergeant Erick Gallardo of the unit, quote, "We don't get supplies, assets. We scrounge for everything and live a lot more rugged, but we know the war is here, we've got unfinished business," which I think speaks to the ethic of these young soldiers to carry on, but also raises a question of, Do they have everything they need? And we're not just talking about the new, fancy Future Combat System, we're talking about the basic equipment to carry out the job they're doing now. I think I would be disturbed—are you disturbed?—when young soldiers, NCOs are talking about, "We don't have everything we need."

General Casey: Senator, I—you know, I go out to the theater, just like you do, and I ask them, everybody I talk to, "Do you have what you need?" I called both General Rodriguez, who's the commander in Afghanistan, and General Austin, who's the commander in Iraq, yesterday, and I asked them, "Do you have supply problems? Do you have shortages?" And their answer was, "There's no systemic shortages, and they're at—their stockage levels." Now, at the platoon level, can there be spare-part shortages? Sure. But, I do not believe—I know that the logistical systems between Afghanistan and Iraq are well established, and we can usually take care of shortages in a relatively short period of time.

Senator Reed: My time is expired. And I want to recognize Senator Chambliss. But, just a question, for the record, or for contemplation. When Secretary Gates was here, just a few weeks ago, and I asked him about the status of Future Combat Systems, he said, rather candidly, "I don't see how the Army could ever fund this system, going forward." And he's someone that I think we all respect, and he's—happens to be your boss. So, I think you've got a problem, if the Secretary candidly and honestly feels that he can't fund the Future Combat System, and you're talking about this all coming to balance in 2011. That's—I'll try to come back for a response, but I don't want to—I want that on the record, at least.

General Casey: I can give you a short one here, that I've talked to Secretary Gates after he made that statement, and he indicated he has no basic problems with the program. And, as he said, he supports the spinout part of the program. But, as with anyone faced with, as the case you posed, the inevitability of reductions in resources, you have to look at a \$162-billion program. I mean—

Senator Reed: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Senator Chambliss?

Senator Chambliss [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Reed.

Gentlemen, first of all, as always, thanks for your great service to our country. We appreciate both of you.

I was pleased to see both of you focus on the issue of wounded warriors in your opening statement, and also pleased to see the accomplishments and progress the Army has made in treating wounded warriors, caring for the families, and ensuring that the deployment reintegration process is as seamless as possible.

Secretary Geren, you were here a couple of weeks ago, when we had the hearing on wounded warriors, and I asked about the ongoing cooperation between Fort Gordon, the Augusta VA, and the Medical College of Georgia in relation to caring for wounded warriors, and I appreciate Lieutenant General Schoomaker's comments about the success of that collaboration. He deserves an awful lot of credit, and I probably didn't say enough about him that day, but he really did a great job, when he was at Eisenhower, relative to this issue, and he, frankly, gave a lot of credit to the farsighted vision of the people of the Augusta community for seeing a need for that partnership and making it work.

Now, as we go forward into the future regarding how the Army treats her wounded warriors and works to rehabilitate them either back into the Army or successfully into civilian life, how can the private sector participate with you in this regard? How can we help you? What kind of expertise, training, or resources might you be able to use from the private sector that would assist you in ensuring your wounded warriors receive the best treatment possible?

Mr. Geren: Well, thank you for your—and I'll pass along your kind words about General Schoomaker. He certainly did an outstanding job there, and he's doing an outstanding job as the Surgeon General for the Army today in a very challenging time. And that partnership, that collaboration between the VA and the Department of Defense at Fort Gordon and Eisenhower, it's outstanding, and it's one of the models that we look to, to emulate around the force. And the community down there does an outstanding job supporting the military and the VA, and we appreciate, very much, all they do.

There are many areas that we have to look to the private sector to address challenges that come with meeting the needs of wounded, ill, and injured warriors. The Congress—last year, y'all gave us \$900 million in the area of TBI and PTSD work. Much of those funds will be invested with outside research efforts in order to increase our knowledge in those areas, so we will look to the outside community for research. Our healthcare system today depends on TRICARE, and TRICARE depends on the private sector, and that is one of the great challenges we have across the system. Many of our Army installations are in rural areas, they have certain medical specialties that are underserved in those areas, and we have a challenge in many of these rural communities, particularly in the area of mental health care, and we need to look long and hard at the TRICARE system and our system of supporting mental health needs within the Army to figure out a good way ahead that meets this need of our soldiers and their families.

But, certainly, research is an area that the private sector will be a full partner, the TRICARE system, and—we've got shortages throughout our system, just as the private-sector medical system has, certainly in the areas of mental health; we've got shortages in nursing; we have shortages in dental care, as dental professionals,

as well. So, with the authorities y'all have given us, we are working with the private sector to try to meet these shortages. But, for us to be successful in meeting the healthcare needs of our soldiers, it will require a full partnership with the private sector.

Senator Chambliss: Well, I applaud you for taking giant steps and trying to make sure that these brave young men and women are getting the treatment they need when they come back, and we look forward to continuing to work with you in that respect.

I think I'm going to have to go vote. What—and I guess we'll be in recess, subject to the call of the Chair.

Mr. Geren: All right. Thank you. [Recess.]

Senator Collins [presiding]: The committee will be in order.

At the suggestion of the chairman, we're rotating back and forth between the votes, and so, I'm going to proceed quickly with my question at this time. If someone else comes back, I'll turn over the gavel. It's nice to temporarily have the gavel.

General Casey, the inadequate size of our Army has caused repeated and extended deployments for our troops, and this is a matter of great concern to all of us. You've talked, this morning, about the tremendous strain on our troops and their families. Another consequence of the inadequate size of our Army has been an unprecedented reliance on private security contractors in a war zone. Do you think that we have become over-reliant on private security contractors to perform tasks, in a hostile environment, that traditionally have been performed by our troops?

General Casey: I would not say, Senator, that we are overly reliant, as you suggest. In the '90s, as we discussed earlier, some decisions were made to reduce the size of the Army from 780,000 down to around 482,000. As a result of that, we recognized that we would have rely on contractors, primarily for logistics, but also for security.

As I—my recollection is that we are relying on about—DOD is relying on about 7,000 security contractors in theater right now. To me, that does not seem to be an inappropriate number, and the tasks they are performing, usually of providing individual or close-in security, is something that probably they could do better than our soldiers, and our soldiers can best be put to counterinsurgency-type operations.

Senator Collins: Secretary Geren, the same question for you. Are you—are you satisfied with the balance between having military personnel, versus private security contractors, in Iraq and Afghanistan, or do you believe that we've become too dependent on private security contractors, who are, for the first time, performing tasks that traditionally have been performed by our men and women in uniform?

Mr. Geren: Well, I think that the—we have to allocate our soldiers and our contract resources according to the priorities of where each could serve best. It's not just private security contractors, but we've seen a tremendous growth in the number of private contractors that support a deployed Army. In Iraq and Afghanistan, we have close to 200,000 contractors. But, I think that's just a reality of the kind of Army we are today. When we deploy today, we will be roughly half in uniform and half out. As we've shrunk the size of the Army, we've had to look to contractors to provide many of

the support functions that have traditionally been handled by soldiers. But, if the choice is between putting a soldier in one of those contract functions or putting a soldier out, fighting the counterinsurgency war, I think we're making the better choice.

Senator Collins: Well, the reason that I'm focusing particularly on the private security contractors is, unlike contract employees who are engaged in logistics, they are far more likely to be involved in a hostile incident; and, indeed, there have been several controversial cases in Iraq where private security contractors have been involved in firefights, have, in some cases, killed Iraqi civilians. Whether unprovoked or not is being investigated, even as we speak.

Let me ask you a different question, then, General Casey. Are you confident that we have a clear legal authority to deal with private security contractors who may have killed Iraqi civilians without justification?

General Casey: Senator, I am not—I cannot say that I am confident. I don't know the specifics of the agreement that was worked out between General Petraeus and the Ambassador. And I know that they were working very hard to ensure that we could exercise appropriate jurisdiction over any contractor that committed, really, any offense that was punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So, I—

Senator Collins: Doesn't the fact that that agreement did not previously exist suggest that the framework for dealing with such cases was legally tenuous or ambiguous?

General Casey: Again, I can't speak to that. I think, as you suggest, the increasing reliance on contractors has caused us to expand what we needed to do to deal with them, and it was a learning experience, and I think they have—you know, we have continued to grow in our knowledge of what it takes to effectively exercise control over contractors.

Senator Collins: Well, General Casey—and I am going to have to go return to the floor, but, in fact, there was not such a framework worked out while you were the commanding officer in Iraq, was there?

General Casey: That's true. That's true. I had jurisdiction over the DOD contractors; the State Department had jurisdiction over theirs.

Senator Collins: And, according to an investigation that the Homeland Security Committee has done, in some cases the only penalty for a contract employee was to be just given an airline ticket home.

General Casey: Yeah, I'd—

Senator Collins: Does that trouble you?

General Casey: I don't know—I don't know that that is the case in every situation. I know that there were some contractors under our authority who were, in fact, punished. I certainly cannot say that that was the case for all contractors operating in Iraq.

Senator Collins: Well, I—my time has expired, but I would just suggest that another consequence of having too small a military force, in addition to the one that concerns us most, which is the tremendous strain that repeated deployments and extended deployments imposes on our troops, our families—in the case of the Na-

tional Guard, the employers, as well—another consequence has been a need to rely on private security contractors who are not under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, necessarily, or who are not subject to the kinds of legal constraints and chain of command that military personnel are under. And I think that's been a real issue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Levin [presiding]: Thank you very much, Senator Collins.

Senator Lieberman?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman.

General Casey, Secretary Geren, thanks for being here. Thanks for the extraordinary service you and hundreds of thousands, over a million, Americans who serve under you give our country. We're placing enormous demands on you, and, in my experience and review, the Army is meeting those demands with excellence, with honor, and with a lot of bravery, and, as a result, we're succeeding in places where it's not easy to succeed. So, I thank you for that.

As you well know, in the nature of the process we go through on the budget, the administration presents the budget, and then we have a responsibility to independently evaluate, consider the threats, demands that we face, and then authorize to a level that we think meets those threats and demands. In this—I want to focus on Army personnel, because obviously the—all the concern that you've expressed here—you've heard expressed here and elsewhere, about the 15-month tours of duty, they're a result of the fact that we've got fewer people in the Army than we should have, in my opinion. And this fiscal year '09 budget funds positions up to what number, Mr. Secretary? In the active Army, that's what I want to focus on.

Mr. Geren: In this budget, we add 43,000 soldiers, which had been in the supplemental, into the—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. Geren:—into the base budget. Today, we've got 523,000 soldiers on Active Duty. At the end of the fiscal year, we'll have 534,000—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Okay.

Mr. Geren:—on Active Duty.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So, let me ask you this question, just to enable to us to go through the process that we have a responsibility to go through. Knowing what—and I want to ask both of you to answer this—knowing what you know about the demands we face today, what your ideals would be, and what other demands and threats we may face around the world, if—leaving aside the very relevant, but I want to you ask you to leave it aside, question of resources and budgeting, how large do you think the Army should be?

General?

General Casey: Leaving aside—that's a hard—hard to leave that—

Senator LIEBERMAN. I know.

General Casey:—the budget out of that—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yeah.

General Casey:—out of that—

Senator LIEBERMAN. But I want to—

General Casey:—discussion.

Senator LIEBERMAN.—I want to give both the committee and, frankly, the American people, some sense, though the budget is high, that—well, let me—

General Casey: What I have said in the past, Senator, is, you know, one, we have a plan to build the active Force—to increase the size of the active Force by 65,000.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So, that would bring us to—

General Casey: That's the 547,000 that—

Senator LIEBERMAN. That's the—

General Casey:—we're building—

Senator LIEBERMAN.—547.

General Casey:—we're building to now.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And you've accelerated—and I appreciate it—the pace at which we're going to do that, and we're doing it.

General Casey: That's correct.

Senator LIEBERMAN. In other words, the original was, that was over 5 years, and—

General Casey: It was going to go out through 2012—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yeah.

General Casey:—and, as the Secretary said, we accelerated the growth until '10.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General Casey: And the purpose of that was to, again, take and reduce some of the stress on the force.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Sure.

General Casey: Now—

Senator LIEBERMAN. So, that's—I'm just—547,000 by 2010.

General Casey: That's correct.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Okay.

General Casey: Now, the question really then goes to, For what? What size Army do you need—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yeah.

General Casey:—for what? And the next question, I think, for the active Army, particularly, What is the—you have to ask the question, What is the access to the Guard and to the Reserve?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General Casey: And, you know, we feel that the Guard and—to sustain the Guard and Reserve, a ratio—deployment ratio of about 1 to 5—1 year out, 5 years back—is sustainable. They're operating at a—at about 1 to 3-and-a-half right now.

Senator LIEBERMAN. One to 3, uh-huh—3 and a half. Right.

General Casey: So, my strategy has been, let's get to 547,000.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General Casey: Let's build that quality force, and let's continue what we're doing to increase the size of the Guard and Reserve, and then let's reassess, and let's have a discussion and a debate about how big the Army should, in fact, be.

Senator LIEBERMAN. So, you're not prepared to give a number about what your goal would be now.

General Casey: No, I don't think so, Senator. But, I mean, if you're looking for broad parameters, you know, with the folks that

are mobilized, there's about 600—around 600,000 people on Active Duty today.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yeah. I gotcha. And so, that—perhaps the goal there would be to have 600,000 on Active Duty.

General Casey: I don't necessarily think so, because—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Well—

General Casey:—you go back to the question you don't want to discuss. The worst thing I believe—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yeah.

General Casey:—could do, Senator, is to build a force that we wouldn't make the quality of this force.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yeah. I—

General Casey: And that—I came into hollow, and I'm—really don't want to go out to hollow.

Senator LIEBERMAN. No, absolutely. And that's exactly the point. In my opinion—I've been reading the things that others have said, including your predecessor, General Gordon Sullivan, who's—he did a slightly larger universe, but he said the Army and Marines and Special Ops Forces ought to hit a total of 750,000. Let me put it a different way. The 750,000 is the current goal. General Sullivan talked about possibly hitting a million. I take your answers—I'm not going to push you any further—to say to me—and I'll say what I believe, myself—that the current goal of 547,000 is not enough, and we're going to have to come back, as we go on to meet the threats that we need to meet, and to do it with people who are capable to defend our security.

Secretary Geren, my time is up, but I don't know if you want to add anything to what General Casey has said on this subject.

Mr. Geren: Well, when we consider the size of the Army, a big part of our effectiveness in the future is going to depend upon how good a job we do in operationalizing the Guard and Reserve. Our Army Active Duty is only about half of the total end strength of our military today.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. Geren: It's a—you've got the same number of people in the Guard and Reserve as you do in the active Duty. Our Reserves, over the course of this growth, are going to add 1,000 soldiers to the Reserves, but, through transformation, they're going to be able to move 17,000 more soldiers into their operating force. So, there are a lot of variables as we look to what the right mix should be and what the right size should be. And I think our most prudent course of action is to achieve the growth that we have on the books now, continue to work the transformation, move folks into MOSs that are in high demand, look at how effectively we can operationalize the Guard and Reserve, and then assess where we are, and then make a decision on whether or not it's an Army that meets the needs of the future.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Well, the dialogue will continue. Thanks very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

I want to pick up, first, on a question that Senator Collins asked about under what law contractors in Iraq—we're talking, here, State Department contractors—are operating. I think it's important that we have a clear answer for the record. And I understand

that—you know, testimony, that there's an effort being, now, to negotiate an agreement with the Iraqi government. That's not what we're—I'm referring to. I don't think that's what Senator Collins was referring to, either, because she was talking about: Up til now, what is the law that governs contractors hired by the State Department who allegedly have committed crimes? And we need to know that for the record.

Mr. Geren: Let us get back to you, the record. [INFORMATION]

Mr. Geren: As you know, the MEJA law gives our Justice Department the authority to criminally prosecute Americans who commit crimes in foreign countries, so that is a backstop, but, as you well know, it's not used very often; it's been used very few times.

Chairman LEVIN. And do you know why it's not used?

Mr. Geren: I do not.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay. Can you give us, for the record, a clear answer to what law applies? If Iraqi law doesn't, because of some agreement reached with the Iraqis, what American law applies? If it's a law that's not used frequently, why it's not used frequently? We need to know that, clearly, for the—

Mr. Geren: I'll get back to you for the record. [INFORMATION]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you. And if you could do that promptly, because this issue is coming up in other committees, and there should be an answer from the Defense Department on this.

The—on the deployment issues that I went over with you before, assume, for the moment, that there's a—say, two additional brigade combat teams that are needed in Afghanistan, and the other countries that are involved don't provide them, and the decision is made by our commander there that they are needed. Could those two combat teams be provided—U.S. combat teams—under your scenario, General? In other words, could you continue your 12-month deployment? Would that answer still be effective after July, if we get down to 15 combat teams in Iraq, and stay there, if two additional brigade combat teams of the U.S. are required in Afghanistan, or would that change your answer?

General Casey: Senator, you asked me—when you asked that question earlier, about what the assumption is, the assumption—my assumption is 15 deployed Active-component brigades, which is—for the Army—which is 13 in Iraq and two in Afghanistan.

Chairman LEVIN. So—

General Casey: And so, at 15 brigades, either in Iraq and/or Afghanistan, that's the—that's where we can stay at 12 months.

Chairman LEVIN. I gotcha. Okay. So, the 15 includes two in Afghanistan.

General Casey: It—there are two Marine regiments in there—

Chairman LEVIN. Okay.

General Casey:—in Iraq. So—

Chairman LEVIN. I just want a real clear answer. Now, there's 3200 marines that are being sent, or have been sent, additionally, to Afghanistan. That's separate, correct?

General Casey: Correct.

Chairman LEVIN. There's—the 15 brigades that you referred to, in Iraq in July, are the 15 that the—that General Petraeus has talked about.

General Casey: That's correct. And—

Chairman LEVIN. Now, if two—

General Casey:—and that would be 13 Army and two Marine.

Chairman LEVIN. Two Marine. My question is, If two additional brigades are needed in Afghanistan, to the number of troops we already have there, would that change your answer?

General Casey: As I said, my assumption on getting to 15 months is that we will stay at 15 Army Active-component brigades in Iraq and Afghanistan. I'm sorry, getting to—getting from 15 months to 12 months is based on—

Chairman LEVIN. What is General Petraeus's statement about getting to 15 brigades in July and then pausing? Are those the same 15 you've just described?

General Casey: He is describing the 15 brigades in Iraq only. And those 15 brigades consist of 13 Army and two Marine.

Chairman LEVIN. The 15 he's talking about—

General Casey: That he's talking about.

Chairman LEVIN.—are 13 Army, two Marine.

General Casey: Right.

Chairman LEVIN. Now, if, in addition to what he's talking about is needed in Iraq, if two additional brigades are needed in Afghanistan, on top of the troops we have there now, then, I take it, your answer is, we could not get to 12-months deployed. Is that correct?

General Casey: Then I would have to go back and relook that impact. I have not looked at supporting 17 brigades—

Chairman LEVIN. I thought you did look. You said that the maximum in both Iraq and Afghanistan was 15. Now you're saying you need to relook it?

General Casey: You asked me what my assumption was—

Chairman LEVIN. Yes.

General Casey:—to get from 15 months to 12 months. And I said it was 15 deployed Active-component brigades between Iraq and—

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

General Casey:—Afghanistan. Army brigades.

Chairman LEVIN. So, you're saying it's possible that you could add two additional brigades to Afghanistan and still have the same answer of 12-months deployment?

General Casey: Yeah, I—I have not looked at that specific case, Senator, and—

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

General Casey:—and, as I said, I'm very comfortable with the 15 number. I have not looked specifically at 17.

Chairman LEVIN. All right. My time's up. Would you get that back, then, for the record, to us? [INFORMATION]

Chairman LEVIN. It's—we have 3 minutes left, plus the 5 minutes add-on. So, Senator Lieberman, we'll turn it to you. And if nobody is here when you are done, would you recess us for 15 minutes? I'm going to come back and make sure there's no other—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Fine.

Chairman LEVIN.—Senators. Thank you.

Senator Lieberman [presiding]: Honored to do that. Thank you. I just have a few questions, then I'm going to go over and vote.

I wanted to focus in on another element of Army personnel. In my opinion, and, I presume, yours, the All-Volunteer Army has

been a great success. And I'm often asked, when I'm out in Connecticut or elsewhere, "Is there a need to go back to the draft?" I said, "No. Military, particularly, doesn't want to do that, because we've got a good All-Volunteer Force."

Studies that I've looked at say that the quality of—the quality of that force is—that All-Volunteer Force—is dependent very much on two primary determinants, and that is the scores of the recruits on the Services Aptitude Test, and if the recruit had received a high school diploma. Obviously, there are individuals who may not score the highest on the aptitude test or may not have a high school diploma who turn out to be extraordinary soldiers. But, I—my reading of these studies says that, on the average, we do better if we have people who score better on the test and have a high school diploma. Reports now indicate that we're falling down from the previous high levels in recruitment—that is, the test scores and the presence of a high school diploma—among people coming into the Army now. And I—I'm—I want to ask you to comment on that, but also I want to ask this question in an affirmative spirit, which is, What can we do to help the Army, if this is a problem, recruit to a level that assures that this All-Volunteer Force of ours will continue to maintain the standards of excellence and success that it has achieved thus far?

Mr. Geren: Well, many issues bear on that question. Let me, first, say that many intangibles go into deciding whether or not somebody makes a good soldier or not.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Sure.

Mr. Geren: And one of the most important intangibles that—in assessing this—our recruiting classes these days, is their willingness to stand up and raise their right hand and join the Army in the middle of a war.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. Geren: That tells you a lot about that young man or that young woman. They—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Motivation.

Mr. Geren: They join the war—they join the Army knowing they will—likely will be going into combat. So, I think, as a threshold question, that helps sort out folks. They—it brings the type of people into the Army that we want, the people that are willing to make selfless sacrifices.

But, you're right, when you look at our quality indicators over the last 3 years, they have gone down. Our high school diploma grads were at 79 percent last year. Our goal was to keep that above 80 percent. The OSD goals are 90 percent, and we—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. Geren:—strive for that, and we are working to get to those levels.

We've got a challenge with our recruiting population. Only about three out of ten young men in the 17-to-24 age range are—have the physical qualifications, the moral, the mental, the educational qualifications to join the Army. So, we've got a population out there that is—we're aiming at the same people that the job market's aiming at—want people that are dependable, want people that are healthy, want people that are moral, want people that are—have demonstrated a commitment to finish what they started, finish

high school. And, as a country, we need to expand that pool, we need to get more young people to finish high school.

A looming issue on the horizon is obesity. We're seeing that—as we look down—10 years down the road—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Interesting.

Mr. Geren:—we're going to see more and more young people are going to be disqualified for—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Yeah.

Mr. Geren:—joining the Army because of obesity. So, we've got to do a better job, as a country, producing 17- to 24-year-olds that have the standards that qualify them to join our Army. So, I think that's a national effort. It's—

Senator LIEBERMAN. So, short answer—and I apologize, because I've got to go over and vote—can you think of anything specific that we can do for you, by way of funding or programs, that will enable you to get back to those higher percentages on the high school diploma, for instance?

Mr. Geren: Well, in this budget, we do have a couple of new programs that we started, this last year, continue this year. One is our Army Advantage Fund, which is offering opportunities for homeownership and also the opportunity to start a small business as an incentive. I think one of our most promising initiatives is a partnership between the active component and the Guard to recruit together and have a young man or woman join the active and then transition to the Guard for the rest of their obligated service. So, funding those initiatives. And we continue to work to figure out ways to do what we do, and do it better, just recruit better. But, long term, we need, as a country, to do a better job of producing young people that are educated and meet the requirements of the Army. And in the support from leaders, such as yourself, national level, the State level, and encouraging young people to join the Army, is a very valuable part of our effort.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Secretary.

General, I apologize for not having the time here, but this obviously is a long-range problem, and you and I will—

General Casey: Sure.

Senator LIEBERMAN.—have many opportunities to discuss it.

Thank you.

General Casey: Thank you, Senator.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much.

General Casey: Thank you for your interest.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Senator Inhofe?

Senator Inhofe [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Let me mention something. It's—after I—Senator Akaka, have you gone—have you had a series of questions yet?

Senator Akaka: No.

Senator Inhofe: Oh.

Senator Akaka?

Senator Akaka [presiding]: Thank you very much.

Secretary, as chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness, I am especially concerned about the amount of time our soldiers are getting at home in between deployments, both to take care of themselves and their families, but also to receive the necessary training. And this really is about resetting, as is being mentioned. Even the

increase in Army end strength, I'm concerned that operations tempo facing our soldiers will impact their ability to be trained and prepared for missions across the spectrum of conflict.

My question to you, Secretary, What are the biggest obstacles for the Army to overcome if another crisis erupts that demands U.S. military intervention on the ground?

Mr. Geren: Our goal is full-spectrum readiness, have ready—our soldiers ready for the full range of threats that are out there. And, as you note in your question, with the length of time that we have at home today, 12 months between deployments, we do not have time to train for full-spectrum readiness in that period of time. We have funding that is allowing us to reset the equipment, so that that equipment is ready for when soldiers redeploy, but, until we get to a deployment-to-dwell ratio that gives us adequate time at home, we are going to fall short of our goal of full-spectrum readiness.

Senator Akaka: General—

General Casey: If I could, Senator, just—

Senator Akaka:—Casey?

General Casey: There seem—there's a perception that conventional training is not happening in the Army, and it's not happening much. But, I recently visited both Japan and Korea, and in Japan I witnessed an Army corps participating in a conventional scenario partnered with a Japanese corps. And then, in Korea, our brigade there in Korea is—and the U.S. forces there under General Bell, are also doing conventional training. So, not much, but it's not nonexistent.

Senator Akaka: If current operations, Mr. Secretary, in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to require the same approximate number of forces for the next 2 or 3 years, what impact will this have on readiness, do you think?

Mr. Geren: Well, we are consuming readiness now as quickly as we build it, and if we are unable to extend the dwell time, if the number of brigades doesn't get down to a demand of 15 brigades for our Army, we are going to have a difficult time having sufficient dwell time to accomplish all the missions that we hope to accomplish when a soldier is home. Our soldiers are training for the mission which they are asked to do today, the COIN, counterinsurgency mission, and the soldiers that we send into combat are well prepared for what we're asking them to do, but the demand to get them prepared for what we are asking them to do now understandably limits their ability to prepare for other missions.

General Casey: Senator, if I could—

Senator Akaka: General Casey?

General Casey: Based on—you know, on your assumption about—or your question about what will happen the next few years, and if you hold the demand steady at those 15 Active-component brigades, what you see is, with our growth, that the amount of dwell time at home gradually increases to the point where every year, starting in '09, we get a progressively larger number of forces trained for the full spectrum of operations, in addition to the forces that we're deploying. So, the growth helps.

Mr. Geren: When we reach our goal of 76 brigade combat teams across the—all three components, we'll be able to sustain up to 19

brigades deployed, at that point. And our—so, as we grow towards that, as we reorganize towards that, we will be able to sustain a higher level of overseas deployments.

Senator Akaka: Thank you.

General Casey, much has been said of the limited value of mechanized warfare and the impact technology can have in conducting counterinsurgency and stability operations, which tend to rely much more on cultural awareness and interpersonal relationships to be effective. In essence, the enemy is not a willing participant in the information network, and detection in urban environments may be beyond the capabilities of any known technology. My question is, What are the specific advantages that a Future Combat Systems VCT could bring to the counterinsurgency fight that justify its cost in the near term?

General Casey: Thank you, Senator. I think—a couple of points here. One, Future—first of all, the Future Combat Systems is a— an effective system across the spectrum of conflict, and I see it as very good at conventional war in the 21st century, which is going to be different than the wars we plan to fight on the plains of Europe. But, it also—I see it very helpful, in terms of irregular warfare. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the—in irregular warfare, your intelligence requirements require much more precision than they do in conventional war. It's a heck of a lot easier to find the second echelon of the 8th Guard's Tank Army than it is to find a—as you suggested, individual on the sixth floor of a high-rise apartment building in a sprawling city. And what we're working on with the Future Combat Systems, and what is being tested and evaluated today out at Fort Bliss, are unmanned and unattended ground sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles, all linked by the network, that will allow us to locate, precisely, the targets of our military operations, and then to apply precision effects. And there's a non-line-of-sight weapon system, that is part of this first test that you'll see, that can put a missile on a target from 40 kilometers away. And so, its precision intelligence-collections ability and its precision attack capabilities will make it, in my view, just as useful in irregular warfare as it is in conventional warfare.

Lastly, the network will enable our soldiers to have a much better situational understanding of what will inherently be a very, very complex environment, and they will augmented in that, in their cultural understanding and their cultural training, which would still be part of it. But, as I said, I'm—I am quite comfortable that, with the FCS capabilities in both an irregular and in a conventional environment.

Senator Akaka: Thank you for your responses.

Senator Thune?

Senator Thune: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Geren, General Casey, thank you for your service and your outstanding leadership to your—our country. And welcome to the committee.

I have to say that the last 6 years have made me extremely proud of the work that our Army does. These amazing men and women have performed incredible feats in the toughest of environments without complaint, and their families, of course, have shoul-

dered an incredible burden, as well, with many of the soldiers serving multiple tours in harsh environments overseas.

What I'd like to do is pick up on some of the questioning. I serve as the ranking Republican on the Readiness Subcommittee, with Senator Akaka. Last November, when you both appeared before the committee, I asked about the unwillingness of the Congress to deliver adequate and predictable funding to you, and what kind of effect this was having. General Casey, you answered, and I quote, "We will beggar the home front to make sure that our soldiers that are in the 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," end quote. Despite that testimony, Congress decided to provide only a portion of the emergency supplemental funds required by the President last year, and, in your prepared statement today, you emphasized that today's Army is out of balance, that, overall, our readiness is being consumed as fast as we build it. These statements are obviously cause for deep concern, and I guess my question is, Is the problem of our readiness being consumed as fast as it is built related to the problems that you face in receiving timely and complete funding from the Congress? And is the lack of full funding inhibiting our ability to grow the force with the capabilities that we need for future operations?

Either one of you, if you want to react to that, or answer.

Mr. Geren: Well, you have to look at the funding in all the many categories that we rely on it. As you know, we use the term, in the trade, "the color of money," but there's money that can be used for certain purposes and can't be used for other purposes. Predictable and timely funding is key for us to be able to operate an organization that is the size of the United States Army—a million men and women in uniform, and over 200,000 civilians, and over 200,000 contractors. And when funding is unpredictable, it makes it very hard to plan, long term.

One area of great concern for us right now is BRAC funding. Last year, you all did not fund the entire BRAC bill, and, for the Army, it's—we're \$560 million short, going into this year, in BRAC funding. It's going to make it very difficult for us to meet the—what the law requires, finishing BRAC funding—finishing BRAC by September 11—September of '11. We need that funding. We need it sooner, rather than later.

The military construction funding also is very critical to maintaining support for our families. We're moving tens of thousands of soldiers around, we're building housing and other support structures across the country and around the world, and the delays that we've experienced in receiving the military construction funding also complicated our ability to being able to build what we need, when we need it, and maintain the type of synchronization that's necessary in order to manage the personnel of a huge organization such as the Army's.

The supplemental funding—we are going to run out of the money in personnel in June in the supp, and we will run out of our O&M in July. And, as we anticipate that, we'll have to start making adjustments in order to accommodate for the ripple effect of those—of that situation. So, it makes it very difficult, it makes things cost more, and it makes things take longer. And we got awfully close,

last December, to a point where we were going to have to start laying off people, or at least giving them notice of layoffs, and I'm hopeful that we don't find ourselves in that situation, this spring. We really need the supplemental funding by Memorial Day.

General Casey: The only thing I'd add to that, Senator, is that what you don't necessarily see are the second- and third-order effects of the delays. You know, for example, I mentioned, in my opening statement, that in fiscal year '07 we got the money for the reset, right up front, and we were able to not only commit all of that, but also to, you know, buy the spares in advance that we needed, the long-lead items. And every time you delay long-lead items, you delay the completion of the reset and the vehicle. So, there are always second- and third-order effects that aren't visible that impact us over the long haul.

Mr. Geren: Let me mention one other thing, if I could, on military construction. When we're operating under a continuing resolution, we don't have the authorities for new starts, either. And that greatly complicates our ability to build the infrastructure to meet the needs of our soldiers and their families. And we have found ourselves, over the last several years, having to operate without the new-start authority. But—and—or at least not having it in a timely manner. And that complicates it, as well. So, it's not just a question of the money, it's also a question of the authority, which comes from authorizers. And that makes a—makes it challenging to be able to build our infrastructure on the timeline that we need in order to meet the needs of our soldiers and families.

Senator Thune: I have some other questions, Mr. Chairman, but I see my time is expired. That was the main, I guess, issue I wanted to get out, so I'll maybe—perhaps submit some of those for the record.

Thank you. [The information previously referred to follows:]  
[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Senator Reed [presiding]: Thank you very much.

Senator Nelson?

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for your service. I know our men and women in Army green are indebted to your dedication—are indebted to you for your commitment, and we appreciate your giving us your candid appraisal of where we are, at the moment, with readiness and a number of other extremely important issues.

One of them that has come to my attention is, last week the Washington Post published an article outlining the Army's policy on maternity leave and deferments from war-zone areas for new mothers that are serving in the military. According to the story, new mothers are facing a continuing difficult decision between motherhood and their service for their country. New mothers who have the critical skills to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have to seek a deferment which would allow them to spend more time with their newborn before having to return to their job within the military.

In 2007, the Navy extended their military policy, their deferment time for new mothers, to 12 months. But, the Army's policy only allows, at the present time, for 4 months before facing deployment. We've written—some of my colleagues and I have written a letter

to Secretary Gates to review the current policies that are in place, but I wonder if—Secretary Geren, in light of our need to keep skilled personnel, many of whom are women, maybe as much as 15 percent of our force, what are your thoughts about the Army's policy versus the Navy policy, or at least in looking at the policy to see if this is a reasonable period of time or whether it should be extended?

Mr. Geren: Well, the chief and I have had numerous discussions about that, and we have tasked the Army staff to examine that policy and examine the impact of a change in that policy. And I don't want to prejudge the outcome at this point, but we have asked them to explain to us why we should not be able to increase the maternity leave—

Senator Ben Nelson: Well, I know with—

Mr. Geren:—at least up to the level where the Marines have been, which is 6 months.

Senator Ben Nelson: With the force strength that we have, and the number of deployments and extended deployments, and trying to cut all that down, it only adds another variable to your already difficult task. But, if we're going to think about both recruitment and retention, I think something has to be—clearly, that has to be reviewed, because it's got to have some impact on people deciding whether to get in or stay in, if they're not going to have an—if they have to get an extended deferment in order to have family.

Mr. Geren: Well, I understand and share your concerns, and we should be able to get back with you pretty soon with an answer. [INFORMATION]

Senator Ben Nelson: Okay.

The—I think it was June of 2007 that the Center for New American Security Publication titled "Institutionalizing Adaptation Report" states, "The most important military component of long war—of the long war will not be the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we enable and empower our allies to fight with us." We're faced with requiring heavy numbers with a very well-armed and well-staffed Army to do what we would call, I guess, the essential combat of the past that an Army does. But, we're now faced with new requirements around the world. I guess we're no longer talking about nationbuilding. That's passe. But, at least in trying to help other countries develop their own military, are we at a point where we need to have a standing Army Advisory Corps, General Casey, as well as the typical operating mix of conventional forces and special operations forces, as well?

General Casey: That's a—that's something that we are looking at very closely, and not only internally, but also with the commander of Special Operations Command, Admiral Olson, and with the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In fact, we're getting together, here, in the next couple of weeks to discuss that.

It—clearly, one of the elements of any former battlefield, we believe, will be our ability to interact and work with indigenous forces.

Senator Ben Nelson: And, without knowing the answer to this, it's impossible to even give much of a guess, but on a 50–50 basis, do you think that 50 percent of the future will require conventional forces, or will it be 60 percent, 40 percent? What mix do you envi-

sion between an asymmetrical combat force capability and conventional force capability—would you envision?

General Casey: Senator, as we look to the future, we believe that our—we will be best served by multipurpose forces that can operate across the full spectrum of conflict, from conventional war to peacetime engagement. That's the doctrine that I spoke about here. And that's—those are the forces that we are trying to build. I would also tell you a bit more about your initial question there. Clearly, there's a role for—increasing role for special forces in training other armies, and we are increasing the number of special forces battalions by five, and that will give us great capability. We are, as you suggest, examining whether we should put an assistance group in each of the combatant commanders that—the regional combatant commanders. And we're working with them to see if that would be useful to them.

But, working with indigenous forces is clearly a element of the—of any future battlefield.

Senator Ben Nelson: Well, I'm going to follow—my time's up, but I'm going to follow up with a letter to Secretary of Defense, in light of the concern that we have about NATO's capabilities of providing military support, where necessary, at the required levels of support necessary. Should we be looking, perhaps, for a two-tiered approach by NATO to not only have the capabilities of combat forces, as in the case of Afghanistan, but for more assistance in this area of advisory—of an advisory role for part of their commitment? Because it seems to me that if—it's one thing for us to hit 'em over the head because they don't send enough troops, they don't have enough troops, they don't keep enough troops—and I'm not talking about all those that are already doing it, but those who can't—there may be another role that they could play. Rather than to have us hit them over the head for what they're not doing, maybe we ought to start thinking about what they could do, and how they could support that kind of a growth in the Army.

General Casey: You know, the NATO allies, especially Italy, did a great job in Iraq, training police. The Carabinieri were very effective in the south.

Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen.

Senator Reed: Senator Graham?

Senator Graham: Thank you, Senator.

I missed the discussion between Senator Levin, Collins, and, I think, yourselves, about what law governs contractor behavior. And the sooner we could get a answer to that situation, I think, the better the country would be.

I've just gotten back from a fairly extended visit to Iraq, and one of the big issues facing our country is that we're going to war now with, I think, over 100,000 contractors, and they're patriotic Americans who are doing a great job, generally speaking, for our country, but we've never had a war quite like this, and the idea of that many people being in Iraq, some of 'em with guns, we need to address this problem and find out what law does regulate their behavior; because, Mr. Secretary, General Casey, I think it's a very demoralizing event for an E-4 or E-5 to be sitting across the table from a civilian contractor who makes four times what they make,

and the contractor breaks the rules in an obvious way, and nothing happens, other than maybe getting fired. So, I would just add my voice to the idea that we need, as a country, to come up with a solution to this problem.

General Casey, when it comes to force reductions in Iraq, the goal is to try to get to 15 brigades, I think, by July. Is that correct?

General Casey: Correct, sir.

Senator Graham: Could you explain to me, very briefly, the collaborative process that's going on, in determining when the troops come home, between you, General Petraeus, and others?

General Casey: As you know, General Petraeus will come back in April and give his assessment of what needs to happen after July. He will interact with the Joint Chiefs in the process of forming his recommendations. But, there will also be independent action by the Joint Chiefs, so that we all—we can present the President with our independent views on what the situation requires.

Senator Graham: I understand that, and I just—my two cents worth here is that it's been a very hard fight to turn things around in Iraq. I think we are turning things around—politically, economically, and militarily. And everybody wants the troops back home, particularly—add me to that list. But, more than anything else, I want to make sure we don't lose the gains we've achieved by going down too fast. And I'm sure you're sensitive to that. Is that correct, General Casey?

General Casey: I am sensitive—

Senator Graham: Yeah.

General Casey:—to that, sir.

Senator Graham: I know the troops want to come home, but they're very proud of what they've achieved, and I want to make sure that, you know, we don't bring people home for anything other than success. And I think we're—they're going to come home with success.

General Casey: Senator, I would—if I could add to—

Senator Graham: Please. Yes, sir.

General Casey:—what you say. And, as I talk to the soldiers, it's exactly what you suggest. The most important thing to them is winning, not—

Senator Graham: Yeah.

General Casey:—necessarily coming home.

Senator Graham: Generally speaking, General Casey, how is morale for folks in the Army, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan?

General Casey: Senator, everything I have personally observed, you know, when I—during my visits in December, and that I continue to hear, is that morale, both in Iraq, Afghanistan, and among the returning forces, is very positive. They believe in what they're doing. They see themselves making a difference in a very difficult environment. And so, I believe morale is very good.

Now, as we said before you arrived, the force is stretched—

Senator Graham: Right.

General Casey:—and there is no question about that. And I just visited a brigade in Alaska that had been back about 90 days. My assessment is, they felt pretty good about what they did, but they were tired.

Senator Graham: Sure. And I can—

General Casey: And it was—

Senator Graham: And that's why we're trying to build up the Army, right?

General Casey: Right.

Senator Graham: Is that correct? Okay.

There was a comment made at, I think, the last Democratic debate—I'm—I think that's when it was made—by Senator Obama, to the effect—Mr. Secretary, I don't know if you are familiar with what he said, but he basically, during the debate, indicated that a captain had come up to him—who was in charge of a rifle platoon in Afghanistan—and that, according to the captain, the amount of troops in that platoon were basically reduced in half, and the other half went to Iraq, and that the people left over went to Afghanistan, and they didn't have bullets, and they had to use Taliban weapons—it was easier to use Taliban weapons than it was to get the equipment they needed from the Army. Has Senator Obama talked to you or anyone in the Department about this?

Mr. Geren: No. I have not discussed it with Senator Obama. General Casey, though, has looked into this issue, and I'd like to give him the opportunity to respond, if—with your permission.

Senator Graham: Please.

General Casey: Senator, as we looked into this, the best we could tell is, this incident occurred back in 2003 and 2004, and it was in a brigade of the 10th Mountain Division. We have talked to the brigade commander, we've looked at their readiness reports. The brigade was manned over 100 percent, and stayed over 100-percent manned the whole time they were there. Now, it's certainly possible that platoons within that brigade might not have been filled to the same level as the rest of the brigade.

You'll recall, that time was a difficult time, as we were all working very hard to get up-armored Humvees in to the troops. There were no up-armored Humvees available for him in training, which is one of the points that he made; there were only, at that time, a little over 50 in all of Afghanistan.

There may have been some spot shortages of spare parts and ammunition, but the commander said that there—there was never a shortage of ammunition that impacted on the unit's ability to accomplish its mission.

Senator Graham: But, you were never contacted by Senator Obama in 2003 or '04, or any other time?

General Casey: No, I—I have not been.

Senator Graham: Okay. Thank you very much.

Chairman Levin [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Graham.

Senator McCaskill?

Senator McCaskill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Well, since we had a McCain moment, I think I need to have an Obama moment, out of fairness. And I wouldn't have—it wasn't what I intended to ask about, but I think—Secretary Geren and General Casey, I think you both are certainly aware that this captain has been contacted and has independently verified to independent sources the frustration he had with getting everything they needed, to do what they needed to do in Afghanistan. Isn't—is that your understanding, that this captain, who has served valiantly and heroically, has independently verified that, certainly,

there was a frustration over getting what they needed to do the job in Afghanistan at that point in time?

General Casey: Senator, I don't think there's any doubt about that. I—we have purposefully not tried to seek out the captain, individually.

Senator McCaskill: Which I respect.

General Casey: I've seen the same reports that you've seen. And, again, I have no reason to doubt what it is the captain says. But, this was 2003–2004, almost, you know, 4 and a half years ago. We acknowledge and we all worked together to correct deficiencies with equipment that we saw during that period, not only in Afghanistan, but in Iraq. And so, there—it was a period that we have worked our way through—

Senator McCaskill: I think there has been, certainly, a—in fact, I admire the acknowledgment that has occurred in this hearing room, by command and by Department of Defense and by Secretary Gates and by you and all of your colleagues, at the shortcomings, in terms of getting the equipment and getting the number of—and we all know the shortages we have in Afghanistan right now, in terms of boots on the ground. I mean, that is a critical, critical problem for us right now, in terms of us having success with NATO, getting the number of other countries involved, like we should have and haven't been able to, because of their unwillingness. So, I think it's a little—to act as if this Army captain is speaking about something that we all haven't acknowledged, I think, frankly, is misleading.

And now I'll get to my questions.

I've looked at—first of all, I want to congratulate Senator Nelson for speaking about maternity leave. I'm glad that he showed his softer side today and acknowledged that that is a career issue for the Army.

I also want to mention, in passing, before I get to officer retention, about paternity leave. I think that it's time for the Army—frankly, for the Secretary of Defense to look at, overall, a uniformity of policy between the various branches as it relates to both maternity leave and acknowledgment of some recognition of paternity leave. I know this was being discussed. I know that there was a kind of a pullback that occurred by one of the Under Secretaries at Defense about paternity leave. But, I just wanted to say that I'm hopeful that you all continue to look at that issue, because it dovetails nicely with what I want to ask you about, this morning, which is our ability to retain officers.

I would like both of you to speak to what I think the GAO pointed out, which is, we need to consolidate the command over West Point and ROTC, in terms of officer retention and—you know, it worries me that we are promoting 98 percent of our captains and majors right now. That's an extraordinarily high number. It also worried me, to the extent that we are doing this ascension—the officer ascension program directly through OCS, as opposed through West Point and ROTC. It appears to me, looking from the outside, that we may have a little turf war going on here between the command of West Point and the command of ROTC. Clearly, if I have young people that have applied to go to West Point, and they don't make it, we need to make sure we're grabbing those folks and get-

ting them in the ROTC program. And I'm very worried about this lack of coordination, especially when you realize that this is where—a huge hole that we can't patch. We have to integrate a solution. And I'd love both of you to speak to that.

Mr. Geren: Well, thank you for raising that. And I appreciated the letter you sent on that. And I've studied the GAO report, and agree with many of those concerns.

WE have tasked a retired general to look at this issue and make some recommendations on how we do a better job of coordinating the overall officer accessions. We are already working to do a better job of taking those outstanding young men and women who are not accepted into West Point, and trying to make them aware and recruit them into ROTC programs. But, overall, we've got to do a better job of taking those—what, right now, are, by and large, three stovepipes—the military academy, ROTC, and OSC—and bring those together, break down the walls between them. And, over the course of this spring, we'll be back to you with a proposal to address those concerns. But, very important concerns, and I—we are in agreement about the challenge, and we'll be getting back with you soon on a recommended way ahead.

Senator McCaskill: And I'm happy, if there's some—you know, sometimes, I know, that the stovepiping is resisted by the commands, and, you know, if some pointed letters to any of those commands, General, would help, I'm more than happy to—

General Casey: Thank you for the—

Senator McCaskill:—let my—

General Casey:—offer, Senator.

Senator McCaskill:—pen fly.

General Casey: I find they respond pretty well to my direction.

Senator McCaskill: I think that you can handle it, but I just want you to know, you've got—there are several of us that have your back on this one. I think—

General Casey: Thank you.

Senator McCaskill:—it's really important.

Mr. Geren: Thank you.

Senator McCaskill: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCaskill.

Senator Sessions?

Senator Sessions: General Casey, one of the things that you promised to do when you returned from as our commander in Iraq was to—as Chief of Staff—was to check on the status of families, those who've served, how they're doing. Your wife has been active in that. You've visited with a lot of people. First, are you continuing to do that? And what are your observations, in general, and concerns about the state of the Army family health?

General Casey: Senator, as I took over, here, and we—my wife and I traveled around the Army, it was clear to us—and this is last—late last summer—it was clear to us that the families were the most brittle part of the force, that we were asking more of Army families than I, frankly, thought that we should have been. And we weren't doing enough for them. And I'm a member of an Army family, for 60 years. And so, I have some experience in this.

The Secretary and I, in October, issued what—an Army Family Covenant, where we restated the commitment of the Army to families. And we focused that covenant on five key areas, and they were the five key areas that families gave to my wife and I, that they were most concerned about.

They wanted standardized services. You know, they said, "We don't need a bunch of new—fancy new programs. What we need is you to fund what you have, standardize 'em across the installations."

They want access to quality—better access to quality healthcare. Quality is not necessary—not usually the problem; it's accessing, getting into the system. And so, we're working with the Defense Health Services on that one.

They want quality housing, they want better education and childcare opportunities for their children, and they want better education opportunities and employment opportunities for themselves.

So, we have focused \$1.4 billion last year, \$1.2 billion this year, in this budget, on improving family programs. That's about double what we've done in the past. And I believe it is absolutely essential to continue on that track, to retain the quality force that we have today.

Mr. Secretary, anything you want to add to that?

Mr. Geren: I'd like to add something, quickly. And this Family Covenant, we went—we signed the Family Covenant, our leaders at each command signed it, all across the world—we had 120 Family Covenant signings—to make sure that families understood our commitment to them, and that they—

Senator Sessions: Were the families participating in these signing ceremonies?

Mr. Geren: Yes, they did. We had large family groups at every signing. And we've seen—the Chief mentioned some of the funding and some of these new initiatives that have been undertaken, but some of the most important initiatives that help the families are going to come from those commanders on the ground, those garrison commanders and those command sergeant majors, as they identify ways to just make the Army work better for families.

General Caldwell, out at Leavenworth, he took over the command there, and saw that we had a start time for the classes at Leavenworth that conflicted with the start time for children's classes in the area schools. So, General Caldwell moved the start time of his classes back 30 minutes, so the parents, who were—had the responsibility of taking care of those children, could take the kids to school, could eat breakfast with 'em. And I think it's little things like that, in addition to some of these major budget initiatives, that are going to make the Army work better for families. So, going to see a lot of creativity coming out of leaders, up and down—NCOs and officers—as we try to make the Army work better for families.

And, this spring—I'd like to, just real briefly mention, we did the Covenant with Families last fall; this spring, we're going to do a covenant between the communities and families. Every installation in America has some wonderful programs which the local communities stand up and support families—Adopt a Platoon, the Hugs program that help families through difficult times. Every one of the

installations all over the country has some, or many, innovative programs to help families.

We're going across the whole force in trying to identify those, catalog 'em, identify best practices, and, over the course of this spring and through the summer, we're going to be going to all the major installations across our country and invite our community leaders to join us in this Covenant with Families, and give them some ideas on things they can do that help families better, take good ideas from Alabama, and take them to Texas, or take them to Oklahoma. So, it's our second step in this.

We are—the Chief used the term "brittle." The families, no doubt, are stretched. They have shown extraordinary resilience. But, we can do more as an Army, we can do more as a government, and our communities can do more. And so, we're inviting them to join hands with us and help better support those families during these challenging times.

Senator Sessions: Well, I think you're wise to spend time on that. I think it's the right thing to do. We are asking a great deal of men and women in uniform, and, as a result, we want them to be supported in every feasible way.

My time is up, but I do believe we're making some progress on improving housing, some very good housing programs that are out there that's accelerated the—our ability to produce housing much faster than we've done in the past. But, I hope that the Army, in particular, will emphasize, because we don't mean—our Army personnel, who, oftentimes, are away while their family's at home in anything but the best housing we can give 'em.

So, thank you, General Casey, for your commitment to that issue. I believe you'll fulfill the commitments you made when you were confirmed and I asked you about that.

And, Secretary Geren, I appreciate your report, there. I think that's a step in the right direction, because we are all worried that our personnel are supported adequately in a whole host of different areas.

Mr. Geren: Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator—excuse me—Senator Sessions, thank you.

Senator Nelson?

Senator Bill Nelson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you for you getting personally involved in this case of the World War II veteran who was inaccurately imprisoned, given a dishonorable discharge; the Army, a half a century later, recognized its mistake, gave him an honorable discharge; but then, to compensate him for the year that he spent in prison, sent him his pay of \$720. And I want to thank you for personally getting into it, with the Department of Veterans Affairs, to try to figure out some appropriate compensation, given the fact that 50 years has passed. So, thank you.

Mr. Secretary, the chairman has already asked you to release the full classified version of the RAND report, which was—on the planning for postwar Iraq, which was prepared for the Army by the RAND Corporation, and also to prepare an unclassified summary. I'd like to, additionally, suggest that that RAND study be sent to the Intelligence Committee. I have the privilege, as does the chair-

man, of sitting on both committees, and, if you will do that, we would appreciate it very much.

Now, what I want to suggest to you here is that—it has come to my attention, from women in my State, about the rapes that have occurred in Afghanistan and Iraq. I have been after this to try to get information, and the IG stated that the Army Criminal Investigative Command—and then they gave me a bunch of statistics for '05, '06, and '07—but, what we'd like is, we want to know the number of sexual assaults. Now, this is not military people, these are contractors. Because if you had this in the military, you've got the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Now, the chairman has already asked you, earlier today, what law applies if a civilian contractor commits a crime, and you said you would get back to the chairman on that. What we're finding is, incomplete information and also this Never-Never Land of not knowing what to do and what the—laws to apply, and who's going to enforce it. You would think, if it's a contractor to DOD, DOD would enforce the prosecution of these crimes. Same in a contractor with the State Department, and so forth. So, for the record, let me just lay out—we're not going to have time, obviously, in this setting here—a number of questions that I'd like you to address.

The IG has given us what they thought were the sexual assaults in those years that I stated, but we need to know, going back to the beginning of October of 2001 in Afghanistan, and then, likewise, the beginning in Iraq—March of 2003 in Iraq and—What's the disposition of each of those sexual assault cases? What are the service components or government agencies involved in each investigation? What is the status of the persons involved in each case? In other words, are they Active Duty military? Are they U.S. Government civilian employee, contract employee, or Iraqi national? Who has the jurisdiction or investigative authority for these sexual assault allegations in both Afghanistan and Iraq? And this committee should have a clear explanation of the rules, regulations, policies, and processes under which these sexual assaults are investigated and prosecuted.

It's obviously in our oversight responsibility to ask these questions. And we would be most appreciative if you could help us get this information, because we've gotten very limited information, thus far, as a result of the IG referring us to the Army Criminal Investigative Command. [INFORMATION]

Senator Bill Nelson: I come to the table with this, because, indeed, there is a Tampa lady that was part of a contractor that had contracted to the DOD. I've already talked to the chairman. In my capacity as chairman of a subcommittee in Foreign Relations, I'm going to have a hearing on this, as it involves the contractors to the Department of the State. But, we need this information with regard to the Department of Defense.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Nelson. Let me just, first of all, commend you for your pursuit of this issue. And we will ask our witnesses whether or not they will be able to promptly provide that information.

Secretary Geren?

Mr. Geren: We'll certainly work to provide it, everything we can get—we can acquire. Now, it's possible that some of this information will come from other departments of government, but we'd be glad to cooperate with them and do everything we can to get you the information you request.

Chairman LEVIN. That's great. Thank you so much.

Senator Webb?

Senator Webb: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to follow up briefly on what the Senator from Florida just asked you, maybe, General Casey, you could tell us what law applied to contractors when you were commanding troops over there.

General Casey: We did this earlier, Senator, and we had—the Uniform Code of Military Justice applied to the folks that were working for the Department of Defense—

Senator Webb: Applied to civilians?

General Casey: The contractors—

Senator Webb: Civilian contractors were under the Uniform Code of Military Justice?

General Casey: The—that worked for the Department of Defense. Not all of them.

Senator Webb: That worked for the Department of Defense. What—well, how many were that—were they—how many—how many are you talking about?

General Casey: It varied over the time I was there—

Senator Webb: From what to what?

General Casey:—Senator. I want to say around 20,000.

Senator Webb: You had 20,000 civilian contractors subject to the—

General Casey: I'm sorry—

Senator Webb:—UCMJ.

General Casey: Not—

Senator Webb: How many were subject to the UCMJ when you there?

General Casey: Senator, I do not recall the number, right now.

Senator Webb: Approximately. You were commanding the troops. How many were subject to the UCMJ?

General Casey: Senator, we worked very hard, over time, to get an accurate number on contractors, and I want to say the number that was subject to UCMJ was around 7- to 8,000, but I am not—

Senator Webb: Seven- to 8,000—

General Casey:—I am not sure of that number.

Senator Webb: When you were commanding, 7- to 8,000 civilians were subject to the UCMJ.

General Casey: That's my recollection, yes, Senator.

Senator Webb: Do you know if any of 'em were ever charged under the UCMJ?

General Casey: Senator, I have a—I have vague recollections of a couple of cases, but I can't—I can't say for certainty.

Senator Webb: I'm not even sure—as someone who has spent some time in military law, I'm not even—and sat on court-martials and been involved in the appeal of cases out of the UCMJ, I'm not even sure how you could have a proper court for a civilian under UCMJ, or how you could charge them. The last—the most recent news I've heard about this was that this was a proposal last year,

when I arrived on this committee. You're saying that you actually had civilians, in Iraq subject to the UCMJ, who were subject to proceedings under the UCMJ.

General Casey: Sir—Senator, my recollection is that I—we had UCMJ authority over some number of DOD civilians that were contracted by DOD. I am not 100-percent certain of that.

Senator Webb: Well, I'd like to know. I would think, quite frankly, if you were commanding people over there, you'd know that.

General Casey: At one time, I did, Senator. And it's been a while.

Senator Webb: It's been a while since you know that? I can remember when I was—

General Casey: A while since I was—

Senator Webb:—commanding troops in 1969.

General Casey: Yes, Senator.

Senator Webb: It's not a difficult concept, whether people are subject to the UCMJ. This isn't something I was going to ask about, but it's—I find it very curious.

Senator Bill Nelson: And may I say to the Senator that I have been told that the UCMJ does not apply, and that's the reason of why we've got to get some clarity about what law does apply to protect these Americans that are serving their country in a civilian capacity abroad. Thank you—

Senator Webb: Well, I would agree—I would say to the Senator from Florida that this was an issue that came up in the Personnel Subcommittee last year as a proposal.

And I'm not aware of anyone, Mr. Chairman, who has—a civilian—who has been subjected to UCMJ.

General Casey: Senator, I—

Chairman LEVIN. We've asked the question so that we can get very clear answers for the record. We've not gotten them clearly this morning. And I believe that my chief of staff has just told me that, in the last couple of years, we've taken some steps relative to contingency operations, and people who are contracted for, relative to those operations, to be covered. But, that's within the last couple of years, and I'm not sure I even heard my own chief of staff, because he was whispering in my ear as you were asking the question.

In any event, Secretary Geren has also, this morning, indicated a backup form of prosecution, and used an acronym, which I'm not personally familiar with.

Perhaps, Secretary Geren, you could repeat for us what you made reference to earlier this morning, in terms of possible prosecution by the Department of Justice.

Mr. Geren: It's a law that was passed in the early '90s, and it goes by the acronym of MEJA, M-E-J-A. And I apologize, I don't know what it stands for. But, it gives our Justice Department the authority to prosecute crimes by American citizens abroad, and it came out of a case in which an American citizen in—I believe, in Saudi Arabia, committed a crime, and led to this initiative. It has not been used much. As I understand it, it's been used 12 to 18 times over its—

Chairman LEVIN. In Iraq? In—

Mr. Geren: No.

Chairman LEVIN.—Afghanistan?

Mr. Geren: I think, just overall, as I understand it. It's a Justice Department authority, it's not a DOD authority. I believe it's been used twice in Iraq. One was a CACI contractor, having to do with a—one of the detainee investigations. It was a CACI contractor that was accused of detainee abuse, and I believe he was prosecuted under MEJA. And there was one other case, and I don't remember the details of that one. But, it's been used very sparingly. At one point, I heard the Justice Department discuss some of the challenges associated with applying that as a prosecution tool. There's problems with witnesses and gathering evidence. They could, obviously, provide you more insights than I could.

And, as I understand it, in '07 Senator Graham offered an amendment that expanded the application of the UCMJ for use against civilians, and broadened that authority, and clarified that authority. And some of our commanders are waiting for some implementing instructions to figure out exactly how you do it. As Senator Webb noted, there are some complications—obvious complications using the UCMJ as broadly as it's now allowed under Senator Graham's amendment.

Chairman LEVIN. Yeah, that is the reference which my chief of staff made, was to that '07 amendment by Senator Graham, which became law.

Mr. Geren: Yes.

Chairman LEVIN. Yes.

Okay, I didn't—we ought to give you—

Senator Webb: Well, I would say—

Chairman LEVIN.—give you some additional time, Senator.

Senator Webb:—I would—yeah, I would just say to the Chairman, I would appreciate if we could really stay on top of this a little bit, because I think that the Congress has been rolled on this issue for quite some time, that with—we now have in excess of 150,000 contractors in Iraq, from the count that I've seen; it's probably higher than that. And I'm not aware of any case—there may be a case; I'm not aware of any case—where serious crimes have been brought to justice. And we know serious crimes have been committed.

Chairman LEVIN. We did ask, before, for a very prompt assessment, because other committees are also interested in this subject, and there's been an IG report on this subject—

Mr. Geren: Yes.

Chairman LEVIN.—so that Secretary Geren committed to a very prompt overview of the law in this area.

Senator Webb: I thank the Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I was told by Senator Warner, who's not here today, that—in a meeting with him, that you expressed—I'm not sure whether they were your personal views or the views of the Department of the Army, that you were in support of the concept of a GI bill that would take care of these people who have been serving since 9/11 in the same way that those who served in World War II were taken care of.

Mr. Geren: We talked, in general, about expanding the benefits of the GI bill, and talked, most specifically, about expanding the eligibility of benefits so that a soldier could transfer his or her BI bill benefits to spouses and children. And that was really the focus

of our conversation that day. He has passed legislation—or the Congress had passed legislation several years ago that allowed us to—for critical skills, we could offer an expansion of the use of GI bill benefits allowed to be transferred to children, and talked, that day, about how we might expand that benefit and make it more broadly available.

Senator Webb: Right. Well, that's a totally separate concept than the issue of S.22, the GI bill that's before the Senate right now. That's taking the Montgomery GI bill and, sort of, moving it laterally rather than measurably increasing the benefits themselves.

Mr. Geren: That's—that was our discussion.

Senator Webb: So, does the Department of the Army have a position on the expansion of GI bill benefits—

Mr. Geren: The bill that you've proposed—

Senator Webb:—other than the Montgomery GI bill?

Mr. Geren: No, Senator, we have not had an opportunity to reach a final recommendation on it. The Secretary of Defense, Dr. Gates, has taken ownership of that initiative, for want of a better word. The services are working with his Under Secretary in analyzing the bill. We have not had an opportunity to work all—through all the provisions of it. As you know, in the President's State of the Union, he noted the GI bill is one of the areas that he wants to see our Department expand its benefits as—

Senator Webb: Well, I am told that the administration opposes this. And so, I'm trying to get some clarification, and I'm—I mentioned that with Secretary Gates when he was testifying, and, in concept, I think he agreed with what we were saying, here. And I would note that you have a pilot program—I just got something on this, about a week ago—that, as an incentive, a recruitment incentive, will pay enlistees who sign up for 5 years, as it reads here in this article, \$40,000 toward purchasing a home when they leave the Army.

Mr. Geren: Yes.

Senator Webb: I don't know what the cost of that program is, but what—you know, what you're seeing here—the argument against S. 22 is that it would affect retention at the end, and what you're seeing here is clearly an incentive for someone to get out and cash in their \$40,000 to buy a home at the end of an enlistment. And I—as someone who spent a lot of my life working manpower issues, I would respectfully say that probably the best recruitment incentive you can give people if you want to broaden your recruiting pool is good educational benefits. You seem to be pounding on one potential pool of enlistees over and over again, when you've got this whole group over here of people who are struggling to get through college, who might have some incentive to serve, that aren't being fit into the formula.

Mr. Geren: Well, unquestionably, educational benefits are one of the most appealing benefit for service in the United States military. It's a big part of our recruiting, it's a big part of our retention. The Secretary of Defense, again, has taken ownership of evaluating that. The services are providing input. And, to my knowledge, the administration has not taken a position on the bill. I'm not aware of it, if the administration has.

Senator Webb: We've had a number of articles in the Service Times, where the administration has opposed the bill. The Department of Veterans Affairs opposed it in hearings last year. I'm on the Veterans Committee, as well. And, you know, I think—I know my time is expired, Mr. Chairman, just say one thing—you know, I—like the General, I've been around the military since the day I was born. I feel very strongly about the people who are serving. I think that the military, right now, has been doing a very good job, in terms of managing its career force. We have some disagreements on the dwell-time issues and that sort of thing. But, there are so many people who come into the military because of family tradition, love of country, with no intention of really staying. And those are the people who are getting lost in the system, here. And that is a pool that actually would expand with the right sort of educational benefits, and they'd have something when they walked back into the community. The number-one recruiting tool, at least from the time that I was doing this, back in the community, is a veteran who is proud of their service and believes strongly in—that the military took care of 'em. So, this is kind of a no-brainer to me. I can't see why we can't get it done.

Mr. Geren: Well, it's being actively evaluated right now, and the Department will take a position on it, I expect, soon. I checked, just as of yesterday, and the Office of Secretary of Defense was still accepting input from the services, and evaluating it, and looking at the financial implications. And, as soon as a decision is made, sir, we'll get back with you, Senator.

Senator Webb: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Webb.

And when you present the analysis of the law which applies to contractors as to whether they can be prosecuted either in a military court or in an American court, include in that any understandings or agreements which have been reached between the American authorities and the Iraqi authorities relative to the prosecution of these folks in Iraqi courts.

Mr. Geren: We will. [INFORMATION]

Chairman LEVIN. Okay.

Mr. Geren: And, just to expand, earlier you asked us to address the State Department—

Chairman LEVIN. That is correct.

Mr. Geren:—and so—

Chairman LEVIN. That's correct.

Mr. Geren:—we'll try to pull together a picture of the entire—

Chairman LEVIN. We appreciate that.

Mr. Geren:—governmental position.

Chairman LEVIN. Senator Kennedy, thank you for your patience.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you very much, General.

I'd like to talk with you, a little this morning, about the kinds of pressures that are upon the—those that have served, and also those that are serving in the military, in order to understanding the state of our—state of our Army.

First of all, in this area of Army suicide—area of Army suicide—in 2007, the Army suicide rate was the highest it's ever been. 2006, Army suicides rose to 17 percent—100,000. That number increased to 20 percent in 2007, when 121 soldiers committed suicide, more

than double the numbers reported in 2001, before we sent troops into Iraq.

The Army strives to ensure that 90 percent of its enlistees have high school diplomas. Last year, only 79 percent of the enlistees achieved that goal. The Army conduct waivers have more than doubled since 2003. The felony conviction waivers have increased 24 percent. Serious misdemeanor waivers have increased by 168 percent. These obviously highlight the strain we placed on the Armed Forces. The Army is currently facing a shortage of 3,000 officers or more, and the shortage is overwhelming in the mid-grades, the senior captains and majors. The Army recently announced that it failed to meet its goal of retaining 14,184 captains, and retained only 11,933, but despite an aggressive campaign that offered cash bonuses, as much as 35,000, plus ability to choose next assignment or attend military-funded graduate school in exchange for continued service. All told, 67 percent of those eligible for the program agreed to serve an additional 1 to 3 years. The goal was 80 percent. And the attitude of the very young, in terms of their willingness to—how they view joining of the service, has been dramatically altered or changed in the last several years.

Several weeks ago, Senator McCaskill and I and others wrote to you about some of these challenges that you're having, in terms of the expansion of West Point, Officers Candidate Schools. We've reached sort of a level on this. It seems that we're reaching a "perfect storm," here, both in terms of attitude of young people going in, in terms of the key personnel that are in there, remaining and staying. For those that do remain and stay, and that have had the—been called on to go to Iraq and Afghanistan—the explosion, in terms of domestic problems and challenges that's happening.

How—what is—what's your, kind of, take of this? How should we view all of this? I mean, is this the "perfect storm," what's happening, in terms of the military? How serious should we be concerned about it? And is it just enough to change the tempo of service from 15 to 12 months? If you look at all of these kinds of indicators together, and take them, it certainly poses a very serious kind of challenge for the military. And how are we going to deal with this?

General Casey: Senator, you're right, and you are seeing the signs of a force that is stretched and under stress. And we—the Secretary and I monitor these and other trends on a very regular basis, and it is something that we are all very concerned about and watch very closely.

That said, there are some other positive indicators that we also watch. For example, retention—noncommissioned officer retention in all three of our components is well above 100 percent. That's a very strong signal. We believe that even though the force is stretched, they are still a very dedicated and committed group.

The second thing I'd say is that all of these indicators that you've mentioned, we are looking at and addressing. You mentioned suicides; that is something that concerns us all. We have a four-point program, here, that we've been implementing for some time, to reduce the stigma, to raise awareness, increase access to behavioral healthcare, and provide feedback to commanders.

So, it's a combination of, one, recognizing that, yes, the force is stretched and stressed, and then, two, taking aggressive action to provide as much support and mitigation to the soldiers and the families as we can.

Senator KENNEDY. You had a task force that was focused on suicide, and then, that became, as I understand, generally underfunded, until very recently. I don't know what your—what the take is on—take is on that. And I—it seems to me, the re-enlistment rate is certainly something to be watched, but if you're taking—if you're looking across the board on this, in terms of the youths' attitude about whether to join the service, all the steps that's been necessary to try and bring people into the service, the challenge that people have in remaining in the service—who are the high-quality figures in the—in their mid-career, the majors and the captains, particularly those who have been involved in combat arms—it's certainly a—the path—a pattern of enormous kinds of dangers. And I'm just interested in what we're looking at. Do you take each of these components and try and deal with them, individually? Do you look at this, globally? How are you trying to come to grips with this in a meaningful way?

Mr. Geren: Well, Senator, we're in our seventh year of combat operations, and next month will have been 5 years in Iraq. And I don't think it's surprising that we will—that we start to see some of these personal indicators that you've noted start to show the stress on the force, both on the soldiers and on the families. On a macro level, one of the most important things we can do is get the deployment lengths down from 15 months down to 12 months, and get the dwell time greater than the deployment length. And that will go a long way towards reducing a lot of this stress on the force.

But, the symptoms of the stress—and you've done an excellent job of detailing them—we are approaching every one of those, individually, as well. The suicides, we've seen; we've watched the divorce rates; we've seen an increase in the number of divorces among females; we've got family programs, chaplain programs, and other support programs, to try to address that. We have mental health issues, an increase of numbers of soldiers that have sought treatment for mental health. We're trying to staff up and do a better job of meeting those needs.

So, on a macro level, we're trying to grow the Army, we're trying to reduce the stress on individual soldiers. But then, in detail, we're going after every one of those symptoms. And we've got an aggressive program to try to attack every single one of those and help soldiers, help families deal with this stress.

Senator KENNEDY. Well, let me just say, finally, in December I mentioned I sent a letter to you with Biden—Senator Biden and Bayh and McCaskill, urging you to develop a plan to efficiently and effectively manage your accession pipeline. In developing a plan, we suggest that you conduct a thorough review of the Army's professional military education and career progression and selection programs. And your response, Mr. Secretary, to our letter details some long-term solutions to these problems, such as precommissioning retention programs and increasing West Point and ROTC production. For many of us, though, the—our concern

is more immediate, and I'd hope you'd take a look again at the letter that we sent—

Mr. Geren: Yes, sir, I'd—

Senator KENNEDY.—to see if you—

Mr. Geren:—I'm—

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you.

Mr. Geren: Your letter is—we have taken immediate steps to respond to the concerns raised in your letter. And I share your concerns. And the GAO report, that you noted in your letter, made some very important observations about our Army—our officer accessions, and we are taking immediate steps, and we have a task force that is going to be reporting back to the chief and me within a couple months, that's going to—and then, we're going to take some additional steps. But, you've raised some very important points in that letter about the need to do a better job of coordinating officer accessions, and we are acting on that.

Senator KENNEDY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Kennedy.

Just one more question about the FCS program. And it's, as you point out, a critically important program for Army modernization, and you've given us some of the funding assumptions in the future, and are confident that it will be, in fact—the program will be completed.

Secretary Gates said—and perhaps you were asked this and I missed it—that it's hard for him to see how that program can be completed in its entirety.

General Casey: We discussed that with Senator Reed.

Chairman LEVIN. Is there not a disconnect there?

General Casey: We've talked—I've talked directly to the Secretary about it. He has no problems with the program. As he said, he particularly likes the spinout program to help the current force. My sense is that, when the question was formed about, "Faced with the inevitability of a downturn in resources, would you have to look the—relook the program?"—and it's a \$162-billion program—and I think that's where he framed his answer.

Chairman LEVIN. I don't understand, then, what your answer is. Did he say that it is his expectation that the program will not be completed in its entirety?

General Casey: Senator, my recollection of the exchange was, it was about, "Faced with a drawdown in resources, could we afford a \$162-billion"—

Chairman LEVIN. It was on the assumption that—

General Casey:—"program?"

Chairman LEVIN.—there would be a reduction in—

General Casey: Right.

Chairman LEVIN.—overall resources, that he—

General Casey: And I think—

Chairman LEVIN.—gave that answer?

General Casey:—as the Secretary said earlier, even at the high point of the funding, it's less than a third of our procurement accounts, which, as you know, are about a quarter of our overall budget. So, we believe that it is affordable.

Chairman LEVIN. I just want to be clear that you're saying that Senator—that Secretary Gates's comment, that it's hard for him to see how the program can be completed in its entirety, that was left out in that quote was that, "If there is a reduction in overall resources for the Army," that then it would be hard for him to see it? Is that what you're saying?

General Casey: That's my recollection. There was something in there about the inevitability of a decrease in resources.

Chairman LEVIN. He said it was inevitable there will be a reduction in resources?

General Casey: Senator, my recollection is it was—that's the way the question was posed.

Mr. Geren: He has expressed his strong support for the program. And I, also, have discussed his comment with him since that hearing. He was expressing concern over—long-term, when you have a program that depends on funding over many years, about the challenges associated with maintaining support over those years in the face of budget challenges. But, he assured me, in our conversations, of his strong support for FCS, and nothing to do with the quality of the program or the importance of the program. But, he was being candid about what he sees as the challenges, long-term, in maintaining a program such as that over many years.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, we thank you both. It's been a morning which, happily, had only three interruptions instead of five, so—as it was, it was a bit hectic, but we very much appreciate your testimony, your service. And, again, please, always represent to our troops and their families the support of this Senate.

Mr. Geren: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Casey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:26 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]