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Chairman Nelson, Distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to talk today on behalf of America's Army. As you know, our Army is out of balance as we enter the seventh year of the Long War. Demand for forces exceeds our capacity to supply them on a sustained basis. As a result, our Soldiers and their Families in both the Active and Reserve Component have endured repeated, lengthy deployments and the countless stressors that accompany the many sacrifices they have made. In spite of this, and facing an uncertain future, they remain committed to serve. We have no greater heroes than America's most precious resource – our Soldiers. These Soldiers and their Families, backed by our Civilian Workforce, represent the very best of American values and ideals. While we may be out of balance, we are not broken, a fact we can attribute to the inspiring resilience and dedication of these American heroes. The Army leadership is committed to their well-being, consistent with their quality of service and many sacrifices.

The Army's number one priority is restoring balance to the All-Volunteer Force, while supporting the National Security Strategy. Restoring balance requires that we grow the Active Army by 65,000, to 547,400, by the end of FY10. Restoring balance also requires that we grow our Reserve Component force, with the Army National Guard and Army Reserve adding 8,200 and 1,000 Soldiers, respectively to their endstrengths. We must do this if we are to continue to effectively support current military operations, while transforming the Army to meet the needs of the Combatant Commanders in a dynamic and lethal security environment. We must reduce deployment lengths from 15 months, increase time spent at home-station between deployments, and provide predictability across all Components, if we are to relieve the considerable stress placed on our Army, our Soldiers, and our Army Families.

Though facing national-level challenges, we remain committed to sustaining [growing] the best trained, best led, best equipped Army in the world. While facing a number of manpower challenges, these factors have not decreased the resolve, nor the quality, of the American Army.

The Army is also dedicated to caring for Soldiers and Families who have borne the burden of battle. The Army must have timely resourcing to ensure we are able to match the quality of life offered to Soldiers with the quality of the tremendous service they provide the Nation. Through initiatives like the Army Soldier Family Action Plan, the Army Wounded Warrior Program, improvements to the Physical Disability Evaluation System, and providing Soldiers with critical skills the ability to transfer portions of their Montgomery GI Bill benefits to dependents, the Army is working hard to care for Soldiers and Families. We are indebted to Congress for your tremendous support and leadership – they have been instrumental to the considerable progress made on behalf of these American heroes. With your continued support, we will further improve our programs and develop meaningful, effective new programs for the benefit of the entire Army community.

Grow the All Volunteer Force

For the first time since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force, America is recruiting and retaining its military during a period of protracted combat. With the help of Congress and the support of the American people, the Army has accomplished its recruitment and retention milestones. However, growing the All-Volunteer Force will not be without challenges.

Wartime recruiting is challenging. It is made even more challenging by a declining eligible population. Fewer than three out of ten of America's youth are fully qualified to serve in our Nation's military due to

medical, conduct, or aptitude disqualifications. Many 17-24 year old men and women may want to join the Army, but are not actively recruited because they have disqualifying physical conditions, have committed crimes, or do not have a high school diploma.

For example, the rate of obesity among youth tripled since 1980. Today, up to 19 percent of the Nation's 6-19 year olds are overweight.

The Nation's high school graduation rate is only 70 percent. For minorities, the graduation rate falls to 50 percent and, for youth living at or below the poverty level, the rate drops to an alarming 30 percent.

These lower capacities among our Nation's 17-24 year old population are not only an Army recruitment issue - - they are a national crisis. Fixing these problems will require concerted, long-term National commitment. We simply cannot afford for the American public to become complacent.

To help meet these challenges, we developed a program called the Assessment of Recruit Motivation and Strength (ARMS) test. This test allows those who pass the physical test, but are a few percentage points over Army accessions body-fat standards, to serve in the Army. To ensure quality, participants must lose the weight within one year from the time they ship to Basic Combat Training. For FY06 and FY07 combined, over 2,500 recruits entered the Active Army under this program, a significant boost to our recruiting efforts.

Another initiative is the Army's Prep School, which will provide high quality youth the opportunity to complete their GED prior to commencing Basic Combat Training. Fort Jackson, South Carolina will be the location for the pilot program beginning in 3rd Quarter, FY08, with expansion dependent upon analysis of the pilot's success and through-put capacity.

Concerns regarding graduation rates, rising rates of obesity, and incidents of misconduct requiring administrative review notwithstanding, young millennials, as they are referred to, continue to answer the Nation's call.

Despite the toughest recruiting and retention environment ever faced by the All-Volunteer Force, the Army's accomplishments in these areas are noteworthy. Two key accomplishments are worth highlighting: (1) the Army recruited more than 170,000 Soldiers in Fiscal Year 2007, and (2) the recruiting and retention success enabled America's Army to grow its combined endstrength by almost 49,000 Soldiers. By making prudent use of the incentive authorities granted by Congress, the Active Component and Army Reserve exceeded their respective recruiting objectives of 80,000 and 26,500 in FY 07, while the Army National Guard achieved 96.6 percent of its 65,115 Soldier objective before reducing recruiting effort to remain within mandated endstrength limits.

The propensity for America's youth to serve in our Nation's All-Volunteer Force is at its lowest point since the Army began surveying such metrics. Their willingness to do so depends on a demonstrated commitment on our part to reward the sacrifices of those who willingly accept this responsibility – one that so many others either cannot, or choose not to, perform.

To ensure that military service remains an attractive career option, the Army continues to shape its recruiting efforts through a mix of innovation, incentives and bonuses. We again thank Congress for providing the necessary funding to support and sustain our recruitment efforts.

The Army Advantage Fund is a pilot program launched on February 4, 2008 in Albany, Cleveland, Montgomery, San Antonio, and Seattle; it

has already produced 17 high quality enlistments. The prospects for widening the pilot in the near future are excellent.

Just as crucial as recruitment is the retention of trained, highly skilled Soldiers in the Army, and bonuses have been a strong incentive for Soldiers to reenlist. The Army Retention Program adjusts to meet the needs of the Army to ensure that the right Soldiers with the right skills reenlist to meet Army manpower requirements.

Army retention continues at very high levels, reflecting the commitment of Soldiers and the quality of Army leaders. Even while engaged in persistent conflict, the Army surpassed its retention goals each year since 2002. This continued success is directly attributed to the talented men and women in the Army who provide "boots on the ground" around the world. It is important to note that their success would not be possible without great leadership, the backing of their Families, and the tremendous support provided by Congress. The Active Army retained 69,777 Soldiers in FY07, finishing the year at 112 percent of mission. The Army Reserve finished the year achieving 119 percent of mission and the Army National Guard finished at 100 percent of mission.

To achieve overall manpower levels in FY08, the Active Army must retain 65,000 Soldiers, the Army Reserve must retain 14,946 Soldiers, and the Army National Guard must retain 31,889 Soldiers. Current indicators show the Army on track to meet its retention mission for FY08. As of the end of January, the Active Army achieved 118 percent of its year-to-date mission, the Army Reserve achieved 103 percent of its year-to-date mission, and the Army National Guard achieved 113 percent of its year-to-date mission. A robust bonus program has been essential in enabling the Army to meet required retention goals.

Careful and deliberate adjustments are made to bonus levels to target retention of Soldiers in critical skills and grades. Retention of combat experienced veterans is imperative to future readiness. The deployed reenlistment bonus targets Soldiers assigned to units in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. Recently deployed units, or units currently deployed to these areas of operations, have reenlistment rates ranging between 110-120 percent of their annual goals. General Petraeus presided over a single reenlistment ceremony for 600 troops who reenlisted in Baghdad on Independence Day this past year. More than 100 Army Reserve Soldiers gathered January 18, 2008, at the Al Faw palace at Camp Victory, Iraq, to reenlist during a ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the Army Reserve. Currently, 50 percent of all reenlistments occur in the deployed theater.

The Army implemented a pilot program in 2006 to allow reenlisting Soldiers with critical military skills to transfer their MGIB benefits to their spouses. Based on the feedback received from Soldiers, we expanded the pilot in November 2007 to include transfer of benefits to their children. Reaction from Soldiers indicates that these benefits contributed to their decision to reenlist. We are still in the assessment phase of this pilot.

Quality of the force

While the Army met recruiting quality marks mandated by law, we did fall short of the Department of Defense goal to have 90 percent of our new recruits enter with a high school diploma. The Army looks at quality as more than DoD quality marks and, therefore, each Soldier we enlist with a waiver is thoroughly screened before being approved for entry. We have seen increases in waivers over the past few years and remain vigilant in our screening process. Our 2007 study of waivered Soldiers, as compared to non-waivered Soldiers from 2003 to 2006, showed that the waivered Soldiers performed comparably. Feedback from commanders in

the field continues to support this analysis. We do not envision the quality of the force or future readiness of the Army suffering as our goal remains focused on DoD quality benchmarks.

Army Officer Corps

The Army's greatest challenges in officer manning are the sudden and rapid growth of officer requirements, the conversion to new modular formations, and the transition in Reserve Component employment from a strategic to operational reserve. The Army will grow over 9,000 new officer billets from FY07 to FY 10 in the Active Component alone, with over 6,000 of those at the grades of Captain and Major. Combined with the long-standing Reserve Component shortages, our officer production capability remains challenged. It will take several years for the Army to balance competing requirements and fully fill its officer corps. We are launching a strategic review of commissioned officer requirements, production sources, policy and legislation to set the conditions for future success, as recommended by the recent Government Accounting Office report.

Officer retention is a critical component of ensuring our officer corps is adequately manned to meet these increasing requirements. While FY07 officer attrition in the Active Component was lower than the historical average, we must reduce attrition even further to meet increased officer requirements by FY11. To address these challenges, the Army implemented a number of measures to maximize growth in the officer corps. Accessions have increased from all traditional commissioning sources. Additionally, with cooperation from our Sister Services, we have added highly qualified officers from the Air Force, Navy and our Army Reserve Components. Those efforts have produced almost 1,500 additional commissioned officers for the Active Army.

The Army also instituted an unprecedented Army Captain's Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) Retention Menu of Incentives Program. This program has guaranteed retention of more than 12,689 captains thru FY10, nearly 90 percent of our goal of 14,184 captains retained from the eligible captain year groups. After review of the initial phase of this program, the Army plans to initiate a second phase of the Incentive Program beginning in the second quarter of FY08 that will add additional captain year groups. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) recently approved a similar program for a range of Reserve Component captain specialties that should substantially increase officer retention in critical specialties required in the Reserve Component.

The Army increased officer accession missions for FY08 and beyond to meet requirements for Captains and Majors by FY11. USMA, ROTC, and OCS will increase production, with heavy short-term emphasis on OCS due to its short lead-time. A pre-commissioning incentives program targets high-performing USMA and ROTC cadets to select their branch, posting, or graduate education, up front, in exchange for an additional three-year service obligation. This program ensures improved retention at critical career decision points in FY10 and beyond and, since its inception in 2006, has guaranteed the retention of nearly 3,000 additional officers from year groups 2006 and 2007. We anticipate an additional 1,500 officers in year group 2008 will participate in this program.

Incentives & Enlistment Bonuses

Incentives and bonuses are effective tools to open the door to the possibility of military service, but going through the door requires the vision of serving a greater good. During his recent appearance before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel, Major General Bostick, the Commanding General of the United States Army Recruiting Command, said, "No amount of money would be enough to

convince them [America's Soldiers] to continue to serve if they did not believe in what they were doing." Once men and women become Soldiers, they realize the significance of what they volunteered to do for their country, their Families and themselves. The incentives and bonuses serve, in a small way, to reinforce their choice and the Army, our Soldiers and their Families are indebted to Congress for your invaluable, continued support in this crucial area.

Army Civilian Workforce

Only through the integrated efforts of Army Civilians and Soldiers can the Army accomplish its assigned missions and make the most effective use of resources. The Army Civilian Workforce offers vital support to our Soldiers and Families in this era of persistent conflict. Short of actual combat, Army Civilians share full responsibility for mission accomplishment by delivering combat support and combat service support - at home, abroad, and on the battlefield. More than ever, Army Civilians are an absolutely invaluable component of readiness.

Currently, the Army's Civilian Corps is over 265,000 strong, over 3,500 of whom are serving in harm's way in the U.S. Central Command Area of Operations.

Army Civilians also serve the Nation in myriad non-combat Army missions such as maintaining waterways and flood control, domestic emergency response, and scientific research. They work in over 550 different occupations, with the highest concentrations in logistics, research and development, and base operations functions.

Army Diversity

Diversity in America's Army assures that the Army remains relevant to the Nation and the demographically evolving American society it serves. Diversity of culture, language, gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as diversity of thought, contribute materially to the Army's unmatched war-fighting effectiveness. Further, a richly diverse force serves as a strategic hedge against uncertainty in an increasingly unpredictable global security environment. The Army established the Army Diversity Task Force in November 2007, which is led by a general officer. Reporting directly to the Secretary and the Chief of Staff, the Task Force will conduct a holistic review and assessment of diversity programs and progress for military and civilian components of the Army, as well as the adequacy of the resources currently available to achieve the Army's diversity vision. An inclusive environment will underpin efforts to build and sustain the workforce needed for the 21st Century environment.

Caring For Soldiers and Families

The well-being of our Soldiers, Civilians and their Families centers on life domains such as standard of living, health, career, community life, and personal and family life. A strong sense of well-being across these life domains enables our Soldiers, Civilians and their Families to focus on performing and supporting the Army's mission while improving a quality work-life balance. Identifying those life domain areas that are out of balance serves as a platform from which to base policy and strategy decisions in order to restore balance and sustain the All-Volunteer Force.

We, as an institution, are deeply committed to providing for the well-being of the force. These life domains define the Army's ability to influence institutional outcomes of recruiting, retention, readiness and

morale. We are leading the effort in building a comprehensive system of subjective and objective metrics and analytics to monitor potential stress and health of the force indicators that affect Soldiers and Army Families. This process will serve as a key element of the Well-Being Index that will assist the Army in its efforts to restore balance of the force.

Our objective is to provide leaders a greater depth of understanding upon which to base policy and strategy decisions; develop a clearly defined multi-component Human Capital Strategy; strengthen the Army's ability to recruit and retain the right human capital; and reinforce the commitment of our Soldiers to serve in the All-Volunteer Army.

The Army is committed to continual combat readiness, but certain stressors can inhibit the personnel readiness of the Army. The Army continuously monitors data that provides indicators of the Well-Being of Soldiers, Families, and Civilians. Data shows that Soldiers and Families are feeling strained by this era of persistent conflict. The Army is committed to providing an environment that mitigates the effects of the stress they experience. We will ensure that Soldier and Family programs meet the needs of our people.

The Army remains committed to eliminating incidents of sexual assault from our ranks. Sexual assault is contrary to Army Values and degrades our readiness -- it has no place in our Army. We continue to lead the effort to refine and improve a comprehensive sexual assault prevention and response program. This program serves as a key element of each Army leader's responsibility to create a climate that minimizes sexual assault, encourages victims to come forward, and takes appropriate action against offenders.

While a number of trends remain steady or show a decline, there are some areas of great concern to Army leaders. One area of continuing

concern is the increasing number of suicides and attempted suicides. The loss of any Soldier is a tragedy, and we remain dedicated to suicide prevention. A General Officer Steering Committee is reviewing the Army Suicide Prevention Program with a focus on better integrating and strengthening our efforts to decrease the current trend. This is a multi-disciplined approach that includes Army researchers, behavioral health professionals, legal professionals, law enforcement professionals and chaplains. Central to the program are actions begun in 2007 to reduce the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues. We are also reinvigorating in small unit leaders and teammates the responsibility to be proactive in identifying issues and behaviors that may signal suicidal behavior.

The Army Chaplain Corps' "Strong Bonds" Training Program is expanding to reach more Soldiers and Family members to develop relationship-building skills intended to reduce failed relationships, the leading stress factor associated with completed suicides. The Army's Medical Command is recruiting and hiring additional behavioral health providers, and screening all Soldiers for possible mental health problems during Initial Entry Training, as well as during pre- and post-deployment health assessments. In addition, commanders have continued to emphasize Battlemind Training, which is designed to build resiliency for Soldiers and Families.

Our plan for providing comprehensive mental health support to our Soldiers includes continuing to expand our capacity for behavioral health treatment, and improving the continuity of care between medical facilities and providers, to include Veterans' Administration treatment facilities for Reserve Component Soldiers. Future steps include the development of an action plan utilizing core strategies in developing life-coping skills, maintaining constant vigilance, encouraging help-seeking behaviors,

reducing stigma, maintaining constant surveillance of behavioral health data, and integrating and synchronizing unit and community programs.

The long-standing Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) is a bottom-up system that also provides a means for Soldiers and their Families to inform leadership about what is working, what is not working, and what might be done to make improvements. As a result of AFAP input, service members' group life insurance benefits increased, family support groups have been institutionalized, and new programs for single Soldiers have been introduced.

We are strengthening programs and services so that the well-being of our men and women remains at the forefront of Army life. These programs address personal issues around substance abuse, suicide prevention, and sexual assault as well as personnel issues involving diversity, safety, occupational health, equal employment opportunity and comprehensive deployment cycle support.

Congressional assistance

Recruiting, retaining and providing for the well-being of the best Army in the world requires a significant commitment by the American people. The Army is grateful for the continued support of Congress for competitive military benefits and compensation along with incentives and bonuses for Soldiers and their Families and the Civilian Workforce.

Congress recently authorized pay raises sufficient to provide 3.5 percent increase in compensation for Soldiers for FY08. The Army is programming a 3.4 percent pay raise for FY09 and would appreciate Congress' support in this plan.

The Army also thanks Congress for new ability to consolidate special pay, incentive pay and bonuses authorities which will give the Army the necessary flexibility to direct programs at specific needs, such as a Warrior Pay program to pay Soldiers who are frequently deployed.

I would like to emphasize that your tremendous support has proven, and will continue to prove, absolutely essential to Army readiness. From recruiting and retention piloting authorities, to funding directed at caring for Soldiers and Families, your yeoman efforts serve as a catalyst for success – be it on the battlefield, or at home stations across the Army. We are Growing and Transforming the Army in a period of prolonged war. We will do so with young men and women of the highest caliber whose willingness to serve portends an immeasurable aspect of quality and commitment. We look forward to meeting the challenges ahead with your continued leadership and support for the Army.