HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2010

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

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m. in room SD–G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Carl Levin (chairman) presiding.

Committee members present: Senators Levin, Lieberman, Reed, Akaka, Ben Nelson, Udall, Hagan, Begich, Burris, McCain, Sessions, Chambliss, Graham, Thune, Wicker, Burr, Vitter, and Collins.

Committee staff member present: Richard D. DeBobes, staff director.

Majority staff members present: Jonathan D. Clark, counsel; Gabriella Eisen, counsel; Michael J. Kuiken, professional staff member; Peter K. Levine, general counsel; Jason W. Maroney, counsel; William G.P. Monahan, counsel; Michael J. Noblet, professional staff member; Roy F. Phillips, professional staff member; John H. Quirk V, professional staff member; and William K. Sutey, professional staff member.

Minority staff members present: Joseph W. Bowab, Republican staff director; Adam J. Barker, professional staff member; Paul C. Hutton IV, professional staff member; Michael V. Kostiw, professional staff member; Daniel A. Lerner, professional staff member; Lucian L. Niemeyer, professional staff member; Diana G. Tabler, professional staff member; and Richard F. Walsh, minority counsel.

Staff assistants present: Paul J. Hubbard, Jennifer R. Knowles, and Brian F. Sebold.

Committee members' assistants present: James Tuite, assistant to Senator Byrd; Christopher Griffin, assistant to Senator Lieberman; Carolyn A. Chuhta, assistant to Senator Reed; Nick Ikeda, assistant to Senator Akaka; Caroline Tess, assistant to Senator Bill Nelson; Ann Premer, assistant to Senator Ben Nelson; Patrick Hayes, assistant to Senator Bayh; Gordon I. Peterson, assistant to Senator Webb; Roger Pena, assistant to Senator Hagan; Roosevelt Barfield, assistant to Senator Burris; Anthony J. Lazarski, assistant to Senator Inhofe; Lenwood Landrum, assistant to Senator Sessions; Clyde A. Taylor IV, assistant to Senator

Chambliss; Jason Van Beek, assistant to Senator Thune; Brian Walsh, assistant to Senator LeMieux; Kyle Ruckert, assistant to Senator Vitter; and Chip Kennett, assistant to Senator Collins.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARL LEVIN, CHAIRMAN

Chairman LEVIN. Good morning, everybody.

Today, Secretary McHugh and General Casey will testify before our committee on the plans and programs of the United States Army as part of our review of the fiscal year 2011 Annual Budget and Overseas Contingency Operations Request.

Gentlemen, we are thankful to you for your dedicated service to our country, and to your families for their support of your service.

As the committee meets again this year to review the Army's posture, we find ourselves, as always, inspired by, and proud of, what our soldiers have accomplished and what they continue to do.

General Casey, I understand that you will be introducing some special guests this morning, later on, and we look forward to meeting them, to hearing their stories from you, and to thank them in person for their service and their sacrifice.

America's Army today is as great as any other, in the Army's nearly 235 years of service to the Nation. Great service, however, always comes with great sacrifice. Our Army remains globally committed and overstretched by nearly 8 years of continuous combat. Thankfully, the drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq has begun, but over 96,000 American soldiers remain engaged in operations there, contributing to the continued strain on our forces. I'm hoping that, at a minimum, we will achieve the planned withdrawal of additional units from Iraq, set to reach 50,000 by the end of this August.

Much depends on the ability and willingness of the Iraqis themselves to preserve hard-fought gains; and, in turn, that will depend in large measure on whether the political steps Iraqi leaders have consistently promised to take will be completed.

At the same time we see the drawdown of forces in Iraq, the administration has shifted its strategic emphasis and resources to the counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan and support to help Pakistan confront the al Qaeda and Taliban threats.

An additional 30,000 troops—many Army—will be committed to support operations in Afghanistan to implement a people-centered counterinsurgency strategy to help defeat al Qaeda and Taliban and more quickly build up the capabilities of Afghanistan security forces.

Last week, coalition forces, including large numbers of Afghan Army units, started a major offensive operation in Helmand Province to take control of key populations away from the Taliban and build support for the Afghan government by leaving security and services in the wake of removal of the Taliban to them. Hard fighting continues, and some of our best and bravest have been lost and wounded.

I've long argued that the principal mission in Afghanistan should be training the Afghan military and police so that they can take responsibility for the security of their country. It is essential to the success of our objectives in Afghanistan that we strengthen the Afghan army, that we demonstrate, deep in the partnership of coali-

tion and Afghan units, operating together on a one-unit to one-unit basis, and for Afghans to take the lead in achieving security. In this respect, operations in Helmand could be a turning point for the Afghan people and their government, their security forces, and the people of this critically important region. But, we are still short thousands of trainers in Afghanistan for the initial 8 weeks of training. That is totally unacceptable. Our NATO allies have provided only 10 percent of the trainers that they committed.

Although the Army continues to meet the demands of counter-insurgency and support operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world, the Army—soldiers and their families—are stressed in many ways. In order to gain and sustain necessary higher readiness levels in our deployed forces, the readiness of our nondeployed forces has been at historic lows. Most of our nondeployed Army units are not ready to quickly respond to an unforeseen contingency. Consequently, getting those units reconstituted and ready for their next rotation to Iraq or Afghanistan is that much more difficult and risky. This Nation faces substantially increased risk, should we need the Army to respond to another contingency, despite the amazing resilience of our troops and their families.

In light of this challenge, the Department of the Army, over the last 3 years, has set a goal to reestablish a balance within the force by 2011. By "balance," we understand that soldiers and units would have twice as much time at home as they would be—as they would deployed—excuse me—as they would deployed. Nondeployed units would achieve required levels of personnel, equipment, and training—and training readiness—necessary to meet other strategic contingencies; budget pressures to support current operations would ease, allowing greater investment in modernization; and Army families would enjoy greater stability and less stress. The committee is interested to learn more about how the Army's fiscal year 2011 budget request will achieve balance in 2011, even assuming that declining operational demands on the force keep pace with current strategic plans.

An issue of concern to the committee, and related to the strain on the force, is the size of the Army. In order to deal with getting units ready for the rotational requirements of Afghanistan and Iraq, the Secretary of Defense has permitted the Army to retain 22,000 soldiers, temporarily, above its authorized end strength of 547,000. Additional troops, plus limiting the growth of Active- component Army combat brigades to 45, are intended to address the Army's soldier shortages in units getting ready to deploy. However, questions of additional permanent Army end strength, as well as unit structure, need to be carefully considered, in light of the inevitable and heavy near- and long-term budgetary pressures that such increases will put on the Army's investment and modernization accounts.

We'd like the witnesses to address the Army's analysis of its current and future end strength and unit structure requirements, and their ideas on how to manage the growth of personnel costs.

Nothing in our defense establishment is as important or as expensive as our people. In fact, the 2009 Quadrennial Defense Review makes preservation of the All- Voluntary Force—All-Volun-

teer Force an overarching national defense strategy objective. The Army's 2011 budget request supports this objective and makes a strong commitment to ensure that we are taking care of our servicemembers and their family.

Much of the defense budget's growth can be attributed to significant and necessary increases in pay and benefit accounts. For example, the fiscal year 2011 budget request continues the Army's major commitment to expand and improve programs for wounded soldiers and their families, as well as for the prevention, identification, and care of soldiers and their families suffering from the stress of ongoing operations.

I commend the Army for your commitment. I look forward to the witnesses' discussion of these programs today.

The long anticipated 2009 Quadrennial Defense Review, submitted with the fiscal year 2011 budget, places the Department's focus and priorities squarely on policies, programs, and initiatives that support the current fight in Afghanistan and Iraq and against al Qaeda around the world.

The QDR recognizes the tremendous contributions that the Army has been providing in this fight over the last several years, and emphasizes that these type of contingencies are more likely the wave of the future. Accordingly, the 2009 QDR's recommendations support much of what the Army has already been doing, but it includes new direction for building or realigning capabilities and force structure that will make it more structurally relevant to the requirements of a regular or unconventional warfare.

We look forward to the witnesses' assessments of the 2009 QDR, what it means for the Army today and into the future, and how their 2011 budget request supports the changes that are directed.

As challenging as meeting the demands of current operations is today, the Army must also ensure that it remains technologically dominant across the range of potential contingencies and assure our future security. Army modernization, however, has proven difficult to manage and achieve. Army technical modernization, as part of a broad transformational effort, appears to have been consistently falling short of plans and promises. Secretary Gates' decision last year to restructure the Future Combat Systems Program, including cancellation of the previously planned manned combat vehicle systems, require the Army to fundamentally change its approach to modernization.

The fiscal 2011 budget request carries the Army deeper into yet another modernization strategy that attempts to rationalize the demands for new, immediately ready technologies needed to quickly support the current fight with the opportunities that other less mature technologies may offer for the force in the next 5 or 10 or 15 years, such as the Army's commitment to a new ground combat vehicle.

The Army must also manage its modernization investment risks carefully and consistently with our recently enacted Weapons System Acquisition Reform Act. It also needs to guard against allowing its enthusiasm for modernization and the near-term availability of resources to lead to a high-risk schedule-driven program, where the necessary technologies are not mature and the operational requirements are not urgent.

We look forward to the witnesses' report on their efforts to establish an Army modernization program that meets the many challenging goals of simultaneously being comprehensive, relevant, technologically achievable, manageable, affordable, and enduring.

So, Secretary McHugh and General Casey, the Nation could not be more proud of the Army, its soldiers, and their families, and we are grateful for your leadership of our Army and our Army family.

Senator MCCAIN.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I join you in welcoming Secretary McHugh and General Casey here today.

I—gentlemen, I thank you for your leadership in these challenging times.

And I've also had the opportunity of saying hello to our wounded warriors and spouses and brave Americans, and I look forward to your introduction of them to the committee. And I thank them for their service and sacrifice.

We all know the Army has been operating at a high operational tempo for the past 8 years, while meeting wartime requirements a half a world away, so we should consider the implications of the President's 2011 budget request in the context of our most pressing challenges, which are, of course, success in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I applaud Secretary Gates' recent statement that, quote, "Achieving our objective in Afghanistan and Iraq has moved to the top of our institutional military's budgeting policy and program priorities." I look forward to your explanation of how the budget priorities of the institutional Army directly supports ongoing operations in Afghanistan and continuing efforts to succeed in Iraq.

General Casey, you have expressed concern, and very legitimate concern, about the effect of continued deployments on our All-Volunteer Army. While stretching our forces does create risk, we have demonstrated that the best way to reduce that risk is by succeeding in theater. The Iraq troop surge offers an important lesson in that regard.

Now we have the right mission and the right leadership in place in Afghanistan. The additional 30,000 troops ordered by the President are beginning to arrive, and the burden on the institutional Army is high. It's incumbent on you to field the best-trained and -equipped force in the world, and it is incumbent on us, in Congress, to approve resources sufficient to do so. We are committed to the long-term success of Afghanistan and Iraq as stable states that can govern and secure themselves and will not become bases of attacks on the United States, on our allies.

I would also point out, incredibly, that retention and recruitment is at an alltime high in the history of the All-Volunteer Force. Many are surprised by that; in fact, I am pleasantly surprised. But, the fact is, it's a testimony to the patriotism and willingness to serve of young Americans all over this country.

The competition for resources frequently pits development of future capabilities against the cost of sustaining current operations, and this gets to the heart of the Army's modernization efforts. Last year, we supported Secretary Gates' decision to restructure the

Army, the Army's Future Combat Systems program with spinouts of mature technologies to the current force.

The Army has done much over the past year to develop a new acquisition strategy based on an incremental Brigade Combat Team modernization plan. This new acquisition plan, like the previous FCS program, will be a multiyear, multibillion-dollar program that is the centerpiece of the Army's transformation efforts. I'm interested in hearing from our witnesses how the Army plans to transition from the FCS program to the BCT modernization program. Specifically, what is the Army's BCT modernization strategy and spinout plan, and what is the impact of an incremental modernization strategy on the Army's budget for 2011 and beyond?

Since taking office, Secretary Gates has taken decisive action to increase capabilities available to our deployed forces, especially those forces in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As we all know, IEDs continue to be the greatest killer of American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I applaud the Army and the Department of Defense for fielding technologies to protect our men and women on the battlefield. Congress authorized and appropriated billions for mine-resistant vehicles, and their increased use has reduced the Army's reliance on other lightly-armored vehicles.

Enhancing capabilities of our fighting forces is critical to our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. I support the Army's budget request to field more helicopters and aircrews, create two combat aviation brigades, and fund new unmanned aircraft.

Recently, Mr. Secretary, I was down at the—last week—at the Yuma Proving Ground. I was very impressed by the coordination and communication between field commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Yuma Proving Ground, as we face these ever-evolving new technologies that the enemy is using in developing new and more lethal IEDs. The battlefield to testing and response, I was extremely impressed by.

Finally, I'm interested, of course, in the views of General Casey and Secretary McHugh on the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. We will continue to listen to our military leaders. As I pointed out before, recruitment and retention is at an alltime high in the history of the All- Volunteer Force, and obviously changes in a policy that, I think, is working would have to be extremely carefully considered.

I want to make perfectly clear that I am enormously proud of every American who puts on an Army uniform to serve in a time of war, and we want to encourage more of our fellow American citizens to serve and to open up opportunities to do so.

So, with that, I would like to thank you, Mr. Secretary—is this—I think this is your first inquisition here, and we certainly welcome you, too—on the other side. And we want to thank you, again, for your outstanding service for many years as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, and the work we did together.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator McCain follows:]

[COMMITTEE INSERT]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

And a special welcome to you, Secretary McHugh. You're battle-tested over in the House, so you come with great background.

Mr. SECRETARY.

General CASEY. It does look a little different from down here than it does from up there, I'll just say. [Laughter.]

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN M. MCHUGH, SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

Mr. MCHUGH. I should say, I've never missed being in Congress so much as I do right now. [Laughter.]

But, with your permission, Mr. Chairman, I certainly want to thank you, sir, and, as well, Ranking Member McCain, for your very kind and very gracious comments of—not just in support of me, but in support of this absolutely incredible Army.

It is a privilege, although somewhat intimidating, to be before you here today, but I do it with great pride, because we are here, along with the Chief, in support of America's Army.

As was noted, it was just a few short months ago that I sat before you as President Obama's nominee for our Nation's 21st Secretary of the Army, and at that time, I recall very clearly, I promised you, and assured you, of my dedication and commitment to support our men and women in uniform, Army civilians, and the great families, who, I know all you understands so very well, stand with them. And I pledged to work with you, as well, in support of that great institution.

It's some 5 months later, and I want to tell you, I come before you again reaffirming that commitment; but, doing so having been in the Pentagon, having worked with these great men and women for that time, it brings an even greater appreciation of those wonderful Americans who serve within the Army ranks, and the vital role they play in defense of our great Nation.

One point 1 million soldiers, some 279,000 civilians, and, as I noted, their families, proudly serving, as you know, in some 80 countries around the world, and they continue to be at the forefront in ongoing counterinsurgency operations against our enemies, assisting other nations to build their own security capacity, supporting homeland defense, deterring and defeating hybrid threats and hostile state actors, and, as we've witnessed, I think, so proudly, in recent days in Haiti, providing life-saving humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters.

At the risk of stating the obvious, each of you—every member of this committee, every member of the House and the Senate at large—are critical to the success of these vital missions, as your capacity as our congressional overseers. And as was mentioned, I know full well, from my nearly 17 years of service on the House Armed Services Committee, that a strategic partnership between Congress and the Army is critical to the Army's success. And I think I can speak from experience, as well; without exception each and every one of you has partnered with us to ensure that our soldiers, civilians, and family members receive the very best in training, equipment, healthcare, and vital family programs. And I want to say, on behalf of a grateful Army, thank you for your leadership and for your unwavering support.

This morning, if I may, Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, other distinguished members, I'd like to share, just briefly, a few of my priorities and some of the perspectives I've gained over the past

several months on where the Army is now, where it's heading in fiscal year 2011.

Admittedly, over the last several months, I've been on kind of a crash course. I learned I was not quite as smart as I routinely said every 2 years in my campaign for reelection. But, through the process of studying our programs, visiting installations in the United States and overseas, examining units in all stages of what we call R4 Gen, and talking—most importantly, talking with our soldiers, civilians, and their family members throughout the force, how well and yet the challenges that lie before us.

I have been, in this time, both impressed and challenged personally by what I've observed and what I've discovered. And frankly, I've found an Army that—clearly, clearly fatigued by nearly 9 years of combat—through it all is today a resilient, determined and extraordinary effective. Our soldiers today, through nearly 8 years of war, have more expertise, more education, more training, and more lethal capabilities than ever before, and due to the advancement and equipment, training and doctrine, are more likely than ever before to return safely to their loved ones and to a grateful Nation.

But, in spite of those significant gains, the stress on our personnel and their families remains all too real. For all our efforts, as has been referenced, and as the Chief of Staff has said repeatedly, we remain out of balance. And as I know all of you clearly understand, the All-Volunteer Force is a national treasure, as Senator McCain mentioned. If we wish to sustain it, supporting our critical family and quality-of-life programs for our soldiers and their families must be a top priority. And if I say nothing else here today, I want to assure you, for those of us in the Army family, it is the top priority. The 2011 proposed budget rightly focuses on those initiatives that support our soldiers, families, civilians. The submission requests $1.7 billion in 2011 to standardize and fund those vital family programs and all those that they serve.

We're attempting to aggressively address the cause of stress on individuals resulting from the effects of multiple deployments, including the essential effort to increase dwell time. As all of you know, and has been referenced here already this morning, with continuing deployments in multiple theaters, this has been no easy task. But, I want to assure you in the strongest terms, the Army is committed to our wounded warriors and those critical programs that support them, and to building dwell and BOG ratios, bringing back a sense of stability, in terms of their redeployments.

We fully believe it is our solemn obligation to provide world-class care and transition services to our wounded, ill, and injured through properly led and properly resourced Warrior Transition Units. Your Army is committed to ensuring that the quality of life for those who serve, or who have served, is commensurate with the quality of their service.

One of the—on the subject of family programs, I've heard from many of the good Representatives, Senators on this panel, about reductions in base operation support—so called "BOS"—budgets in installations across the country. Earlier this month, General Casey and I announced the Army's plan to increase BOS funding by $500 million in this fiscal year—2010. The Army's Installation Manage-

ment Command continues to work with the—and the lights went out?

Chairman LEVIN. That's the Army's new energy savings—

Mr. MCHUGH. Yes. [Laughter.]

I didn't see that one on the list, but—

Again, General Casey and I announced that we had a plan to increase BOS funding by $500 million, and the Army Installation Management Command continues to work with each installation to guarantee that essential base operating support needs are met.

We also will conduct a comprehensive midyear review of all BOS accounts to ensure that adequate funding is maintained to meet Army priorities through the remainder of the fiscal year.

I want to make it clear that as our installations look for ways to operate more efficiently, as they should, family programs will be sacrosanct; they will not be touched. That isn't to say we won't ask, "Is this program working? Is the money well spent? Are there better ways to provide necessary care?" Where change is required, we'll change things, but where money is best directed, we'll so direct it. But, through all of that, Army families must not—in our judgment, Army families will not—be left behind.

Second, I found an Army with equipment systems and networks in need of reset while simultaneously requiring significant modernization to ensure our soldiers maintain a decisive edge on the battlefield of today, as well as superiority over threats of tomorrow. Nowhere is this challenge more evident than in the need to repair, replace, and recapitalize equipment affected by the harsh realities and environment of war. And as the responsible drawdown in Iraq continues and the flow of forces and equipment to Afghanistan grows, we'll confront this reality anew.

Additionally, we have to strive to modernize efficiently in an era growing fiscal challenges. As such, with this year's budget, the Army has embracing what I believe is an affordable yet effective modernization strategy designed to revamp our vehicle, network, aviation and logistical systems. We've requested $31.7 billion for research, development, and acquisition, which includes 3.2 billion for the Brigade Combat Team modernization, 1.29 billion to fund tactical vehicle modernization, 2.74 billion to fund Army network systems, and 6.41 billion to fund aviation modernization. Fully funding these programs is vital to our soldiers' welfare this year and beyond.

Thirdly, I found an Army acquisitions system that, while improving, still lacks the workforce and flexibility needed to efficiently and affordably purchase the right weapons, services, and equipment to our soldiers. Here, too, the proposed budget will help us better meet our continued commitment to growing the Army's acquisition workforce by thousands of positions over the next few years, thereby ensuring that we have the best available equipment for our soldiers, while being responsible stewards of the taxpayers' dollars.

But, I would tell you, workforce improvements are not enough to fix the procurement system, and I know you on this committee, particularly the Chairman and the Ranking Member, who worked so hard on the Reform Act of last year, know that full well. The entire process must be retooled, and in that way, more fully adopt

an agile system that rapidly develops, purchases, and fields innovative solutions. This approach will require more streamlined procedures and flexible rules, and for that, we need your help.

As I mentioned, in 2009 Congress significantly reformed how the Department of Defense purchases major weapons systems. And, again, thank you to this committee and its leadership in that regard. But, as the Chairman and the Ranking Member so correctly noted, both at that time and since, it's only a start. Now it's time to address how we purchase services, and on that front, we look forward to partnering with you to develop better ways and better systems that achieve that critical objective.

In the end, I would tell you we have an Army that is strong in spirit, strong in ability, and strong in results. We need to recognize, too, this is an Army that, after 8 years of uninterrupted war, is tired, stressed and too often burdened by the inefficiencies of bureaucracy. This must change, and with your help, we'll make those changes.

Let me close by highlighting, again, my deep appreciation for the men and women in uniform, the civilians and the families who support them, and by so doing, support this Nation. Every day, I'm humbled by their dedication. I'm so blessed to have the chance to walk into a building every morning to go to work where the word "hero" really means something. All of you on this great committee are part of that magnificent formula for freedom. Thank you, again, for all you do in support of our men and women in uniform, our Army civilians, their families.

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to appear here before you, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McHugh follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

General Casey.

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

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

As the Chairman said, I would like just to being by introducing four representative members of this great Army that we have.

First, I'd introduce Mrs. Donna Engeman. Donna's husband, John, was killed in Iraq 4 years ago, and she currently runs our Survivor Outreach Services Programs. It's a program we put in place, about 2 years ago, to increase what we were doing for surviving family members. Her son, John, is on his second tour in Iraq.

Mrs. ENGEMAN. Patrick.

General CASEY. Patrick—I'm sorry—Patrick.

Thank you, Donna.

Next to her is Staff Sergeant Christian Hughes. He was wounded in Afghanistan in October. He's recovering from his wounds in Walter Reed, and he looks forward to rejoining his unit as soon as he can.

Thank you.

Next is Sergeant First Class Shana Tinsley. Her husband, Arthur, is a Master Sergeant. He leaves for Afghanistan in—Thursday, I think, and she will be here with her children, working here with us in the Pentagon.

And lastly, Sergeant First Class Jeff Lawson. He has recently completed a program at the University of Pennsylvania that qualifies him to be a master resilience trainer, and this is an important part of our Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program that I will talk about a bit later. He's got three tours in Iraq, himself.

So, thank you all, very much, for coming out. [Applause.]

Chairman LEVIN. General, thank you so much for bringing our—these special guests to us. And I just want to give them a special thanks for their service, their families' service, their dedication, commitment to this country, and we stand in awe of you. Thank you.

General CASEY. Thank you.

Now, if I could, Mr. Chairman. As you noted, I've been saying for the past 3 years that the Army is out of balance, that we're so weighed down by our current commitments that we can't do the things we know we need to do to sustain this All-Volunteer Force and to prepare to do other things. I can tell you that, with the help of the committee, we've made progress over the last year to get back in balance, but we're not quite out of the woods yet.

That said, this '11 budget completes the procurement funding to finish our conversion to modular organizations that we began in 2004 and the growth that we began in 2007. It also contains the military construction funding to complete the Base Realignment and Closure moves of 2005. So, your continued support will allow us to meet the goals we set 6 years ago to build an Army that was both relevant to 21st-century challenges and back in balance.

Now, this plan that we put in place to get ourselves back in balance was centered on four imperatives. We had to sustain our soldiers and families; they're the heart and soul of the force. We had to continue to prepare our soldiers for success in the current conflict. We had to reset them effectively when they return. And then we had to continue to transform for an uncertain future.

Let me just give you a short progress report on where we are.

Our first objective was to finish our growth. And you'll recall, the administration, in January 2007, directed that we increase the size of the Army by 74,000. Originally, we were going to do that by 2012. With Secretary Gates' and your support, we completed it last spring. When that did not prove to be sufficient, we were granted a temporary increase of 22,000 soldiers, and we will evaluate, later this year, whether we need to—that entire amount. This growth, coupled with the drawdown in Iraq, has allowed us to meet the need for additional forces in Afghanistan without returning to 15-month deployments and without going back on stop-loss.

Our second key objective was to increase the time our soldiers spend at home. And I will tell you, after almost 3 years in the job, I'm more convinced than ever that this is the most important element of putting ourselves back in balance, and for several reasons. One, our soldiers need time to recover from repeated combat deployments. What we continue to see across the force are the cumulative effects of these deployments. And we recently completed a

study that demonstrates what we intuitively knew, that it takes 2 to 3 years to recover from a 1-year combat deployment. That's why it's so important for us to meet our near-term objective of 2 years at home between deployments for our Active force and 4 years at home between deployments for our Reserve components. As demand decreases, we plan to move to more sustainable goals of 3 and 5 years, respectively, between deployments.

More time at home also gives us more stable preparation time for the next mission and more time to prepare to do other things. When you're only home for a year, you barely have time to finish your leave before you have to begin preparing to go back. I've recently visited units that had 18 months home. And the difference between 18 months at home and 12 months at home, and the pace of the tempo that they're home, is significant.

Additionally, as time at home increases, we'll be able to see more units training for the full spectrum of operations, and we will gradually rekindle some of the skills that have atrophied over the past several years.

Our third objective was to move away from our cold war formations to organizations that are more relevant for the challenges we'll face in the 21st century. In 2004, we set out to convert all 300-plus brigades in our Army to modular organizations. Today, we're almost 90-percent complete, and these formations are demonstrating their versatility and their value in Iraq and Afghanistan every day.

We also set out to rebalance the skills resident in these formations. This involved converting, retraining, and equipping around 150,000 soldiers from all components to new jobs. By way of example, in the last 6 years we have stood down around 200 tank companies, artillery batteries, and air-defense batteries, and we've stood up a corresponding number of military police, engineers, civil affairs, and Special Forces companies. This has paid tremendous benefits in the current operations.

So, together, the rebalancing and the modular conversions represent the largest organizational transformation of the Army since World War II, and we will have done this while fighting two wars.

Fourth, we are moving to put the whole Army on a rotational readiness model, much like the Navy and Marine Corps have been on for many years. This model will allow us to more efficiently and effectively provide a sustained flow of land forces that are trained for the full spectrum of operations to our combatant commanders. It will also allow us to have forces available to hedge against the unexpected contingencies that you spoke of. It will also allow us to do this in a way that's predictable and sustainable for this All-Volunteer Force.

Our fifth objective was to complete our restationing, and we're just over half way through these efforts. We're on track to complete the BRAC by 2000-—by the end of—2005 BRAC by the end of '11. This will affect over 380,000 soldiers, family members, and civilians. And while it's a lot of turbulence, the construction on these new installations will significantly improve the quality of life for our soldiers and families.

So, the bottom line, Mr. Chairman, is, we've made progress, but we still face challenges as we work to restore balance and set the conditions for the future.

Now, I'd like to conclude my remarks with comments on three areas that are very important to us and, I would hope, also important for this committee.

First of all, sustaining our people. This budget contains money for housing, barracks, childcare, youth centers, Warrior Transition Units, and surviving spouse programs—all critically important to sustaining our soldiers, civilians, and families through a period in which our country is asking so much of them. In general, we're strengthening our programs to build resiliency into the force, to help them deal, not only with the challenges of the past, but with the challenges of the future.

We've all seen the manifestations of the stresses of 8 and a half years at war—elevated suicide rates, increased demand for behavioral health counseling and drug and alcohol counseling, increased divorce rates, increased numbers of soldiers temporarily nondeployable from nagging injuries from previous deployments—and we've been moving aggressively to give our soldiers and families the skill they need—skills they need to deal with these challenges.

In October, we began a program that we had been working on for more than 18 months with some of the best experts in the country. The program is called Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. I've spoken about it here before. And it's designed to give mental fitness the same level of effort that we give to physical fitness. We intended to provide our force the resiliency skills that they need to succeed in an era of persistent conflict. This program consists of four components: an online self- assessment to identify resiliency strengths—this assessment has already been taken by over 250,000 soldiers; next, online self-help modules; third, master resilience trainers, like Sergeant Lawson. And these are designed to conduct resiliency training down to unit level. We've trained over 600 Sergeant Lawsons at University of Pennsylvania already. And finally, there will be resiliency training at every Army Leader Development School. This program shows great promise, and I'd be happy to discuss it further in the questions and answers.

Second, the reset of our equipment will be increasingly important as we complete the drawdown in Iraq over the next 2 years, and for 2 to 3 years after the conclusion of combat operations. It's important to note that our reset efforts have been a key factor in maintaining the high operational readiness rates for ground and air systems in Iraq and Afghanistan. This budget provides almost $11 billion to reset our equipment, and sustained funding for reset will be essential to the long-term health of the force.

Finally, this budget, as you mentioned, Chairman, contains a significant adjustment to our modernization strategy. I believe that we are in a period of continuous and fundamental change, and that we must continually adapt to deal with evolving threats. So, in conjunction with the Secretary of Defense, we've transitioned away from the Future Combat System program to what we believe is an achievable, affordable modernization program for our Brigade Combat Teams. This program leverages the lessons that we've learned

at war and the lessons that we learned from the Future Combat Systems program itself. It contains four elements. First of all, incrementally modernizing our networks over time to take advantage of rapid advances in technology. Second, incrementally fielding capability packages to put the best equipment into the hands of our soldiers as rapidly as it is available. Third, incorporating MRAPs into our force. And then, lastly, rapidly developing and fielding a new ground combat vehicle that meets the requirements of a 21st-century Army.

We intend to make this program a model for the Weapons Systems Acquisition Reform Act, and we look forward to working with the committee on it.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate how proud I am of what the men and women of this great Army continue to accomplish at home and around the world. We've made progress in restoring balance, but we still face a tough road ahead, and we could not have done it without the committee's support.

Thank you very much, and the Secretary and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Casey follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you so much, General. We appreciate that testimony.

Let's try a 7-minute first round.

The—and this goes, first, to you, Mr. Secretary—the fiscal year 2011 budget request for the Department of Defense includes $549 billion for the base budget and $159 billion for the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, on top of the $708-billion request for 2011, the administration has included a 2010 supplemental request of 33 billion to fund the additional 30,000 troops to support the President's policy announced last December, and much of that additional funding is required to support the Army's operating costs. What is your estimate, Mr. Secretary, of how far into the current fiscal year the Army can cover its war costs before you're going to need that appropriation of additional funds?

Mr. MCHUGH. I appreciate you asking this, Senator, because obviously it is something we spend a lot of time talking about in the Army side. I recognize full well that the process of introducing, and ultimately passing and having signed, a supplemental, under any conditions, is not always subject to a calendar, but there are realities, as you just mentioned.

Our budget people tell us, including Comptroller—Department of Defense Comptroller Hale, that the last possible moment in which we can comfortably fund this would be at the end of June, beginning of July.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

The Weapons Systems Acquisition Reform Act was designed to address the problems that we've had with weapons systems that take too long, cost too much, by getting the programs off on a sounder footing, with better systems engineering, better cost estimates, more mature technologies, and better developmental testing. Is the Army on track to rebuild its systems engineering, cost estimating, and developmental testing capabilities, as required by that Act?

Mr. MCHUGH. Is that directed at me, Senator?

Chairman LEVIN. Yes.

Mr. MCHUGH. We believe we are. I've jokingly said, over the last several months, as a prime cosponsor of that bill in the House, that had I known I was going to be Secretary of the Army, I probably would have read it more carefully. But, having the chance now to work with it, we're working very hard, particularly in programs like the ground combat vehicle, to meet the kinds of standards and the kinds of milestone judgments and prototype competitions that is envisioned in this act.

I would tell you, we have a challenge on insourcing and growing that workforce, as you know. If you look at the statistics of—over the last 10 years, there's been a 15-percent cut in the acquisition workforce in the Army. At the same time, we've been called upon to execute approximately a 500-percent increase in contracted dollars. I think the workforce, as strained as they have been, have done a good job in that regard. Over '08 and '09, we had about 1,000 protests to the contract lettings through our systems, and yet, of those thousand, approximately only eight were sustained.

Nevertheless, the long pole in the tent, it seems to me, is bringing in more contract expertise. We had a good start. We've insourced about 900 core functions. We've saved about $41 million. We have, though 2015, a plan to insource about—nearly 4,000 new positions. But targets sometimes are hard to achieve. But, I think we've done, thus far, a pretty good job in respecting the—both the intent and the letter of that law.

Chairman LEVIN. In general, you feel you're on track.

Mr. MCHUGH. I do, sir.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Now, on the Wounded Warrior Transition Command—you've both made references to our responsibility to our wounded warriors. We have set up, I believe, a—the Army has set up a Wounded—or a Warrior Transition Command to oversee the care and support of wounded or ill or injured soldiers. Is that, in your judgment, General—let me ask you for a quick answer to this, if you can—is that new command now in operation, and is it effective?

General CASEY. It has been fully operational, Chairman, and it has been increasingly effective. We've continued to improve our facilities, the staffing, and actually how we process soldiers through the Warrior Transition Unit system. We've shifted—trying to shift our focus away from just disability, over to rehabilitation. And we focus them on goal-settings, to move them more rapidly through the process.

The other bit, I'd just say, is, we've added an automation component to this, and we're automating the evaluation board process, and I think that's going to help us streamline this, as well. Short answer, it has improved the way we handle our warriors.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Relative to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law and policy, Secretary Gates testified that he's appointed a high-level working group to review the issues that are associated with implementing a repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law and policy. And Admiral Mullen has testified that he and the service chiefs are in support of that approach.

Let me ask both of you, Would you object to a moratorium on discharges for homosexuality until completion of that review?

Mr. Secretary?

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Chairman, I hate to parse words, but it depends what you mean by "support." We've—

Chairman LEVIN. Well, I said, Would you object to a moratorium?

Mr. MCHUGH. We don't feel we have the legal authority to impose that, from the Department side. But, quite honestly, if it were the will of the Congress and the President to institute that moratorium, I can't see that we would object to that, per se.

Chairman LEVIN. Okay.

General, if Congress adopted a moratorium, what—would you object to that? Would you recommend against it? What would be your position?

General CASEY. Senator, I would recommend against it. Aside from the legal issues that the Secretary mentioned, it would complicate the whole process that Secretary Gates had laid out. We would be put in a position of actually implementing it while we were studying implementation, and I don't think that would be prudent.

Chairman LEVIN. If the moratorium were simply a moratorium? In other words, you're not implementing anything, you're just withholding discharges until that study is completed?

General CASEY. Chairman, this process is going to be difficult and complicated enough. Anything that complicates it more, I think I would be opposed to.

Chairman LEVIN. Well, if we do that, we'll try and make it simple and straightforward.

Senator McCain.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses.

General Casey, you've put forward the goal of increasing dwell time for soldiers, so they can spend 2 years at home for every year deployed. I think it's a laudable goal. And, obviously, there's two ways of reaching it—reduce our commitment overseas or increase end strength. What would be the effect of making the temporary end-strength increase of 22,000 soldiers permanent? Would that be helpful?

General CASEY. Senator, it would be—it would have a slight impact on dwell across the Army. I can tell you that, with the drawdown in Iraq and the plus-up in Afghanistan, we actually get 70 percent of the active force to our goal of 1 year out, 2 years back, in '11, and 80 percent of the Guard and Reserve meet their goal. So, we are well on the way to getting that, because of our growth and because of the drawdown in Iraq.

Senator MCCAIN. Well, so, you still think we can get close to our—your objectives by 2011?

General CASEY. I do, Senator.

Senator MCCAIN. Secretary McHugh, how much of the Army's Overseas Contingency Operations Request could be placed in the base budget?

Mr. MCHUGH. About 8 billion, sir.

Senator MCCAIN. Out of 100 billion.

Mr. MCHUGH. A hundred-plus, yes.

Senator MCCAIN. So, we will probably see supplemental requests for a long period of time.

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, I can't speak to that. I mean, there is certainly an expectation—a hope, if you will—amongst the Army leadership and, I expect, most of the services, as we are engaged in named overseas operations, that we would have supplemental support. As to——

Senator MCCAIN. You think—in other words, we need supplementals——

Mr. MCHUGH. If we're going to operate in these types of—these types of theaters, yes, we absolutely do.

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Secretary and General Casey, as we know, they—stop—going to stop making the Humvee. The 2011 request ends production in the Humvee line of vehicles. Maybe you could provide, for the record, the plan that we have to—long-term plan for a wheeled- vehicle fleet. I think that's—I understand the President's budget request. I hope that we have some plans to—on a replacement for that.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator McCain: General Casey, do you feel that the operational commanders also ought to have input into this issue of how to address the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" issue?

General CASEY. Their input is certainly welcome, but we're the ones responsible for organizing and preparing the forces that they employ. And so, I believe we have a greater—we, the service chiefs, have a greater stake in it. But, their reasoned opinions are always welcomed.

Senator MCCAIN. And, of course, since they have to implement your personnel policies, and are given that responsibility, it seems to me they should be consulted, as well.

I think it's pretty obvious what the next step is in this effort to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Senator Levin just said, now instead of going through the study that the Secretary of Defense has called for, the forces now will want a, quote, "moratorium" before any decision is made. Not unexpected, but certainly it flies in the face of what the Secretary of Defense committed to, and that is, before a decision is made to change a policy that, in my view at least, is working, we would then impose a moratorium.

So, this—what are the plans for this long-range study that the Secretary of Defense is going to implement? Do you know, Secretary McHugh?

Mr. MCHUGH. In general terms, Senator, it's still being set up; and, in fact, some of the basic construct of the seniors group was worked out this weekend.

If I may, before I go to that, just to return to the Chairman's question. My answer about a moratorium was predicated upon the assumption that if Congress were to pass it, we would respect and obey that. If—

Senator MCCAIN. But, that was not the Chairman's question.

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, that's how I took it. When—and I want to be clear. If you're asking for my personal opinion as to the effects of a moratorium, we have any number of cases underway, pursuant to the current law, that would be greatly complicated were there

a moratorium; but if it were passed, obviously, and the intent of my answer was to say, we would follow through with that.

Chairman LEVIN. What are those cases, if I could just interrupt?

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, we have Lieutenant Choi, in New York, for example, who's in a process now, whose Federal recognition has been withdrawn, who's not had final action, as yet—a member of the New York Reserve.

Chairman LEVIN. Who is being discharged?

Mr. MCHUGH. We've not yet seen the recommendations and paperwork out of the State, but certainly with the process of withdrawing his Federal recognition, that would certainly lend to that decision and others. And I'm not trying to prejudge the appropriateness of that discharge or any other discharge, I'm just saying it would bring a legal complication to the circumstances.

But, again, if Congress were to pass, and the President were to sign that, we would step forward and respect it and implement it. As to——

Senator MCCAIN. But, Mr. Secretary——

Mr. MCHUGH. I'm sorry?

Senator MCCAIN. Mr. Secretary, but that's not the question. The question is, Would you support a, quote, "moratorium" before the review, as conducted by the Secretary of Defense, was—is completed?

Mr. MCHUGH. If the question is my personal opinion, if asked, the preference would be, we would not enact a moratorium.

Senator MCCAIN. Thank you very much.

Unfortunately, last year we put hate crimes on the defense authorization. For the first time in history, we put a legislation, that didn't have anything to do with defense authorization, on the authorization bill, and I'm greatly concerned about what would be put on this authorization bill, since the precedent was shattered last year, by the majority, by putting on legislation that had nothing to do with the Nation's defense.

I thank you for your candid answers, and I thank all of you for your service to the country.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator McCain.

Senator Lieberman?

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Just while we're on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," am I correct in concluding, based on your testimony, that—two things, really—one, if Congress adopted a moratorium on enforcement of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," or adopted repeal and the President signed it, that you would carry out those orders—those laws? Is that correct?

Mr. MCHUGH. Absolutely.

General CASEY. Absolutely.

Senator LIEBERMAN. And then, the second question is, on the question of repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," what I'm hearing both of you say—maybe you want to fill it in—is that, this morning, you are neither supporting nor opposing repeal. Is that correct?

Mr. MCHUGH. I have a somewhat different position on this matter, under the constructs of my responsibilities as Secretary. I work for the President of the United States and—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MCHUGH.—the Secretary of Defense. I entered this job with a full understanding, and the President has been consistently clear, that he supports repeal of this policy. Recent developments, of course, are the first steps by the administration to take steps to work in a way in which he believes can bring about an end to that. And my job is to try to provide, as the Secretary of Defense is doing at this moment, the best possible information and views, from the Army's side, so that they can formulate whatever decision forward and way forward they may choose, and thereafter, to best explain and represent the policies that the Commander in Chief has put forward.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Secretary.

I know, when we talked about this a while back, General Casey, I thought I understood you to say that you had some questions about a repeal, but that you were not taking a hard position either for or against, at this point.

General CASEY. Senator, I think that's fair. I mean, as I mentioned to you, I do have serious concerns about the impact of the repeal of the law on a force that's fully engaged in two wars and has been at war for 8 and a half years.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General CASEY. We just don't know the impacts on the readiness and military effectiveness.

Mr. MCHUGH. Exactly.

General CASEY. And that's why I fully support what Secretary Gates has laid out. I'll fully participate in that. And then we—I feel I can perform my—provide my informed military judgments to the Secretary of Defense, the President, and the Congress.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Good enough.

Let me go on to the end-strength question that Senator McCain took up for a moment in his questioning. As you know, we worked very hard to give you the increase in temporary end strength of 22,000 soldiers. Based on the dwell time, the time back at base, that our troops have and the stress that they're under, and also, of course, based on the unpredictability of the two hot wars we're involved in, in Iraq and Afghanistan, which is to say, what demands there'd be on manpower we never can foresee—I notice there's a story in the paper this morning suggesting that, because of uncertainties surrounding the election in Iraq and the post-election negotiating to form a new government, that it may be necessary to keep more of our soldiers in Iraq longer than we had originally hoped—not clear yet, but—while we're surging in Afghanistan. So, I want to get clear, just for the record, General Casey. Have you filled that 22,000 increase in end strength now?

General CASEY. We have not. And we will fill all but about—well, up to 15,000 this year.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General CASEY. And then we'll make a decision, later this year, whether of not we want to complete the last 7. It's tied, as you would suggest, to the demand on our forces—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Right.

General CASEY.—and the drawdown in Iraq. I will tell you, because of what was already spoken of here—the military personnel costs—I mean, we need to—we will work to find the right balance

between an Army that we can afford and an Army that is able to meet the Nation's demands at sustainable deployment rates for its soldiers.

Senator LIEBERMAN. Well, I appreciate it. We had a hearing yesterday with Secretary Flournoy and General Paxton about, really, a status report on where we are in the operations in Afghanistan and Marja, and the—based on statements that General McChrystal, General Petraeus have made, that there's a natural—this is the beginning of a turn-the-momentum-against-the-Taliban operation that will presumably go from Marja in Helmand Province into Kandahar. These are all very troop-intensive operations, and we know that, in this kind of conflict, numbers matter. So, I just want to express my hope—first a concern, if I can—that the budget that you're receiving—this end- strength increase temporarily goes to 2012, right? Right. So, that—my concern is that you're going to get squeezed budgetarily to make a decision against the troop increase that we may need or—in Afghanistan and Iraq, because the truth is that personnel really do cost a lot of money. And the net effect of that, I fear, will, of course, be that we will increase the stress on our forces and not do so well in combat. And, in a sense, the Secretary of Defense's decision—which I support with the fiscal year-11 budget—to add two additional combat aviation brigades—which I supported, because it provides much need aviation assets for the Army—also creates additional manpower and budgetary demands on our overtaxed force.

So, you get my point. I'm concerned that the Army's going to be pressured, for reasons of money, not effectiveness in the field or your goal, which I totally support, of increasing dwell time, to not have the personnel we need to achieve those ends. How would you respond?

General CASEY. Senator, I share your concerns, and I assure you that we won't get pressed by that to do something that will impact on a force that's already stretched by 8 and a half years of war. And as I talked to you in your office, I'll—the Secretary and I will let you know, here, as we get closer to this, about where—how we're thinking on it and where we're going.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate that. We'll—and I'll keep asking the question.

Secretary, do you want to add anything?

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, I would simply say, Senator, as both the Chief and I have discussed, we've—(a) we deeply appreciate that plus-up; and it was through yours and other great members of this committee that that came about. We feel that if our plans for drawdowns in Iraq and the continued plus-up goes according to the outlines, that we can meet our BOG-Dwell objectives without that end strength. But, obviously, as General Odierno's comments in the media this morning suggest, this is a situation that could change, and we need to—

Senator LIEBERMAN. Sure.

Mr. MCHUGH.—make that judgment at the appropriate time.

Senator LIEBERMAN. I appreciate that. Thank you.

You have a lot of allies here in that cause, so thank you very much.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Lieberman.

Senator CHAMBLISS.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, gentlemen, again, thanks for your service.

And, Mr. Secretary, you and I have been good friends for a long time, and I'm, again, very proud of your service and your commitment—continuing commitment to our military services—in the case, particularly the United States Army.

My State continues to be at the forefront of both the war in Afghanistan, the conflict in Iraq. The 48th Brigade of the Georgia National Guard is in the process of returning home right now, after a very—another very successful engagement, this time in Afghanistan. Of course, the 3rd ID is on their fourth tour in Iraq now and, again, just doing a terrific job. We're very proud of those folks.

General Casey, you referenced, in your budget, that—in your statement—that this budget includes all the remaining funding to complete the round of BRAC. While the Taliban can't stop the United States Army in Afghanistan, it appears that the red-headed—-cockaded woodpecker in Georgia has at least slowed down the transfer of the Armor School. Can you give us an update on that, and does your budget reflect the fact that we're going to complete that in the short term?

General CASEY. The budget reflects the fact that we're going to complete the construction. I'm—frankly, am not up to speed on where we are with the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Mr. Secretary, I don't know if you have the data, either.

I can—I'll find out, and let you know.

[The information referred to follows:]

General CASEY. I was—I'm sorry—I was down at Benning probably 2 months ago, and they told me that they were on track. They were—they mentioned some problems, but they didn't think those were going to keep us from meeting that September 2011 date to have Armor Center down there.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Okay. Well, if you could just give us a followup on that in writing, or have your staff give me call, that would be fine.

Mr. Secretary, we previously discussed the issue of Fort Stewart and the Army's decision not to grow the additional three BCTs, as previously stated. And with that in mind, the QDR mentions two pending reviews of our four European-based BCTs. As you well know, we eagerly await the outcome of those reviews and hope that the Army will give a hard look at where those BCTs should be based, and keep in mind both your commitments to NATO allies, as well as the need to have troops based in the continental United States.

Now, in that regard, the fiscal year-10 defense authorization—excuse me—defense appropriation bill called for a review to be completed within 60 days of enactment of the Department's efforts to mitigate the impact of the brigade basing decisions, that I mentioned above, on local communities. Can you give us the status of that, since we are at the 60-day mark?

Mr. MCHUGH. The one thing I've learned, Senator, since my 5 months in the Pentagon, is that 60 days usually means 75. I've not yet seen that report. I promise you we will attempt to find out where it is for you and provide that information with you.

[The information referred to follows:]

Mr. MCHUGH. As to—for you, I should say—as to the rebasing, we expect the NATO review and the attendant U.S. posture reviews, as to the four brigade teams' end in the European theater, to be concluded, and, hopefully, a decision can be made whether they'll be retained in Europe or, perhaps, one or both be brought back home by fall—fall of this year.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Okay.

With respect to the reset and replacement of the equipment that we are using, or have used, in Iraq over the last several years, it's pretty obvious, when you're on the ground over there, that a lot of this equipment is just simply worn out. And if we're truly going to leave the Iraqis in a position to be able to maintain security, both internally and also threats from external sources, we're probably going to have to leave some equipment with them. What's the plan of the Army now with respect to how much of this equipment is truly going to be brought back to the United States to be reset, how much is going to be left there for the Iraqis, and how much is simply too worn out to do either of the above?

General CASEY. Senator, a great question. In fact, we have been working on the drawdown in Iraq for over 18 months, and putting in place the stewardship boards to ensure that we have a good handle on this. And as you suggest, just to give you an idea of the scope of this, this is about 3 million pieces of equipment in Iraq—and, as you say, in various states of repair. About 70 percent of that equipment is Army standard—belongs to Army units. And that will come back to the United States, get reset, and get put back into units. The remaining 30 percent is nonstandard equipment. About 95 percent of that will be retained for our future use. It's things like X- ray machines that we use at entry sites. And about 5 percent will be made available to State agencies for emergency use.

Right now, it looks like we will leave about half a billion dollars' worth of excess equipment to the Iraqis, and that includes trucks, Humvees, rifles, generators, those kinds of things. And that's all—part of that has been provided by the authorities that came from this committee. But, of all the billions of dollars, only about half a billion dollars will be used—will be left there for the Iraqis.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Okay. I think Senator McCain touched on the issue of the 22,000 personnel that we've plussed-up and whether or not we ought to make those permanent. But, without repeating the specific question that he asked—I hope I'm not—General Casey, what are your thoughts on making the current temporary increase of end strength at 22,000?

General CASEY. Senator, because of the costs of personnel and the impact of that on the rest of the programs within the budget, I want to look at it very closely. And as I mentioned to Senator Lieberman, if we meet the drawdown in Iraq targets about as they've been laid out, we may not need the entire 22,000, and we may not need to keep it. But, it's something we'll look very, very closely at here, probably over the next 6 months.

Senator CHAMBLISS. Yes. Well, I would fully expect this committee is going to support your decision, whatever it may be, but the one issue that I keep hearing, back home as I visit the Army

posts, is the OPTEMPO issue, and it primarily comes from spouses, the same as what you already know, I'm sure. But, trying to deal with that issue is not easy, but, obviously, one way to do it is to make these 22,000 permanent.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Chambliss.

Senator Reed.

Senator REED. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, gentlemen, for your service.

General Casey, the Marines deployed, initially, MRAPs that had specialized suspension for Afghanistan. Where is the Army in that process? Are you—is that something you intend to do?

General CASEY. I know that—in fact, I was up at Aberdeen, and I looked at one of those systems up there, and we have a plant in Kuwait that is actively transitioning some of the MRAPs that we have in theater to the new suspension system. So, we're actively working on that.

Senator REED. And do you—is it your goal to fully equip all our Army forces in Afghanistan with those vehicles, or what is the plan?

General CASEY. My recollection, Senator, is that we're converting a certain type of MRAP. All MRAPs don't necessarily need—

Senator REED. Right.

General CASEY.—that kit, and so—

Senator REED. Right.

General CASEY.—we'll continue to outfit those.

Senator REED. Thank you.

And as—both for the Secretary and for the Chief of Staff—as we go forward, both in Iraq and Afghanistan, hopefully the need for combat brigades will decrease, the need for trainers will increase. How are you trying to accommodate that shift in the future?

General CASEY. We have been creating, probably for the last 6 months or so, Senator, advise-and-assist brigades for Iraq and brigades that are—modular brigades that are augmented with additional trainers for Afghanistan. And there's a two-phase training process: one, that when they go to their mission rehearsal exercise at one of our training centers, they get some training there; and then, last year, we stood up a new brigade whose sole mission is to conduct security force assistance trainings for general-purpose units. And so, the leadership of those units also receives a training, additional training in the skills required to work with indigenous forces, much like our Special Forces do. So, the combination of those—we're having great success.

The other thing, Senator, I'll tell you, I was down visiting a brigade from the 82nd at one of their exercises, and I said, "What's the story, guys, is this—can we really do this? Can conventional units do this training?" And there was silence, and then one of the battalion commanders said, "Sir, it's what we've been doing for the last 4 years." And so, we—since 2005, really, our conventional forces have been actively working with the indigenous forces in Iraq and also in Afghanistan. So, we're getting much better at it.

Senator REED. And your—this proposal you're talking about is the embedded trainers or units working with American brigades? Is that the concept that you—

General CASEY. We put additional field-grade officers into existing brigades so that they can partner with divisions—

Senator REED. Right.

General CASEY.—border brigades, things like that.

Senator REED. But, at some point, the presence of major units—brigades—in Iraq first, and then Afghanistan—will be minimal, if—and what about individual trainers or training structures that don't depend upon the brigades?

General CASEY. Both at—Iraq and Afghanistan have training—have structures to stand up the institutional side of their armies. It's called MNSTC–I, in Iraq, and it's called CSTC–A, in Afghanistan. Bill Caldwell has been working in Afghanistan to stand it up. Frankly, it was under-resourced. In fact, we've just sent about 50 soldiers—senior leaders from that training brigade to Bill Caldwell to augment his staff and continue to get things going there. And I—that is where, currently in Afghanistan, he is having problems with the trainers, the institutional trainers that I think the Chairman mentioned in his opening statement.

Senator REED. But I'd—going forward, General and Mr. Secretary, are you consciously planning to resource this effort with, you know, qualified officers—noncommissioned officers on an extended basis? Is that built into your plan?

General CASEY. Absolutely. In fact, we have begun selecting lieutenant colonel and colonel commanders, off of a command select list, to command in those organizations.

Senator REED. Another aspect to this training issue is interagency training, predeployment. Is that going on, and how effective is that?

General CASEY. It is, but it's tough, Senator. And what we wind up doing is contracting retired interagency folks to come out and give us that expertise as we're going through the training. It's just—the other agencies just aren't big enough to provide the folks that are actually going to be out there in time. So, that continues to be difficult.

Senator REED. So, there's no sort of—as you do before deploying military, you know, to bring all of the relevant parts together, train for a period of time, then deploy. You have surrogates, and then when they get in the field, they get together with the actual agency partners.

General CASEY. Right. If we're getting the actual partners there, it's by exception and not the rule.

Senator REED. There's been a lot of discussion about the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Have you heard anything from commanders in the field in Afghanistan or Iraq about the readiness or the—I mean, of British forces or Canadian forces, which do allow gay servicemembers to serve openly? Is there any reluctance, by American units, to cooperate? Any feedback from individual soldiers about their policies?

General CASEY. I have heard nothing from anyone about any conflicts with British or Canadian soldiers, or any other country's soldiers, that have already implemented that policy.

Senator REED. Have you had anybody suggest that their battle readiness was impaired by that policy?

General CASEY. I have not, Senator.

Senator REED. As you go forward, and you've—you're reorganizing the military—as you point out, the most significant reorganization in decades—is there any, sort of, thought about changing the construct of the Reserve Forces, of putting more or less combat service support elements there? And if there is, can you comment?

General CASEY. We're always trying the get the mix right—the mix of Active-component and Reserve-component forces. And we made a conscious decision in 2004 to get through this, to complete this reorganization that we've done. Now we're reassessing and we're taking a hard look at ourselves to see if we have the mix right. And that will take place over the next 6 months, and I'd be happy to keep you abreast of it as we go forward.

Senator REED. Thank you, General.

I just want to point—because my time expired—is to recognize and commend the Secretary for your leadership. We were all very gratified when the President nominated you, and your performance since then, Mr. Secretary, has been very exceptional, and I thank you for that service.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Reed.

Senator Wicker.

Senator WICKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me echo my appreciation to both witnesses for their service. And to reiterate what I said when Congressman McHugh was nominated by the President, I think the President chose well, and we're proud of the Secretary.

Just to follow up on Senator Reed's question, General. Have you had conversations with British or Canadian generals of like rank about the transition and their observation with regard to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"?

General CASEY. I have not, Senator.

Senator WICKER. Okay. But, don't you think that might be a good idea, something you might pursue?

General CASEY. We will do that as part of this process.

Senator WICKER. Okay. Thank you.

As you know, there's been a lot of discussion about MRAPs today. In your prepared testimony, gentlemen, you say the Army is incorporating these vehicles throughout its unit formations. I understand that Secretary Gates mentioned sharing MRAPs with our allies. And so, to either one of you, are we going to do that, or is that just a notional concept? Would we be giving them to other countries? Would be selling them under foreign military sales-type program? And also, how many—specifically, how many MRAPs do we have in Iraq today? I have information that it's about 23,000. Would that be a fair number? No, sir?

General CASEY. No, Senator. We have probably about 9300 or so in Iraq. There's a total of——

Senator WICKER. Ninety-three hundred.

General CASEY.—we, the Army, now.

Senator WICKER. The Army.

General CASEY. We have about 11-—almost 12,000 total deployed and about 600 of these all-terrain—MRAP all-terrain vehicles out there.

Senator WICKER. Okay. Now—

General CASEY. That may be—23,000 sounds high, but it may be all of the other services thrown in there.

Senator WICKER. Okay. Well, is this part of the equipment that Senator Chambliss was talking about? Will some of these be left in control of the Iraqis? We going to bring them all back?

Mr. MCHUGH. We're not through that process, as yet, Senator. I will tell you that, with respect to discussions to provide MRAP or any other piece of hardware to our allies, obviously we want them to be equipped in ways that, as they help us on this or any other battlefield, they have adequate protection. But, the last I knew, the Secretary of Defense's position was that we must meet United States solders' requirements first and foremost.

As to the means of disposal of those, either through some sort of in-kind donation or should they pay up front, it will be on a case-by-case basis, should we get to that point.

Senator WICKER. Okay, now this refurbishing that Senator Reed asked about is taking place in Kuwait. Is that to make them ready for the different terrain in Afghanistan?

General CASEY. It's to put a more agile suspension system on them, yes.

Senator WICKER. And will all of them have to go through this refurbishing before they're sent to Afghanistan?

General CASEY. Senator, I don't believe so, but I don't know exactly. So, I will tell you—provide that to you for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator WICKER. Okay.

General CASEY. It will apply to some models for sure. I don't know that it applies to all the models, but I'll—

Senator WICKER. Okay.

General CASEY.—get you that for the record.

Senator WICKER. And I understand we're transitioning, then, to—from the MRAP to the MATV. Are we going to be building any more MRAPs or are we going to start making MATVs exclusively, at this point?

Mr. MCHUGH. My understanding is that the various platforms of MRAPs will continue. The theater demand is for the MATV, but that doesn't suggest that some of the other variants don't have suitability and applicability in other uses, and that will be examined on a case-by-case basis. But, clearly, from the battlefield, the MATV, particularly in Afghanistan, is the high-demand platform.

Senator WICKER. Okay. Well, let me leave it—we've sprinkled a lot of questions in a few moments. Perhaps one—

General CASEY. We're getting the impression you're—

Senator WICKER.—you could get back to us on the—

General CASEY.—interested in MRAPs.

Senator WICKER. Sir?

Mr. MCHUGH. We're getting the impression you're interested in MRAPs.

Senator WICKER. Indeed, and other members of the panel—

Mr. MCHUGH. Yes.

Senator WICKER.—have been interested in MRAPs.

One other line of questioning, and that's with regard to the Fire Scout vehicles. They've been made by Northrop Grumman, in my

State of Mississippi. I was disappointed when Secretary Gates canceled the program.

We have eight Fire Scout vehicles manufactured, sitting in storage in the manufacturing plant in Mississippi. The President's budget indicates that the Army is working to transfer existing assets to the Navy or Special Forces. But, my question is, it would seem to me that the Army would need a vertical takeoff-and-landing capability in Afghanistan, much as the Fire Scout can provide. So, can either one of you tell me why the Army decided to cancel the Fire Scout program. When will the Army present Congress with its plan on moving forward with existing assets that have been manufactured and are sitting unused? And is the Army currently conducting any studies to determine the need for a vertical takeoff-and-landing unmanned air system capability in its future force?

General CASEY. Senator, if I could, I'd answer those in reverse. Right now, we have—we don't have any—currently have any studies ongoing for a vertical takeoff- and-landing system. I will—we will get you the plan for how we intend to deal with the existing systems here within the next 60 days.

[The information referred to follows:]

General CASEY. And then—now to the question of, Why did we go down this road to begin with? The bottom line is, Senator, that we developed a unmanned-aerial- vehicle strategy that gave us more capability at less cost. And we studied this over the last year, and we looked at the payload, the cost, the force structure that was attendant to operating the different systems. And when we compared it to an improved Shadow, which is a system that's already in the force, the Shadow gave us more value for the money, and more capability for the money, as well. And while a vertical takeoff-and-landing capability is convenient, it just didn't put it over the top, in terms of the capabilities that the improved Shadow gave us for the cost.

Senator WICKER. The Shadow doesn't have that vertical capability. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.

Senator Akaka.

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

I want to add my welcome to Secretary McHugh and General Casey. And I want to thank you for your distinguished service to our country.

I also want to thank the men and women of our Army, both uniformed and civilian, who serve our country proudly. And also, I want to thank Army families, who make many sacrifices while their loved ones serve our country.

Mr. Secretary, the number of servicemembers returning from deployment who have mental health issues is a great concern. Many servicemembers are reluctant to volunteer information that could reflect negatively on the state of their mental health. Secretary McHugh, considering servicemembers' reservations to volunteer such information, can you update us on the Army's efforts to proactively identify and assist soldiers dealing with mental health issues? And also, for those transitioning from the active component,

how is the Army helping them to find mental healthcare, either from VA or from the civilian sector?

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, you raise a very important point, Senator. There has long been the attitude, amongst men and women in uniform across the services, that somehow mental health is a shortcoming, a handicap, a weakness. And, from the Army side—and, I think it's fair to say, from all of the services—we're working very hard to try do change the opinions of those who we hope will find themselves in a position to reach out for help. Earlier, the Chief mentioned Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, and this change of attitude has to begin at the very basic level, and that is to have Army doctrine treat physical fitness and mental fitness along the same par. And that is the attempt of this initiative. I think it's fair to say that, combined with the online assessments—mental health assessments that are available through that program, and coupled with the resilience trainers that are increasingly going out into the units and helping soldiers become more resilient, that they're beginning to understand it's okay to seek out help.

We have the same challenge, quite frankly, that we see in the civilian community, and that is a difficulty in bringing on necessary providers—behavioral health specialists. And, in fact, we're about 86 percent of our stated requirements for those behavioral health providers, and we're working, each and every day, to try build on that. But, we've had success, I would argue, particularly in moving our concern about behavioral health, and our focus on it, away from just the predeployment. We're reaching out into the battlefields. We have the mental health advisory teams that come back and provide advice to us as to what we can do to extend that service, and we're—now in the battlefields, both Iraq and Afghanistan, have mental health specialists dealing with the troops, dealing with them on patient-to-provider ratios that, frankly, are better than our stated requirement. We have a requirement in theater of about one of these behavioral health providers for every 700 soldiers, in both OIF and OEF. We're just about or just above the one-to-600.

So, the way you get people to understand it's okay is to act as if it's okay and by providing that kind of care and destigmatizing it. And that's key to our success in the future, and it's certainly key to our activity, thus far.

Senator AKAKA. The other part of that question was the—on whether there are any efforts being made to help them plan for their healthcare from either VA or the private sector.

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, we don't just turn people loose, Senator. When soldiers redeploy, thanks to the work of both houses of Congress, and certainly this and the House Armed Services Committee, we're now providing not one but two post-deployment reassessments. We're trying to create a continuum where we can, more early on, identify folks who are either likely or who are encountering problems; and when those people are identified, we try to provide for them in house.

Where distance becomes a challenge, as it often does with respect to the Reserve component, we're working through the Reserves to—through the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program and others, to make sure that we can do everything we can to connect people who

are in need, based on their service challenges, to those who can provide them help.

I don't want to suggest that we've got this perfect. We don't. But, it is, nevertheless, something we focus on every day, and we're, I think, improving every day. But, still a ways to go.

Senator AKAKA. I'm very interested, Secretary McHugh, in collaboration between the services and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Of note, the Army has worked with the VA on a Physical Disability Evaluation System pilot program, and a Virtual Lifetime Electronic systems—Record systems. Mr. Secretary, can you give me an update on the pilot program and how you are addressing the challenges of creating a Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record system?

Mr. MCHUGH. I can provide you an overview, and I think the Chief could give you more detail, because he's been focused on this. I spent a lot of time in Congress, on the Armed Services Committee, frankly, frustrated at the disconnect between the various evaluation systems maintained in the military versus those in the VA, and we're working very hard, particularly post what we found out at Walter Reed. One of the great frustrators of soldiers, in our Warrior Transition Units who were doing the transitioning from the military to the VA disability system, was that disconnect and the frustration of repetitive dealings.

The last report I got is that the model study is going fairly well and they hope to have the—it completed and results in the relatively near future. But, I'd defer to the Chief for any fill-in-the-blanks he might have.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Chief?

General CASEY. The pilot is currently working at ten places, and we're going to increase it by another five in March. And that, frankly, is not as fast as I'd like to see it go, because it—intuitively, we all believe it's the way that we should go.

The soldiers—the general feedback we get from the soldiers is, they see the one physical given in the pilot is more fair, because it allows them to start getting their benefits sooner.

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

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Akaka.

Senator Sessions.

Senator SESSIONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, both of you, for your service, and look forward to continuing to work with you to support the finest Army this Nation's, I think, ever fielded. And they've been under great stress, and have exceeded, I think, all our expectations. So, I'm so proud of the men and women that serve.

Just a few issues that I'd like to raise. General Casey, we have a continual discussion about unmanned aerial systems, and there's some confusion, for a period of time, about who was going to be responsible for that. It seems to me that it—I think that matter has been settled with clarity.

First, is that so? And what—we've seen how effective they can be, and is there any need to expand the number of military units and the size—reduce the size of the units that have access to this kind of capability?

General CASEY. Well, I think, Senator, to answer your first question, we have worked very closely with the Air Force over, really, the last 18 months to resolve who's in charge, and at what level. And I feel very comfortable that we have resolved the differences that we—

Senator SESSIONS. Was that different from Secretary England's decision? Have you made any changes at what I understood his decision was?

General CASEY. What I was speaking of, Senator, was the employment aspect of it, not the procurement side of it.

The other thing I would say is it—I think you know that, in this budget, we have been given some additional assets to procure some additional unmanned aerial vehicles. In fact, several companies of the—of our top-line UAV. And I think we all feel that these systems give our soldiers, not only a great capability to operate in irregular warfare operations, but they are relevant across the spectrum of conflict.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, like I said, the system is—of course, we have MRAPs, and we spend a lot of money on those protective vehicles. But, there was an article in the paper, in the last few days, about a young officer using an unmanned aerial system to identify somebody planting a IED in the road—a group of people doing that. And so, it could save lives in a lot of different ways. I just hope that you will not hesitate to ask for what you need.

Second, with regard to the CERP funds and the funds, General Casey, that soldiers have to deal with local civilians, let's say, in the Afghan theater, there's a village, remote from the central government, that has always sort of taken care of its own matters. What I think we learned in Iraq—and you were there when it really happened—that if you work with some of the local leaders, and can help them have the resources to hire and train local people who are going defend the local community, sometimes you get a lot better production than if you take those young people and send them off to some distant part of the country, where they have no family and not the same loyalty.

So, I guess my question to you is, as I understand it, you do have—the commanders have certain abilities to utilize funds through the CERP program to work with local leaders, but the substantial majority of the money, as I understand it, may be going through the State Department, and often they're not in these more remote villages. And I guess my question is, Are you satisfied that you have enough funds, based on the amount that's out there, to actually work with local leaders, shake hands with them, make some commitments, and be able to deliver on those commitments in a way that can transform a whole village, region, valley in a more positive way?

General CASEY. Senator, there's $1.3 billion in the—this fiscal year-11 budget for CERP funds. The bulk of that, 1.1 billion, is going to Afghanistan. And so, that seems to me to be an appropriate amount for what they—what their needs are there, at the low level.

Senator SESSIONS. Can that be used at the local level, let's say, to help a local leader hire a police force, and pay those people—

General CASEY. Yes. I'm a little—Yes, I'm a little rusty on the exact restrictions they have. Hiring people sometimes is outside of the realm of CERP.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, there we go.

General CASEY. But, certainly it can be used—

Senator SESSIONS. See that's the problem. That's the problem. It was in the Washington Post; they had an interesting article about it. General Eikenberry—how soon he forgets; now he's become an ambassador—and the—Ambassador Holbrooke was quoted about it, and they have concerns. Kabul has concerns. They like everybody to answer only to them, of course. But, didn't we have success in Iraq, when you were there, in creating loyalty with the local leaders by the military people being able to deliver, and help them provide, jobs and security forces for their people?

General CASEY. Yes, Senator. And I'm not getting any feedback—and I was just there before Christmas—I'm not getting any feedback that that's not happening in Afghanistan.

Senator SESSIONS. Well, I—

General CASEY. If you—

Senator SESSIONS.—there's still some uncertainty about it. I just hope, Secretary—Mr. Secretary, you know, sometimes the Defense Department's got to defend its legitimate interest in the internal bureaucracies that are out there. And I don't know precisely where the line ought to be drawn, but I know, in certain areas of Afghanistan, there really is no State Department presence. The only presence there is a trained, skilled military officer, who meets with a tribal leader, and he needs to be able to offer that leader something, and make decisions that could neutralize hostilities and save lives. Is that something you've thought about?

Mr. MCHUGH. I have, and it's something that I agree with you about. The workings between State and the Department of Defense on this program took some time. My understanding is that now it's working relatively well, that commanders on the ground do have access to those funds that provide, as you correctly noted, Senator, a great opportunity and a great option to create local jobs through various construction projects, be it a repair of a road, or be it construction—

Senator SESSIONS. What about security forces?

Mr. MCHUGH. I—the—well, I've got to demur, as I think I heard the Chief do—

Senator SESSIONS. Well, it's a pretty——

Mr. MCHUGH.—because——

Senator SESSIONS.—big issue, so I—would you agree that that's a big issue?

Mr. MCHUGH. I'm——

Senator SESSIONS. And will you look at it? That's all I'm——

Mr. MCHUGH. I'm not disagreeing. What I'm saying is, I'm not certain, under the current construct, if direct hiring is allowable under CERP. I just don't know as it is or it isn't. Generally, a CERP program is a construction program that provides jobs and, obviously, economic security in that way. If there's an opportunity for hiring of direct forces, we're generally inclined to do that through other means. But——

Senator SESSIONS. Well——

Mr. MCHUGH.—we can certainly check and get back to you.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator SESSIONS. General Casey, just briefly, isn't that—you did that in Iraq. The forces were able to partner with local people, put their local young men on the payroll as security forces, and they ran al Qaeda out of their villages, time and time again, didn't they?

General CASEY. Yes, I—Senator, I'm—that—I think that happened afterwards. I don't recall hiring security forces with CERP. I know——

Senator SESSIONS. I don't know where they got their money——

General CASEY. Yes.

Senator SESSIONS.—but I'm just telling you, that's a big deal. And they don't have time to send them off a year to Kabul to be trained and get sent some other place in Afghanistan. I mean, the reality is now; you've cleared a village or whatever, and you've got some support and—I just think we need to cut through this and be able to recognize, in some areas of the country, that the military are the only real people there that make a good decision, and they should be—have access to some of those funds, if need be, to do that.

General CASEY. I'll check on that and get back with you.

Mr. MCHUGH. I'll double check on that.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator SESSIONS. The—I have some other questions I'll submit to you in writing.

I, again, thank you for your service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Sessions.

I do believe that Senator Sessions is correct. I think the CERP funding has been authorized at least for the reintegration piece; it's not just for construction. I think it's been specifically authorized for reintegration, which would include payroll.

Mr. MCHUGH. But, as I said——

Chairman LEVIN. Pardon?

Mr. MCHUGH.—we will certainly check——

Chairman LEVIN. Yes.

Mr. MCHUGH.—and see how that's being applied.

Chairman LEVIN. I think it is not only authorized, I think it's been used for that purpose, at least to reintegrate some of the lower-level Taliban into—with some pay for them.

Senator Ben Nelson.

Senator BEN NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, gentlemen, for your service.

I thank the members of the Army for your service, as well as the families who support our men and women in uniform.

I'd like to turn to MILCON, just for a moment, Senator McHugh and General Casey. And, General Casey, you and I have talked about reset and recapitalization, so what I'm really addressing is, the budget request includes significant funding increases to replace aging facilities for the National Guard and the Reserves. Obviously, the investment is critical, considering the Guard and Reserve personnel comprise some 51 percent of your end strength. But, your request for Guard and Reserve MILCON, while $1.2 billion, is less than 1 percent of your total base budget, and only a fifth of your

total MILCON request. And some of Nebraska's Guard units, for example, are lacking, currently, adequate space to store reset and new equipment. For example, Nebraska units lack 33 acres for improved and unimproved parking to store new trucks, tractors, and trailers, as well as 8,000 square feet of heated storage and 3500 square feet of security vault storage.

What—and we'll take this for the record—but, what is the current state of our Guard and Reserve infrastructure at the present time? Perhaps you could make some general comments. We'd like to have something more for the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

Senator BEN NELSON. Secretary McHugh?

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, as you know, Senator, as we have begun to operationalize the Guard and Reserve, there have been significant challenges. The first wave of those challenges were based largely on the equipment side. And if you look at the state of both the personnel, as well as the equipment readiness for Guard and Reserve, although still a work in progress, we've made some successful steps. The personnel readiness ratings have improved about 4 percent this year over last. The equipment, right now, is at about 79-percent readiness. If you count substitute equipment, that raises to about 89 percent. But, what that tells us is, we have a long way to go.

As to the distribution of MILCON, certainly, if I were in a Guard or Reserve unit, I'd feel as though I wasn't getting what I needed, and we have to admit that. But—

Senator BEN NELSON. Well, that's why, in taking them to an operational Reserve, it has to be thorough in—with respect to not only equipment, but to their facilities, so that the facilities management is capable of taking care of the equipment and keeping them an operational ready Reserve. So, that's my concern, and obviously it's your concern, as well. But, I hope that you can address that in more detail for us and for the record.

Mr. MCHUGH. We will do that, Senator.

[The information referred to follows:]

Mr. MCHUGH. As I said, we're making progress, but it's incremental, at best, I would agree with you.

Senator BEN NELSON. Well, if we don't continue to make progress, what we'll see happen is what would be fairly obvious, that would be a sliding back of the capabilities of the Guard and Reserve to be that operational Reserve, and readiness will suffer, I think, as we all understand.

On human capital, one of the biggest challenges will be managing and expanding the new missions while maintaining the fixed end strength. And a significant number of questions have been asked about that. What I'd like to do is focus on the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance mission—ISR—seeing a great deal of growth all across the services, due in part because of this expansion of the UAVs. How will the Army be able to staff these growing needs of these missions, both as to the increased number of units and increased number of these UAVs? What are we doing to be able to keep pace with the growing nature of the use of such?

General?

General CASEY. That's a great question, because—Senator—because, you know, as—we have learned a lot over the course of the last 8 and a half years about intelligence and how to—particularly in how to apply intelligence in this environment. And we are in the process of going through another significant reevaluation of our whole intelligence structure. And as we look at this, we do very good analysis of where our gaps are, you know, where the shortfalls are. But, what we don't do well, and what we are working on, is redundancies, and how to get at redundancies. And so, to get at high-payoff forces, like the intelligence forces, we've got to continue to be able to free up redundant forces from other areas, to put them in these high-payoff areas. And that process is—it's hard, but it's ongoing right now.

Senator BEN NELSON. Do you think that we're maintaining an adequate pace? Is it something we need to step up in order to be able to be as—have our readiness there be as sufficient as we would like it?

General CASEY. I think—you know, we—you always like to go faster. We are keenly aware of the fact that we're at war and we have soldiers deployed, and I think we're moving on this about as fast as is reasonably possible, Senator.

Senator BEN NELSON. I've also noticed that the—in the request of fiscal year-11—507 million to buy 29 MQ–1 drones, as well that spend 2.9 billion on 158 of these aircraft by 2015. The Air Force's request, 1.1 billion in fiscal year-11, to purchase 48 MQ–9 drones, and they'll spend 7.3 billion on 341 MQ–9s over the same period.

Is there intercooperation between the Air Force and the Army sufficiently on this so that there's no overlap or underlap, in that we don't have a stovepipe situation developing where we have ours, they have theirs? Obviously, coordination of these efforts would strengthen our overall military.

General CASEY. You're exactly right. And as I said, we—I've been working, frankly, directly with the Air Force Chief for almost 2 years on UAV issue. I can't look you in the eye and tell you it's—we've eliminated all the redundancies, Senator, but we will continue to work closely with the Air Force to avoid that.

Senator BEN NELSON. Well, these are not only essential military requirements to be able to meet to have the sufficient number of UAVs for certain, but we don't want to underlap the situation in any significant way, because, obviously, the information can be exchanged readily if there's a willingness to do it. And I appreciate the fact that you're suggesting to us that you're working with your counterpart in the Air Force. I hope that that will continue. Obviously, I'm going to ask the Air Force the same question. So, if I can smooth the process for you, I'll be happy to—

General CASEY. Use my name, Yes.

Senator BEN NELSON. I'll use your name. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Nelson.

Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Casey, 6 years ago this week, at a hearing before the Personnel Subcommittee, you and I had a discussion about the problem of sexual assaults in the military. At that time, you stated

that the Army had a zero-tolerance policy, and you pledged your commitment to trying to deal with this growing problem.

Last fiscal year, however, there were 2900 reports of sexual assaults among servicemembers; and obviously, since the Army's the biggest, the—on a percentage basis, the majority of those assaults occurred among our soldiers. This reflected an increase of 8 percent over the previous fiscal year.

Now, I understand that the Army is contending that this is a result of better reporting and that our female soldiers, in particular, feel more comfortable now coming forward to report assaults, but it is still extremely troubling that we're seeing those kinds of numbers. Why haven't we made more progress in the past 6 years in this troubling area?

General CASEY. Senator, that's a fair question, and I can tell you, I still remember that hearing. And as the Vice Chief, I went back and we worked very hard to put together a prevention and response program that—we, frankly, didn't have one that was effective. And we worked very hard on it.

When I came back to this job—it was probably about 18 months ago, now—I was sitting down and getting a report on where we'd come, and I was shown the data for the last year—and I think it was the year before—and we were clearly the highest of the services. And I was told the same thing that you were, that, "Well, we just report better." And I said, "Baloney." And as I bored into it, it was clear to me that we had a program that was almost entirely focused on response, on helping the victim after it happened, and not on the prevention. And Secretary Geren and I sat down and used Secretary Geren's experience as—when he was working with the Air Force on this, to put together a program to change our culture so that we could prevent the assaults before they happened. And we kicked that off in the end of 2008, and we have—we put $28 million in his budget to make that—bring that program to fruition. We recognized—and we started it in 2008—that it was a culture change and that it was going to take some time. But, we're absolutely committed to staying on this until we fix it. Because the—I still feel that we're zero-tolerance, and we have to be.

Senator COLLINS. Secretary McHugh, would you like to add anything?

Mr. MCHUGH. I would, Senator. As I—as you and I have talked before, there's very few, if any, other single issues that are more contrary to the Army values than that sexually assaulting or harassing another member in uniform—or anyone, for that matter. And I made the pledge to you and to others in the House—Congresswoman Harman, for example—and any number of others who have, thankfully, focused on this issue so carefully.

The Chief, I think, has highlighted what the Army needs to do, and that is to change the culture. I can't tell you how it is it became—it came to the level it did. I don't want to say it was ever acceptable, because it wasn't, but clearly, there was some kind of disconnect amongst our young soldiers that didn't help them understand more clearly, this is not just wrong, it's unacceptable. And the "I. A.M. Strong" program, under the SHARP program, as you're aware, is the major means by which we convey that new attitude of values. It's something we're working very hard. The Chief cor-

rectly mentioned the $28-million appropriation in the President's proposed budget for this.

But, I think we need to, as well, while changing the culture, help those victims understand that, if they do come forward, they're going to be helped. And that, critically, means that we're going to pursue, legally, those that have committed these acts. I think there was an attitude amongst many, largely female, victims that if they reported, they'd become a victim again by a system that just didn't follow through and somehow didn't care.

And we have worked hard to start, in our JAG schools, to put courses in for prosecutors to pursue these. We've hired highly qualified experts and forensic scientists who are skilled in pursuing crime scenes, and brought in new prosecutors, as well, so that those soldiers who are the victim of this horrendous, unacceptable crime, when are they brave enough to come forward, sees that it means something and we follow through.

So, the Chief correctly said, it's frustrating, in that it doesn't happen overnight, but we are fully committed to that.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

I know, from our discussions, that you also share my concern about the enormous increase in suicides in the Army. You've had a previous discussion with members of this panel about the need for more mental health services. And, Secretary McHugh, I just want to commend you for your emphasis in talking about not just physical fitness, but mental and emotional fitness. I think that's absolutely critical.

It's troubling that the Army had it's worse year on record last year, as far as the number of suicides. But, it's even more troubling that we don't know why, that there doesn't seem to be a correlation—at least that's what I'm told—between the number of deployments or whether the person's in Reserve or Active Duty. Are we any closer to understanding why there is this troubling spike in suicides?

Mr. MCHUGH. Sadly, the answer is "not much closer." We have instituted—and I appreciate your kind comments, but—the Comprehensive Social Fitness program, that I think is so critical, and we're transitioning that now to families, as well, to help people become more mentally resilient. And that was a lot of great work by my—by the Chief and by my predecessor. And those kinds of things need to continue to help people better cope.

But, as to why people take this step, particularly as to why men and women in uniform do, we're still, in many ways, befuddled. The best hope I see, in terms of understanding it truly, is the 5-year longitudinal study that the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army has kind of headed up for us, with the Institute of Mental Health, that will take a cold, hard look, over a necessary period of time, to try to better understand that. And, frankly, we don't have much better answers in the civilian community, either.

But, as you noted, 160 suicides last year in the Army, the highest number ever, tells us that we've got to focus in on this even more strongly, and we're doing that.

The one thing I would say about this 5-year study—it seems like a long time, and it is—that there is a process for quarterly reports, so that, as things hopefully come to light as we begin to under-

stand things we might do in the interim, the data will be provided, and the guidance provided, for us to step forward and to try to take some—put into place some measures that will hopefully provide some solutions.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Collins.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Mr. Chairman, if I might, Senator Hagan was here before I was—

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

Senator UDALL.—and I'd like to yield to her, and - -

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you.

Senator UDALL. Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. According to my list, which is obviously inaccurate, you were next.

Senator Hagan.

Senator HAGAN. Thank you. Thank you, for my colleague.

But, to Secretary McHugh and General Casey, thank you very much for being here today, for your service and your testimony.

And, General Casey, thank you for bringing the individuals that introduced.

And I want to thank each and every one of you for your service to our military.

And I do want to say that we all know that we have the best army in the world and that the—Fort Bragg's 82nd Airborne Division is leading the effort in the Regional Command East in Afghanistan, and there are also elements of the 82nd throughout Afghanistan and Iraq, advising, assisting and partnering with the Afghan National Security Forces, as well as the Iraqi Security Forces.

And I also want to point out the exceptional contributions to the Army Special Forces in theater, as well as the 30th Brigade Combat Team from the North Carolina National Guard. I can't tell you how proud we are of all the incredible important job that they are doing.

And, Secretary McHugh and General Casey, both of you, in your opening statements, talked about the commitment that you have for the families. And, Secretary McHugh, you said that you were pleased to hear that the number-one concern to you is the care for families and the programs for them. And, General Casey, when you were talking about the—getting the Army back in balance, you stated that—I believe—that dwell time was the most important issue in order to get back in balance. And then you gave details about that.

You know, obviously, ensuring family readiness, I think, plays a big role in Army retention. And, you know, improving the quality of life of our Army families allows our soldiers to operate in theater more effectively. I'd like to have you comment on some of the enhanced family programs that you have mentioned is included in this budget.

Mr. MCHUGH. I appreciate, first of all, the great service of all those great North Carolinians you mentioned, not just in Fort Bragg, but your Reserve-component soldiers. I was over there; I had a chance to visit with some of them, and they should make you proud. They make all of us proud.

One of the great things that—and if you can't tell, I will state it for the record, I'm a big admirer of Secretary Geren—Pete Geren, my predecessor—and one of the—one of many great things he did is work with the Chief of Staff and really make a commitment, to our Army families, that we're going to do everything we can to return the sacrifice that, as you so correctly noted, Senator, they make, each and every day, on our behalf. The main conveyance of that was the Army Family Covenant. It was something—one of the first acts I did when I came to the Pentagon was to resign that in a ceremony that reaffirmed our commitment to those families and the various programs that we've instituted to try to attend to their needs.

We have done a good job on funding. In fact, over the last several years, the appropriations for Army family programs has doubled—about $750,000 when we started, now just 2—I believe—short years later, it's up to 1.5 billion. The President's budget would increase it to 1.7, and by the end of 2015 it would be up to 1.9, according to the planned way forward.

And it does a whole host of things. It provides respite care for the caregivers and families whose soldier is deployed; it provides respite care to those soldiers and their families who have children with special needs; there's the Spousal Employment Program—the so-called SEP program that works with Fortune 100 and 500 companies to provide employment opportunities for spouses. In fact, we've had the great success through, those terrific companies, of filling jobs for more than 35,000 Army spouses. And just on and on and on.

And it's just something we have to do. You noted, we sign up the soldier, we re-sign the family. And it's something that we believe in very, very devoutly. We've got a plan for creation of 50-some new child development centers, seven new youth centers, just trying to take the whole range of family needs and show them that the family cares.

General CASEY. The only thing I really can add is, as you point out, keeping the families understanding that we really are committed to them over the long haul is an essential part of holding this force together over this—over the next couple of years.

Senator HAGAN. Well, I appreciate signing the Army Family Covenant. I do think that that's extremely important. And I think these programs, and the enhancement of the programs, are certainly playing a big role in the families and the retention. So, I thank you for that.

I know we've had a lot of discussion today about the MRAPs. I wanted to say that I'm supportive of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle Program; however, I want to learn more about how that program fits within the Army's long- term ground vehicle strategy. And when the Joint Light Vehicle Program first began, in 2006, the MRAP requirement did not exist, and the unforecasted procurement of a—significant numbers of the MRAPs has impacted the overall JLTV program. And the Army has stated that the MRAPs fill a short-term urgent joint service requirement in order, obviously, to protect our soldiers, while the JLTVs are the long-term solution.

Can you describe the—how the best interests of the Army to maintain the JLTV and the MRAP, given their overlapping missions and requirements, and how does the JLTV service the long-term solution in order to better protect our soldiers?

Mr. MCHUGH. Let me take the first swat at that, Senator. It really all starts with Humvees. The Army did an assessment this year as to the requirements for the current tactical—light tactical vehicle in the Army fleet, the Humvee. What we discovered is, we had totally met our stated requirements for that platform. And, as such, there are no funds included in this budget for any more procurements, beyond the stated contract, for Humvees.

The question you have to ask yourself, or we have to ask ourselves, is, How do we provide for a light tactical vehicle until the JLTV, the joint program with the Marine Corps, is up and running? And the answer to that is really twofold. One, we've experienced far fewer battle losses, far fewer breakdowns on the Humvee platforms than originally expected. And so, we feel that we can meet a large part of that through recapitalization and reset of the platforms we have available. And, as you said, about 3,000 or so of the Humvee requirements can be met by our MRAP stocks. And so, until the JLTV comes onto line, we feel very comfortable that we have a light tactical vehicle that will serve and keep safe our men and women in uniform.

One of the concerns of the Humvee, of course, is that commanders are telling us that it does not provide, in its manufactured state, the level of protection that is necessary. And we hope the JLTV will meet that need.

General CASEY. And the other thing I'd add to that is—and we had—in response to another question over here about, What's our wheeled vehicle strategy?

Senator HAGAN. Right.

General CASEY. And we are in the throes of completing that. But, you know, we've had a significant—the Department of Defense has had a significant investment in MRAP, and we have to figure out how to incorporate that into our force, and into our overall wheeled vehicle strategy.

Senator HAGAN. I have another host of questions concerning this, but I believe my time has run out, so I'd put those on the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you very much, Senator Hagan.

Senator Graham.

Senator GRAHAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both for your service.

When it comes to mental health professionals, I know they're in short supply nationwide, but approximately many more mental health professionals do we need to address some of the problems related to suicide and just general mental health problems? And what's the strategy to find these people?

Mr. MCHUGH. The requirement of behavioral health providers in the Army is 4,304—

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Mr. MCHUGH.—as I mentioned earlier, when that—86 percent of that, which, if my math is correct, is 3714, so, if we—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes. I'm sorry I missed that part, so—

Mr. MCHUGH. No, no, I didn't go into that detail, Senator. So, roughly about 600 short. The strategy is to try to use the flexibilities that this Congress has provided us in creating incentive programs and outreach programs to try to convince those folks, who obviously are in great demand in the private sector, to come and to serve their Nation in the Army.

Senator GRAHAM. Well, do you have the tools you need to be competitive with the private sector?

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, we're making progress. And I guess that would suggest that we have sufficient tools. Certainly, as we go forward, if more flexibility and more initiatives are needed, we won't hesitate to ask.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, that's my invitation. Let us know. Is it harder to recruit a mental health professional than it is just a traditional doctor?

Mr. MCHUGH. Generally, recruiting of specialties and subspecialties is more challenging, simply because you don't have the density of personnel available.

Senator GRAHAM. Is there a cross-training effort within the military to get people who are—enjoy the military, are willing to kind of go into a new career?

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, we do have education opportunities, through the university hospital system and scholarships and such, that can be provided to candidates who meet the qualifications.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay, great.

When it comes to the Guard and Reserve, I think TRICARE has been very helpful, making that available to Guard and Reserve families, because a lot of them didn't have healthcare, or—it just gave them an opportunity to purchase TRICARE for their Guard and Reserve time, which I think is a pretty good deal for the force.

The other issue I hear from the Guard and Reserve everywhere I go is about lowering the retirement age. And I know there's several ideas floating around about how you can earn an early retirement by doing more Active Duty tours and getting credit for that. And I do understand the need for the military to sort of self-select, but I'm looking from the 20- to the 30-year point. It used to be that most Guard and Reserve members stayed in 30 years. A lot of them are getting out, now, at 20, for a variety of reasons; you know, multiple deployments being one reason. Is there a strategy to deal with allowing people to retire early, but incentivizing them to stay from 20 to 30, based on the needs of the military?

Mr. MCHUGH. That's part of the process that we have to do in deciding what kind of structure has to be put into place to operationalize the Guard and Reserve.

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Mr. MCHUGH. The challenge I think we ultimately have to face is, How do we sufficiently incentivize those good folks to come from our communities, to periodically leave their jobs and their families, to act as an operationalized Guard and Reserve, but, at the same time, recognizing we have to keep certain distance, in benefits and such, with the active, because we want to make sure we make sure we—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, you don't want to cross-purpose here.

Mr. MCHUGH. True.

Senator GRAHAM. You don't want to get people out of the active Duty—

Mr. MCHUGH. Exactly.

Senator GRAHAM. But, I don't really think that's that much of a problem right now, with the benefit packages, as just—you know, from the 20- to 30-year period, a lot of people are leaving earlier, some of our best and brightest, and I'd—if they could earn their way to early retirement, they might stay past 20.

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, we're—I think it's correct to say we're willing to consider any kind of initiative.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. MCHUGH. I know that there are many champions in Congress of a variety of approaches.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. MCHUGH. My good friend, now-retired Jim Saxton, on the—

Senator GRAHAM. Right.

Mr. MCHUGH.—House side, was very active in this regard. And—

Senator GRAHAM. Okay.

Mr. MCHUGH.—you know, any plans would be—or any ideas—would be—

Senator GRAHAM. Well—

Mr. MCHUGH.—happily accepted.

Senator GRAHAM.—I'll give you some input, and I appreciate—

Mr. MCHUGH. Okay.

Senator GRAHAM.—your willingness to receive it.

General, Guantanamo Bay. General Petraeus, I think, said, Sunday, that he believed it was in our National security interest to try to close Guantanamo Bay. Do you share that view?

General CASEY. Senator, that's a policy issue that is outside the purview of my job here, as the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Senator GRAHAM. Okay. Fair enough. Just from your travels, is it—have you—do you think Guantanamo Bay is used by our enemies, still, against us, the images of the past?

General CASEY. I mean, I have—I have read intelligence where the—I have seen how the enemy—

Senator GRAHAM. Yes.

General CASEY.—has used that against us.

Senator GRAHAM. That's fair enough.

We're looking at, you know, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. I think y'all have give good answers about how we'll study it. Any movement to change the role of women in combat? Has that time come?

Mr. MCHUGH. From the Army perspective, Senator, we conduct, periodically, an assessment of all the MOS's and who is eligible to serve in them. That's ongoing right now. It is not directed specifically at women in combat, but, obviously, the billets that are either open or closed to women would be part of that review.

Senator GRAHAM. So, General, what's your view about expanding the ability of women to serve in combat roles?

General CASEY. Senator, I believe that it's time that we take a look at what women are actually doing in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we—and look at our policy. And we've discussed this, between ourselves here. We don't have an active effort going on that, but I think it's time.

Senator GRAHAM. Yes, I agree with you, because, as I understand it, women, on the aviation side, fly combat missions. Do they fly combat aircraft? You know, the attack helicopters? [No audible response.]

Well, I think it would—if we're going to—probably the time has come to look at that, and if you could give us some input, we'd appreciate it.

Thank you both for your service. And I know these have been stressful times for our men and women in uniform, and they've delivered. And I just want to make sure that we're here to deliver for them, and that's why your testimony is so helpful.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Graham.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Chairman McHugh, great to see you here. Thank you for taking the time to come out to Colorado and visit Fort Carson. I know you could spend every day of the rest of your tenure visiting the facilities around the country, but when you come back out, maybe we can join together and be inspired by the men and women there at Fort Carson.

General Casey, thank you for your service. And you and I have had some conversations about the transition opportunity for soldiers with Outward Bound. It's an organization I worked with for 20 years, and it's a wonderful way to provide those soldiers with the opportunity to get in touch with that excitement, the adrenaline, the meaning that comes when you serve in combat, but also how you make that transition with those needs back to civilian life.

A couple of shout-outs. I wanted to acknowledge Master Sergeant Rubio, who's here. She served as a fellow in my office for a year. It's a wonderful program. And, General, you need to know that, whether she's in uniform or in civvies, she brings a complete game. I miss her. I know she's back with her first love, but I wanted to acknowledge the great work she did for me.

And then, Sergeant First Class Larson, thank you for what you're doing as a master resilience trainer. I liked what General Casey said about mental fitness. You know, this thing up here is the biggest, baddest piece of equipment we have, or weapon, however you want to describe it, but it needs to be maintained and upgraded, needs a little TLC, sometimes the sights have to be recalibrated. But, thank you for what you're doing in that regard. You're a brain mechanic, it sounds like, and we've got a lot more to learn. So, thank you for pushing the envelope there.

I'd like to turn to two areas. One, I want to talk about Combat Aviation Brigades, and then conclude with a couple of comments on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

We've seen, in these last few decades, just how important aviation is. It's a combat multiplier. It—from—everything from airborne attacks to aeromedical evacuations. It appears in the budget, the fiscal year-11 budget, that we're going to increase aviation assets, supports the development of a 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, and then begins to acquire, it looks like, equipment for a planned 13th Aviation Brigade.

When will you make stationing decisions for those brigades, General and Mr. Secretary? And can you share some criteria that the Army would use to make those decisions?

Mr. MCHUGH. Those are ongoing right now. Obviously, there have been no final determinations made. As I think both you and your colleague on your right from Alaska are aware, that the Army is looking very carefully at all the permutations of that stationing, from environmental to training capacity, et cetera, et cetera. So, I would expect, in the very reasonably near future, those decisions will be finalized.

Senator UDALL. Look forward to working with you in that way. We have, certainly, mountainous terrain that rivals and matches that in some of the theaters in which we're undertaking operations today. And we have, in Colorado, of course, a history of training combat aviators up in the Eagle County region, at the HAATS facility that the National Guard runs so effectively. So, thank you for that outline.

Let me turn to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." And what I heard both of you say is, when the repeal occurs, you'll follow the leadership and the dictates of the Commander in Chief and the Joint Chiefs themselves. I appreciate that clarity.

If I might, I'd just—I'd like to make a couple of comments on how I see this. We did talk about the moratorium and how that might work or be implemented. And it was mentioned that a moratorium would introduce legal complications; for example, in the case of Dan Choi. It seems to me that that complication would simply be that the Army would not, for the duration of the moratorium, discharge an Arabic-speaking combat veteran who's now participating in drills with his Guard unit, at the request of his superior officers.

My belief is, the moratorium could be put in place as we put this implementation plan together. And I say that because the testimony of Admiral Mullen and Secretary Gates was that the review was not—is not about "whether," but it's about "how" we'll implement the repeal. So, it seems that the eventuality of the repeal isn't in question.

And so, in that spirit, this Senator thinks that we ought to put a moratorium in place during this implementation period. In other words, the moratorium would be in effect until we begin to implement this plan to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" measure.

The Army and the military does human resources as well as any corporation, as well as any organization I've ever seen. And I know that this is one of the challenges, and one of the reasons we, maybe, need some time to study how you implement—is, Well, how do you deal with those servicemembers who are in the pipeline right now, if you will, because of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," because they've been identified as being gay servicemembers? And I just think that we should do everything possible, given that we're going to, based on what the President said—the Secretary, Admiral Mullen—implement a repeal, that we should do everything possible to ensure that as few servicemembers are discharged between now and then.

We—who's going to be the last gay servicemember to be discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"? That's—that would be a tragedy, in my mind, because they're clearly patriots, they clearly

want to serve their country. Admiral Mullen made it very clear that they shouldn't have to lead a lie to serve their country and defend their country.

And I mentioned—and I'll end on this note—I mentioned Senator Goldwater in the previous hearing. He was an Arizonan. I had the great privilege to know him as a boy. He and my father, who served in the Congress—one a Democrat, one a Republican—loved Arizona, they loved the libertarian spirit of the West, where it's "Live and Let Live." And Senator Goldwater, famously, said, "You don't have to be straight to shoot straight." And I think that's what we've come to be aware of, and that's why I so strongly support repealing this policy, so that every single American can serve who would like to.

You don't need to respond. I just wanted to, for my own heartfelt reasons, make that statement to the committee.

But, thank you again for your leadership. I'm just so proud to know both of you and to be able to serve with you in my capacity as you defend our Nation.

Thank you.

Chairman LEVIN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

And I'm going to have a question on that issue, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" answer of yours, on a second round, which will be brief, I think. I hope. But, I will have another question or two on that same subject.

Senator Begich.

Senator BEGICH. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And thank you both for being here. I know you've been here for several hours, so I'll try to give you a random selection, because you've already—you went—came through the snowstorm to my office, and I appreciate that. And we had a good time there, having a good discussion about many issues. And I have, kind of, a couple of broad questions, then I'm going to kind of bring it down a little parochial.

But, first, if I can follow up on the dwell-time issue. Based on the rebalancing that's occurring—and either one of you can answer this—and, General, I know you've talked a great deal about this—for folks, for soldiers that are listening, for families that are listening, give me a sense of the difference that it will be for a family, today or next year versus 2, 3 years ago, in the amount of time, or dwell time or time home, they might have. Can you put that in kind of a term that people can, you know, see it and hear it?

General CASEY. I can try, Senator, but, you know, for the last 5 years, a good portion of the force was deploying on 1 year out, 1 year back. And we were, frankly, meeting ourselves coming and going.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

General CASEY. They'd come home, take their leave, come back, and immediately start training to go back. So, the time they were home, they weren't home.

Senator BEGICH. Right.

General CASEY. I've just met—I went down and visited a unit that was home for 18 months. The difference in pace between 18 months at home and 12 months at home was striking. The difference in pace between 24 months at home and 12 months at

home is going to be even more striking. And, as I mentioned earlier, we expect to get 70 percent of the active force to 2 years at home by '11, and 80 percent of the Guard and Reserve at 4 years at home by '11.

Senator BEGICH. And when you say "'11," just so—because we sometimes talk in different language here—calendar year, January, or fiscal year, October?

General CASEY. By the end of the calendar year.

Senator BEGICH. End of calendar year 2011.

General CASEY. Yes, 2011, right.

Senator BEGICH. Very good. Thank you. I know you had mentioned it earlier, and I just wanted to kind of reemphasize, because I think this is—I agree with you, in regards to—and we've talked a little bit about this, both of us—all three of us, actually—in regards to the amount of dwell time is critical for the long-term health of the military. It doesn't matter if it's the Army or the Air Force, but Army, specifically, because the amount of time that you're out is going to be critical for the long-term health. So, I want to say thank you for kind of moving down that path.

Mr. Secretary, did you have something that you wanted to add to that, or—

Mr. MCHUGH. Well, I was just going to say—and there's another component to it, as well, that, if families are listening, the Chief and I certainly fully endorse the commitment that we're not going to revert to 15-month deployments, and we'll be sending folks out without the threat of stop-loss. Now, that—

Senator BEGICH. Excellent.

Mr. MCHUGH.—doesn't directly play into the dwell time, although, in a very real way, it does, because—

Senator BEGICH. Sure.

Mr. MCHUGH.—it requires more troops. But, families care very much about that, and I think they would want to be assured of that, as well.

Senator BEGICH. That's great. That's a good point. They're—it's a combo. It's a combo package.

Let me ask a couple more—again, just general—and then I'm going to be on a couple of quick Alaska issues.

I want to follow up with Senator Graham on mental health services and making sure you hire the right professionals. One thing I had heard—and maybe it's not as much—but, I heard the pay differential between the private-sector mental health providers and what we're able to pay—there's a gap there. And is that one of the challenges you have? Because if that's the case, you know, again, I think this committee, or members, would be very interested in trying to help solve that to make sure we're competitive in the marketplace, especially as this economy is now turning around. Healthcare providers in the private sector will be one of the biggest fast-growth areas in the new economy, and we're going to be competing with that. When I say "we," the military. And I want to make sure we are not in a economic disadvantage.

Is that something you could get to me and indicate, at some point, if there is a gap? If so, what strategies do you have? Because as this economy picks up, the fastest- growing industry will be

healthcare, and we will have a problem competing against that. Is that a fair request?

General CASEY. Yes, sir.

Senator BEGICH. Excellent.

On retirements, when people do retire—again, what was just being talked—again, from Senator Graham—do you do exit interviews with those folks that are retiring, to determine why they're leaving early, versus just, kind of—you know, I hear things from people, but is there an actual datapoint study that you guys utilize or—

General CASEY. I don't know that we do retirees so much as we do soldiers or officers who leave before retirement.

Senator BEGICH. Before retirement.

General CASEY. We—I know we do very good sitdowns just to find out what's on their mind and what's motivating them to leave. I don't know that we do that with retirees.

Senator BEGICH. No, but that's—you know, you just—actually, I misstated. The way you stated it was correct.

General CASEY. Yes.

Senator BEGICH. The early retirees, basically, people getting out before, you know, their 20 or 30. Do you put that in any kind of analysis that can be shared with this committee or with members? I'd be, just, curious, what are those two or three top things that people say, "This is why I'm leaving," based on data?

General CASEY. Right. And we do have that data available. In fact, we recently completed a survey—it was finished up in the end of the summer last year—and it's a general survey of the force. And as part of that survey, it was repeated deployments—

Senator BEGICH.—that were the problem.

General CASEY.—that still remains the number-one reason for soldiers leaving the Army.

Senator BEGICH. Okay. I'd be—

Mr. MCHUGH. We also—I'm sorry, Senator.

Senator BEGICH. Go ahead.

Mr. MCHUGH. We also utilize our various intellectual centers, such as we maintain at West Point, to look at—and I'm thinking specifically of our midgrade officers—our majors, captains—who were leaving the force in greater numbers than we'd like, and in greater numbers, I think, than we would expect. And they've done some analysis to see what it was that they felt they weren't getting as part of their Army service. In large measure, it was educational and the rotations and to go to the various schools and such that we're trying to respond to. So, it's not something we look at holistically, but—

Senator BEGICH. Sure.

Mr. MCHUGH.—through bits and pieces, particularly where we're finding challenges that we—but, we try to get whatever answers we can.

Senator BEGICH. Very good. That helps.

Let me get to, very quickly, a couple of quick Alaskan ones. This is one that you could respond later, because it's very, very specific. It's in—in Fairbanks, in the basic allowance for housing, there was a study done. And when they did the study, it reduced the rates of what's—the soldiers would get for their housing in Fairbanks.

When they did this study, they did it in a time—I can tell you, from my experience of almost 25 years in the landlord business, that they did it at a time when the utility rates were lower and—summer—they also did it when vacancy rates were higher, which is summer. And it creates a problem, because then the analysis sets the rate, which then they will have to pay for or deal with as they go into the winter months, which was lower vacancy rates and the higher utility costs. So, the end result is, the soldier—we've gotten calls on this—end up paying out of their pocket to make sure they can compensate for the housing allowance.

Would you take a look at that? We will send you something a little more detailed. But, it's—just in my 25-plus-years experience in the real estate business, the timing of the survey was probably not the most appropriate time, or they could have extended it over the winter-fall to get a better picture. Because you can go 2, 3 dollars a gallon heating-fuel differential between those months, as an example, and the rates can dramatically be different, based on winter and accessibility of the fuel and other things, especially in Fairbanks, which is a significant problem with heating issues. If you wouldn't mind, just note that.

The last thing I'll say—only because Senator Udall isn't here now, I can say it—that, of course, we have the best training grounds. We not only have mountains—we don't have hills, we have mountains—and you and I, all three of us, have talked about that in the past. But, again, as you progress on utilization of training facilities, the one, as I mentioned to you, is the unmanned aircraft, I think we have some superb location that, as you consider all the deployments and reassignments of equipment, obviously we want to be engaged in that discussion. But, you know it better than I do, by your ground troops up there, what we have up there, and it's exceptional. And I'll tell Senator Udall later that I credited his and I didn't say anything about mine.

Thank you very much for your testimony.

Chairman LEVIN. You create a real problem for me, Senator Begich, because it's hard—I'm tempted to talk about our training areas in Michigan, and I'm going to resist that temptation, only because of time limitations.

Couple of questions. One has to do with equipment that's—we have authorized to go from Iraq—or, more technically, perhaps, Kuwait—to the Afghan Army. I mean, we have—are short on training that army, in the shortage of trainers, I pointed out, but we also have not done what we need to do, in terms of equipment. So, we authorized, in the last authorization bill, not just equipment that could go to the Iraqi army, even though it was not excess equipment. The same thing is true with the Afghan army.

And we talked to one of our trainers over there, when we were there a few months ago, and he indicated, as a matter of fact, some of that equipment was beginning to arrive from Iraq-Kuwait into Afghanistan, for the Afghan army—not just for our guys, but for the Afghan army.

You didn't—in going through the numbers there, before, General, I think you went through some numbers, and you indicated that half a billion dollars of excess equipment, I believe, was left for the Iraqis. Perhaps it was nonexcess. I'm not sure. But, in any event,

we have authorized, not just excess equipment, but nonexcess equipment, understanding we're going to have to replace that, but also understanding that it's essential that we get equipment to the Afghan army if we're serious about turning over responsibility for the security of Afghanistan to that army.

Do you have any numbers at all on how much either excess or nonexcess equipment has gone from the Iraq theater to the Afghan army or police?

General CASEY. You know, I have—I know we've processed the Afghans' up-armored Humvees, machine guns, and some ammunition and repair parts, but I don't have any—

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

General CASEY.—specific numbers.

Chairman LEVIN. If you could get us that for the record, I'd appreciate it.

[The information referred to follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. Now, on this question of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," what you've indicated, appropriately, is that there—a moratorium, for instance, could create complications for pending legal cases. But, the decision of the Commander in Chief to end the policy—the only issue being, in his mind, how and when, and not whether—has also got to create some complications for existing cases. If you were representing somebody, in an existing case, who was being discharged, or threatened with discharge, I assume you'd ask for a stay until there's a resolution of the matter.

So, what I will need from you is your lawyers' assessment as to whether or not there are complications, currently, with the decision of the Commander in Chief to end the policy, and just to have a study as to how it's done, and as to—compare that to any complications which might occur from having a suspension of the discharges, pending a decision on whether to repeal.

And remember, a moratorium or a suspension is not repeal. That would mean that, if for some reason it were not repealed down the road, then the current discharge policy would stay in place.

So, my request of you—I—is that you, from your lawyers—Army lawyers or whoever the lawyers are—DOD lawyers—that you get from them a—an assessment for this committee as to whether there are complications from the decision that's been given by the Commander in Chief, relative to repeal down the road, and whether there are complications from a moratorium, which obviously there could be, as well as from a down-the-road repeal announcement, and to compare for us whether or not, one way or the other, there are more or less complications.

So, that's not a question, other than to ask you whether or not you will ask your lawyers if they could prepare that assessment for us.

Mr. MCHUGH. Absolutely.

[The information referred to follows:]

Chairman LEVIN. All right.

Now, with that—have you got anything else? [No audible response.]

We thank you both. We thank the men and women you lead. We particularly, again, want to acknowledge the presence of their special guests here today. We thank them for their service, for their

sons' service. We are grateful for it. It's a grateful Nation that is united behind our troops and our veterans, no longer facing the kind of divisions we had in previous engagements, such as Vietnam, but, regardless of policy differences, totally behind our forces, our men and women who put on the uniform of this country.

Thank you all.

And we will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:18 p.m., the committee adjourned.]