Opening Statement
DoD Independent Review Congressional Hearing Conference
SASC
21 January 2010

Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, distinguished Members of the Committee: We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and discuss the findings and recommendations of the Department of Defense Independent Review Relating to Fort Hood.

Two months ago, a gunman opened fire at the Soldier Readiness Center at Fort Hood, Texas. Thirteen people were killed and 43 others were wounded. November 5, 2009 will be remembered as a day of great tragedy. We extend our deepest sympathy to the families of the fallen, to the wounded, to their families, and indeed all touched by this tragic event.

Following the shooting, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates established the Department of Defense Independent Review Related to Fort Hood, and asked that Admiral Clark and I lead it. We have done so and report on it today.

Events such as the Fort Hood shooting raise questions about how best to defend against threats posed by external influences operating on members of our military community. The challenge for the Department of Defense is to prepare more effectively for a constantly changing security environment. It is with that backdrop in mind that Secretary Gates asked us to conduct our review.

Secretary Gates charged us to provide an independent review and assess whether there are programs, policies or procedural weaknesses within the Department of Defense that create vulnerabilities to the health and safety of our servicemen and women, DOD civilians, and their families. Dr. Gates asked that we take a careful look at personnel

policies, force protection measures, emergency response procedures and support to our military health care providers. And, he asked us to evaluate the Army's application of its policies, programs, processes and procedures to the alleged perpetrator.

We established a board of advisors with senior officers from the four services. We constituted five review teams, consisting of a range of experts, who investigated the key tasks outlined in our terms of reference. The teams had unrestricted access to personnel and facilities. The teams traveled to Fort Hood as part of their review.

Our charter directed us to focus on the non-criminal aspects of the shooting. Although Fort Hood was central to our review, our scope extended across the entire Department in order to gather the most significant and meaningful findings and recommendations. As recognized by the Secretary of Defense in stating that he intends to call upon the military departments to conduct in-depth follow-on reviews based on our results, areas in our report will require further study. By design, we limited the depth of our report in areas that will be covered in follow-on reviews.

We recently submitted our report to the Secretary of Defense. Before discussing the overall report, we note that we cannot address specifics with respect to the alleged perpetrator in open session, in order to preserve the integrity of the ongoing military justice process. We can tell you, however, that several individuals failed to apply professional standards of officership regarding the alleged perpetrator. We recommended the Secretary of Defense forward these issues of accountability to the Secretary of the Army. The detailed results and findings associated with the alleged perpetrator are found in a restricted annex that will not be publically released at the present time.

The review was much broader than the assessment of the alleged perpetrator. With that in mind, our report includes recommendations to strengthen the Department of Defense's ability to prepare for and respond to potential threats. It is based upon research by our teams of more than 35,000 pages from over 700 documents related to departmental policies, programs, processes, and procedures.

Before discussing the details of our findings, we would like to highlight some observations from the tragic events on November fifth.

First, no amount of preparation is ever too much. Leaders at Fort Hood had anticipated mass casualty events in their emergency response plans and exercises. The initial response to the incident demonstrated this. It was prompt and effective.
Two minutes and forty seconds after the initial 9-1-1 call, Fort Hood first responders arrived on the scene. One-and-a-half minutes later, the assailant was incapacitated, taken into custody and remained in custody handcuffed to a law enforcement representative for the next several chaotic hours. Two ambulances and an incident command vehicle from the post hospital arrived on the scene two minutes and fifty seconds later to begin providing life-saving emergency care. Yet 13 people died; scores were wounded. We will prepare harder; plan more diligently; seek to envision the next incident.

Second, we must be attentive to today's hazard. Even as the role of our nation's military is to confront the external threat to our country, one of the most significant emerging concerns in the protection of our force is the internal threat. We need to develop a better understanding of the forces that cause a person to become radicalized; commit violent acts; and make us vulnerable from within.

Third, courage and presence of mind in the face of crisis can carry the day. It happened at Fort Hood. Courageous acts were the key to preventing greater losses that day.

As our report reveals, however, these attributes alone are not enough to protect our force. We must exercise the foresight necessary to identify the looming menace – self radicalization and its often resultant violence -- and act preemptively.

Our review of DoD policies, procedures, and processes revealed shortcomings in the way DoD is prepared to deal with internal threats, and in particular, the threat posed by troubled and potentially dangerous individuals and groups.

Commanders are our key assets to identify and monitor internal threats. Existing policies, however, are not optimized for countering these threats. The policies reflect insufficient knowledge and awareness required to help identify and address individuals likely to commit violence.

While the department focuses very effectively on many things, guidance concerning workplace violence and the potential for self-radicalization is insufficient. DoD policy on prohibited activities is limited and only addresses active and visible participation in groups that may pose threats to good order and discipline. This lack of clarity for comprehensive indicators limits commanders' and supervisors' ability to recognize potential threats and detecting a trusted insider's intention to commit a violent act requires observation of behavioral cues/anomalies.

Complicating the force protection challenge is the diverse nature of responsibilities as they have evolved within DoD since 911. Because no senior DoD official is assigned overall responsibility for force protection policy (Diverse nature responsibilities

throughout DoD), synchronization is difficult. Moreover, there is a lack of DoD policy integration. This has resulted in a lack of a well-integrated means to gather, evaluate, and disseminate the wide range of behavioral indicators that could signal an insider threat. Some policies governing information exchange, both within DoD and between outside agencies, are deficient and do not support detection and mitigation of internal threats. The time has passed when concerns by specific entities over protecting "their" information can be allowed to prevent relevant threat information and indicators from reaching those who need it—the commanders.

As the Secretary indicated, we see a requirement to create the ability to adapt rapidly to the changing security environment, which requires anticipating new threats and bringing a wide and continuously evolving range of tools, techniques, and programs into play. Robust information sharing, therefore, is essential, along with the accompanying command and control structure to convert active information gathered on potential threats into decisions and actions, including dissemination of the analysis and assessments to the appropriate levels of command.

While leaders at Fort Hood responded well under the stress of a rapidly evolving crisis, we are fortunate that we faced only one incident at one location. Real time information sharing will be critical should we face a situation of multiple events.

While all 50 states have complied with the Federal requirements for the National Incident Management System, designed for a synchronized response in crises, there are no established milestones to define initial and full capability within DoD. The timelines should be evaluated; doing so could lead to an umbrella plan for emergency response and recovery and ensure interoperability with all the states. Synchronizing the DoD emergency

management program with this national guidance will ensure the Department can integrate effectively with all partners in response to any and all emergencies. Using common emergency management principles, we can prepare our military communities to respond to emergency from the smallest incident to the largest catastrophe.

The response by the Fort Hood community in the aftermath of this tragedy serves as a reminder of the strength, resiliency and character of our people. We were very impressed with them, both military and civilian. In a community where we might have expected the fabric of trust to fray, it remained intact and grew stronger through mutual support. The thrust of our effort has been to do all that we can to prevent similar tragedies in the future.