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FOR SOLDIER AND COUNTRY: Saving the All-Volunteer Army

*As you know, you have to go to war with the Army you
have, not the Army you want.*

—DONALD H. RUMSFELD, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The ability of the United States military to perform its missions depends on smart people more than on smart bombs. Even during the darkest days of the Cold War in the 1970s, when the Soviet military had far more weapons and forces than the United States, our military leaders repeatedly said that they would not trade our military for that of the Soviets because of the quality of our men and women in uniform. As Melvin Laird, Richard Nixon’s secretary of defense and the architect of the all-volunteer Army put it, “People, not hardware, must be our highest priority.”¹

The priority given to the men and women of our armed forces today, especially those in the Army, appears to have diminished, as overextension and overuse, as well as inattention to quality of life issues, place severe strain on the troops. Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have revealed deeply troubling cracks in the organization and structure of the million-strong U.S. volunteer Army. These problems have been exacerbated both by the current challenges of the international security environment and the way in which the Bush administration has used the active-duty and reserve components since September 11. As a result, we are closer to breaking our volunteer Army today than at any other time in its 30-year history.

Since September 11, the volunteer Army has been called upon to assume greater and broader responsibility than ever before. Our soldiers are needed to battle terrorism around the globe, protect the American homeland, and engage in peacekeeping, stabilization, and nation-build-

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ing operations. Few imagined that the total volunteer Army would be used in such a manner when it was designed 30 years ago, and the Bush administration has failed to make the appropriate changes to reflect the new environment. As a result, the active-duty Army is not large enough and it does not have the mix of skills necessary to meet current needs; moreover, the reserve component is being used at unsustainable levels.² This threatens not only the quality and readiness of the total volunteer Army, but also its ability to recruit and retain troops.

To rectify these dangerous shortcomings, the president must work with the Congress to both enlarge and reorganize the total Army in the face of today's global and domestic challenges and give it the resources necessary to respond to them. To do so, the president and the Congress must embrace the following principles:

- *The all-volunteer model is the right one.* The president and the Congress should make every effort to maintain the total Army on an all-volunteer basis. Returning to the draft would not answer the manpower and capability problems the total Army faces. Rather, it would result in an Army that is not as well-suited to today's challenges because the overall experience and education level would decline. In addition, a mixed force of draftees and volunteers is more expensive because there would be more turnover and therefore much higher training costs. While the average volunteer enlists for four years and about half of them reenlist, draftees typically served for only two years and less than 10 percent reenlisted. Moreover, Pentagon studies show that recruits need up to three years to reach full competency in combat, combat support, and combat service support skills.³ In addition, reinstating a draft at this time would open up a whole host of issues that this nation has not addressed satisfactorily since the 1960s, and in particular the question of who shall serve when not all shall serve. Reinstating the draft would also further isolate the United States from our NATO allies, most of whom have abolished conscription at our urging.
- *The size and skills of the active-duty Army must be equal to the new missions and duties it faces.* The active-duty Army should be large enough to meet current and anticipated needs and have the requisite quality and combination of skills to wage wars, fight terrorism, and win the peace (*i.e.*, engage in peacekeeping, stabilization, and nation-building operations).
- *The reserve component is a vital, but supplementary, part of the total Army, and should be treated as such.* Overusing the reserve—by, for example, activating it for more than one year out of every six years—has an adverse impact on the willingness of soldiers with prior active-duty service, as well as new recruits, to join and remain in the reserve component. This, in turn, undermines the ability of the nation to protect the homeland, since national security involves the ability not only to project force around the globe, but also to deter and respond to attacks at home.
- *Soldiers and their families should be treated with care and respect.* The military enlists individuals but retains families. As a matter of equity, and to maintain military readiness,

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Total Army: The Army is composed of over a million volunteers. About half of these men and women are on full-time active duty. The other half is in the reserve component, which is composed of the selected reserve and the individual ready reserve. These three groups comprise the total Army.

Selected Reserve: The selected reserve, sometimes known as the drilling reserve, consists of people who belong to organized units that train or drill one weekend a month and spend at least two weeks a year on active duty. The Army's selected reserve has two branches: the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve. Both components serve as back-ups to the active-duty Army.

Army National Guard: National Guard units, which are in all 50 states, can be used by the states as a militia for natural disasters or civil disorders when they have not been mobilized by the federal government, which pays for more than 90 percent of their costs and thus has first call on their services. It is comprised of combat and combat support units like civil affairs, transportation, and military police.

Army Reserve: Army Reserve units are under the control of the Department of the Army and can be mobilized by the secretary of the Army. It is composed mainly of combat support units.

Individual Ready Reserve (IRR): The IRR is composed of individuals who have completed their active-duty service and have not joined a selected reserve unit, but who

still have time left on their eight year military service obligation, which, by law, they incurred when they joined the Army. For example, a person who enlisted in the Army for four years in 1998 would have been released from active duty in 2002, but would remain in the IRR until 2006. Members of the IRR receive no pay, training, or benefits. Currently there are about 100,000 people in the IRR.

Special Operations Forces: These elite or commando units from the Army, Navy and Air Force are trained to perform clandestine missions behind enemy lines. Currently, there are about 50,000 personnel in these units. About 8,000 special operations forces are deployed in 54 countries.

Army Organization: The active Army is organized into ten divisions and the Army National Guard into eight. Each division has between 10,000 and 18,000 people organized into at least three brigades or regiments composed of 3,000 to 5,000 people. These brigades, in turn, consist of battalions of between 500 and 800 people each.

Delayed Entry Pool: Men and women who have enlisted in the military but who will not report for basic training until some time in the future. Normally the service has about 35 percent of its enlistees in this pool at any given time.

Stop-Loss: The policy that prohibits a person in the service from leaving his or her unit to return to civilian life even though his or her term

of enlistment has expired. This policy has been invoked for people in units that have received notification of being sent to Iraq or Afghanistan or are already in one of those countries.

Military Police: Individuals whose military specialty is performing police functions in a combat environment, for example, arresting and guarding prisoners, stopping looting, etc.

Civil Affairs Units: Units whose job it is to administer an area that has been conquered until a new civilian government can be established. These units have people with skills in civilian areas such as law, public administration, engineering, and health.

Term of Enlistment: An individual joining the armed forces agrees to serve on active duty for a certain term, normally four years.

Military Service Obligation: An individual enlisting in the armed forces incurs an eight-year obligation to the service, regardless of how long he or she agrees to serve on active duty.

Imminent Danger Pay: A pay supplement received by troops in combat zones. Currently about \$225 per month.

Family Separation Allowance: A pay supplement received by military families to help pay for expenses while troops are away from home. Currently about \$250 per month.

the nation needs to make sure that soldiers and their families have a decent quality of life. This social compact involves ensuring not only that they receive adequate pay and benefits, but also that they are not forced to spend more than one-third of their time away from home on foreign deployments on a regular basis.⁴ This means that for every year a soldier is deployed abroad, he or she should spend at least two years at his or her home base (or if the deployment is six months long, the soldier should spend at least one year at home). Such a policy is not only a matter of basic equity, but it also enhances retention and readiness because it allows the units to retrain before being redeployed. The Navy, Marines, and Air Force rotate their men and women this way.

Returning to the draft would not answer the manpower and capability problems the total Army faces.

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

To better understand the nature of the problems facing the all-volunteer Army and what must be done to correct them, it is important to examine briefly the current model and how it came into being.

Richard Nixon put the all-volunteer model into place in 1973, in response to widespread public dissatisfaction with conscription and its use during the Vietnam War, when most of the country's elites managed to avoid service in what former Secretary of State

Colin Powell has referred to as an "antidemocratic disgrace."⁵ While the draft had allowed the government to pay subsistence wages, the creation of the all-volunteer force (AVF) required a dramatic increase in military salaries at a time when it was also necessary to increase spending on military equipment and technology.⁶ To keep costs under control, the Pentagon decided it had no choice but to reduce substantially the size of its active-duty military to some 2.2 million people, or about 18 percent below its pre-Vietnam level of 2.7 million.⁷ Because finding volunteers was always harder for the Army than for the other services, it bore the brunt of these reductions, dropping from more than one million people before the Vietnam War to 780,000 in 1974, its lowest level since before the Korean War.⁸

To compensate, the Pentagon developed the concept of the "Total Force." Under this plan, the military's selected reserve component would, theoretically, receive enough resources to make it a full-fledged part of the nation's military. The National Guard and reserves were given separate accounts, and the selected reserve's share of the budget was doubled.⁹ In deciding which forces to place in the reserves, the Army chief of staff, General Creighton Abrams, resolved to prevent a repetition of Vietnam (where successive presidents managed to avoid the political costs of waging an unpopular war by using only the active-duty force and not calling up the reserves), by putting fully half of the Army's combat units (divisions and brigades) in the reserve component.¹⁰ In addition, certain non-combat components that were deemed to be essentially civilian functions, such as military police, engineers, and civil affairs, were allocated almost entirely to the reserves. These skills would be needed only for postwar stabilization, or what is now called "peacekeeping."

After getting off to a predictably rocky start, the new system began working reasonably well. By the mid-1980s, the AVF became the most professional, highly qualified military the United States had ever fielded. One of the reasons for its success is that norms and standards were established for the use of both the active and reserve components. When reservists were called up for the Persian Gulf War or for peacekeeping duties in the Balkans or the Sinai, they were not kept on duty for more than six months, which most analysts felt was necessary to get and keep people in the reserve component. This was in keeping with a longstanding Pentagon personnel policy that forces should not spend more than one-third of their time away from home. In fact, many reservists actually volunteered to go. Moreover, active-duty forces sent on peacekeeping missions were rotated home after six months and were not deployed overseas again until they had spent at least a year at home.

These standards and norms for the use of the volunteer Army began to break down after September 11, however, due in part to extremely poor planning for the postwar transition

in Iraq and the inability of the United States to get substantial troop contributions from other nations. When Donald Rumsfeld took charge of the Pentagon in January 2001, he did so with a mandate to transform the military by ensuring that its weapons systems and tactics took advantage of advances in technology. He did not, however, focus on the question of the size of the Army and the balance between active-duty and reserve soldiers, which became critical issues once the country launched the global war on terrorism and went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Thomas Hall, the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs, indicated three years ago that the Pentagon's civilian and military leadership was aggressively studying such issues.¹¹ In his first press briefing of 2004, Rumsfeld admitted that rebalancing the way reserve forces are used should be his first priority for the coming year. The Army has begun the process of shifting the duties of some 130,000 personnel, but this process is not yet complete.¹²

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Thus, the percentage of military functions currently allocated to the reserves is substantially the same as it was in 1973—and better represents the challenges of that era than of the present one. Reserves currently account for 97 percent of the Army's civil affairs units, 70 percent of its engineering units, 66 percent of its military police, and 50 percent of its combat forces.¹³ Moreover, the size of the active-duty Army has shrunk: at around 490,000 soldiers, it currently makes up a smaller proportion of the total U.S. military—about 34 percent—than at any other point in U.S. history.¹⁴ As a result, the all-volunteer Army is being overstretched and misused in an effort to meet the new challenges presented by international and homeland insecurity.

Army Overstretched

The Army currently has about 490,000 soldiers serving on active duty in over 120 countries around the globe.¹⁵ The bulk of these troops are in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea, and the Balkans.¹⁶ In 2004, 26 of the active-duty Army's 33 combat brigades (or almost 80 percent) will have been deployed abroad.¹⁷ Nine of the ten active-duty divisions in the Army were deployed to, getting ready to deploy to, or returning from Iraq or Afghanistan last year.¹⁸ About 40 percent of the approximately 160,000 troops in Iraq are from the reserve component, as are almost all of the U.S. troops in the Balkans.¹⁹ All told, seven combat brigades from the Army National Guard are currently in Iraq.²⁰ According to a Defense Science Board study presented to Secretary Rumsfeld on August 31, 2004, the military does not have sufficient personnel for the nation's current war and peacekeeping demands.²¹

This overstressing leaves us potentially vulnerable in places such as South Korea. In fact, one of the two Army brigades stationed in South Korea has already been sent to Iraq. It also means that combat units have been sent on back-to-back deployments or have had their overseas tours extended unexpectedly beyond the duration that had been promised.²² For example, the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division, which was originally scheduled to come back to Fort Hood in November 2004, had its tour extended twice and did not return until April 2005.²³ The First Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division spent December 2002 to August 2003 in Afghanistan, was deployed to Iraq only five months after its return, where it served until April 2004, and is now slated to return to Afghanistan in spring 2006 for at least another year.²⁴ The Third

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Infantry Division, the First Armored Division, and the Second Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade also had similar experiences.²⁵ In July 2003, the Army announced that Army units would have to spend a full year in Iraq, double the normal tour for peacekeeping duties.²⁶

Our experience over the last 30 years shows that retention rates will decline if the Army keeps soldiers away from home for more than one year out of three, especially among mid-career personnel like Army captains, senior non-commissioned officers, and seasoned warrant officers, most of whom have not made a lifetime commitment to the Army. This is how we broke the

career Army in Vietnam.²⁷ Not retaining sufficient numbers of mid-career personnel will result in a hollow army that will be less capable and less ready to carry out the demanding challenges it currently faces.

National Guard and Reserve Misused

Since September 11, over 400,000 reservists have been called to active duty.²⁸ Several National Guard and reserve units have been kept on active duty for longer than anticipated, sent overseas to Iraq and Afghanistan without effective training for the missions they are expected to carry out, and mobilized without reasonable notice. This practice not only undermines the readiness of the reserve soldiers to carry out their tasks, it also puts an unfair burden on the families and the employers of the reservists by leaving them with very little time to adjust to the absence of the soldier. Members of the Michigan National Guard, for example, were sent to Iraq with only 48 hours notice.²⁹ In another example, the Maryland National Guard's 115th Military Police Battalion has deployed three times since September 11, and by the end of their last tour, some of these soldiers had been on active duty for more than 24 months.³⁰ All of this has occurred in spite of the fact that Lieutenant General James Helmly, the commander of the Army Reserve, has stated that a reserve soldier ideally should be given at least 30-day notice before being mobilized and not be kept on duty for more than nine to twelve months in a five-year time frame.³¹

In 2004, the Bush administration was forced to notify about 5,600 Individual Ready Reservists that they will be called to active duty in order to replace casualties in the Guard and reserve units deployed to Iraq or to fill out understaffed units that have been mobilized to go to Iraq.³² These are men and women who have completed their active-duty service and have not joined a Guard or reserve unit but who still have time left on their eight-year military service obligation. In addition to facing the unfairness of being called back involuntarily after having already served their country, many of these individuals are being sent to combat zones without any recent training. Thirty-seven percent of those Individual Ready Reservists who were to report to duty by October 17, 2004 failed to show.³³ All told, more than 3,000 of these former soldiers have resisted returning to active duty.³⁴

The Bush administration has compounded this problem by invoking its stop-loss authority for individuals in both active-duty and reserve units. This policy, which Senator John McCain called the single most damaging morale issue for the military, prevents an individual in a unit that has been notified that it is being deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan—or is already in one of those countries—from leaving the service until three months after the unit returns from overseas. To date, more than 50,000 men and women have had their enlistment extended or retirements put on hold, some for as long as two years, because of stop-loss.³⁵ On December 6, 2004, eight of these soldiers challenged this Army policy in court.³⁶ And on December 8, 2004, a soldier in Kuwait who was headed to Iraq boldly asked Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld how much longer the Army will continue to use its stop-loss power to prevent soldiers from leaving the service who are otherwise able to retire or quit.³⁷

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Domestic Protection Capability Diminished

Many of the reservists who have been called up without appropriate notice and kept on duty too long are police officers, firefighters, and paramedics in their civilian lives—that is, first responders who are vital to the safety of their local communities.³⁸ When these personnel are called up for military service and kept on active duty for long periods, it can reduce the ability of their communities to deal with terrorism.

In addition, the fact that National Guard units have been deployed overseas undermines the ability of states to deal with natural disasters as well as potential terrorist attacks on the homeland. For example, Governor Dirk Kempthorne, a Republican from Idaho and immediate past chairman of the National Governors Association, said recently that he was worried because 62 percent of Idaho's National Guard had been called up to active duty by the Pentagon.³⁹ Like his colleagues in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, where wildfires are a significant problem, Kempthorne was concerned that he would not be able to use the Guard troops to help with fire fighting.⁴⁰

Operational and Personnel Readiness Levels in Decline

The current system has led to a decline in the overall operational readiness of the Army. In fiscal year 2003, the Army canceled or postponed 49 of its 182 scheduled training exercises because the units were either going to or returning from Iraq or Afghanistan.⁴¹ In December 2003, a senior Army official informed reporters that four Army divisions due to rotate back from Iraq in the spring would not be fully combat ready for as long as six months.⁴² This, in turn, would leave only two of the Army's ten active-duty divisions ready for conflict outside Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴³ Furthermore, the Army has decided to send the 11th cavalry regiment, its elite training unit, to Iraq in 2005, taking them away from their mission of training other units.⁴⁴

Personnel readiness, which depends on the experience level of the soldiers in a unit, is also declining. According to a survey of U.S. troops in Iraq by the military's own *Stars and Stripes* newspaper in late 2003, the Bush administration's approach to Iraq risks doing to the AVF what

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Vietnam did to the conscript service. After polling almost 2,000 troops, *Stars and Stripes* found that approximately one-third of them thought the war against Saddam Hussein had been of little or no value and that their mission lacked clear definition.⁴⁵ A full 40 percent said that their missions had little or nothing to do with what they had trained for.⁴⁶ And, most ominously, about half of the soldiers surveyed indicated they will not reenlist when their tours end and the Pentagon lifts the stop-loss order that prevents troops from retiring or leaving the service at this time.⁴⁷ A survey of Guard and reserve units conducted by the Defense Manpower Data Center in May 2004 had similar findings. According to the survey, fewer than half of the Army and Marine Corps reserve personnel who served in Iraq say they will likely or very likely stay in uniform.⁴⁸ Compared to a similar survey from May 2003, even non-deployed personnel are less inclined to stay

in because of the threat of being recalled, and the morale of all reservists declined over the past year.⁴⁹ Finally, the Pentagon says that more than 5,500 service personnel have deserted since the invasion of Iraq.⁵⁰

Were it not for the stop-loss policy, which even high-ranking officials admit is inconsistent with the principles of voluntary service, the AVF and the Total Force would be in severe jeopardy, lacking the necessary personnel to complete their missions. For example, one infantry battalion commander deployed in Kuwait and headed for Iraq said that he would have lost a quarter of his unit over the next year were it not for the order.⁵¹ Through a series of such stop-loss measures, the Army has prevented more than 50,000 troops from leaving its ranks.⁵² Yet even with these rules in place, the Army Reserve failed to achieve its reenlistment requirements for fiscal year 2003.⁵³ The Army Reserve has lost so many middle grade or company officers that it has only 59 percent of the captains it is supposed to have.⁵⁴ The Army National Guard fell 12 percent short of its overall recruiting requirement for 2004 and missed its goal of reactivating people from the active force by 44 percent.⁵⁵ In fiscal year 2005, the Army Guard fell 20 percent below its recruiting goal, and the Army Reserve missed its goal by 13 percent, primarily because fewer and fewer soldiers joined the Guard and reserves after leaving active duty.⁵⁶ The active-duty Army, meanwhile, failed to meet its annual recruiting goal for the first time in six years, falling short by over 8 percent.⁵⁷

The Pentagon is also having difficulty keeping enough experienced Special Forces personnel on active duty as more and more of these elite warriors are beginning to accept offers from private security contractors who are performing military functions in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁵⁸ Ironically, we need to use so many private security contractors because the Special Forces are not large enough to carry out all of the functions they are assigned. The taxpayer thus ends up paying twice, once to train the personnel for the Special Forces and then again for contractor services. These contractors pay up to \$1,000 per day for work in war zones such as Iraq, far above the average military salary.⁵⁹ Last year, the Special Forces units were manned only at the 85 percent level.⁶⁰

The experience and capability level of the Army has also been hurt by the discharge of thousands of men and women for being openly gay and violating the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy.

A number of those discharged were soldiers with critical skills, such as Arab language abilities.⁶¹

Quality of Life Undermined

In wartime, every citizen should expect some privations, and this is particularly true for soldiers. But the Bush administration has exacerbated personnel problems by attempting to cut back benefits that members of the military and their families need. The timing of these cuts fueled the perception of disregard for the wellbeing of the same troops that the administration relies on to defend the country. For example, the administration proposed cutting imminent danger combat pay by one-third for U.S. troops in the war zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also proposed cutting family separation allowances by nearly two-thirds for those troops away from their home base.⁶² Public pressure ultimately forced Congress to reject the White House proposals.

In addition, thousands of U.S. soldiers have been injured abroad, yet less than one in ten applicants to the military's disability compensation system is receiving the long-term disability payments they request. Almost one-third of sick or injured National Guard and reserve veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are forced to wait more than four months to find out if they will be compensated. The majority of those who do receive disability pay leave the military with a one-time, lump-sum payment that is inadequate to make up for the loss they have suffered.⁶³

Finally, the Bush administration also requested a 14 percent cut in assistance to public schools on military bases and other federal property.⁶⁴ In what one Army commander called an act of betrayal, the civilian leadership at the Pentagon has considered closing or transferring control of the 58 schools it operates on 14 military installations.⁶⁵ These decisions threaten not only the quality of education for the children of soldiers, but also the morale and support of military families. Ultimately, these decisions threaten the long-term viability of the all-volunteer force.

PROGRESSIVE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

If the United States hopes to be able to occupy and rebuild countries like Iraq, essentially by itself, while also meeting its other global commitments, protecting the homeland, and treating the men and women of the military fairly and in a way that ensures that they will join and remain in the volunteer Army, it must take the five steps outlined below. While some of these steps require adding money to the Army's budget, these funds can be found in other parts of the overall baseline defense budget of \$420 billion. Programs that can be reduced without undermining the nation's ability to wage the global war on terror include the National Missile Defense program, new nuclear weapons research programs, and Cold War-era programs like the F-22 fighter and Virginia Class submarine. The cost of adding funds to the Army budget can also be offset by reducing the number of people on active duty in the Navy and Air Force, both of which are currently exceeding their target end-strengths.

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Increase the size of the total Army by at least 86,000 troops⁶⁶

The Army is overstretched and does not have sufficient numbers of active-duty troops trained for nontraditional duties such as nation-building. The additional 86,000 troops should be added while maintaining the same quality standards that the Army has followed for the past five years, namely that at least 90 percent of all recruits have a high school diploma, and 98 percent score average or above average on the Armed Forces Qualification Test. The new troops should be added as follows:

- *Add two division-sized peacekeeping or stabilization units.* Because the Army will continue to be used in nation-building, the president should request and the Congress should provide sufficient funds in the Army budget to recruit, train and equip two division-sized units of 13,000 people each (one active-duty and one reserve) trained in helping turn a battlefield victory into a political one. In addition to combat power, these units would have a greater number of personnel trained in policing, civil affairs, engineering, and medicine than are in the current Army divisions.
- *Double the size of the active-duty Special Forces.* The president should request and the Congress should provide sufficient funds to recruit, train, and equip the 50,000 people necessary to double the size of the active-duty Special Forces to 100,000. The secretary of defense must also give higher priority to these elite soldiers in the defense budget to enable them to take control of the military's counterterrorism mission. These steps will have the added benefits of allowing the Pentagon to reduce the number of private contractors in combat areas and enabling the administration to implement the 9/11 Commission's recommendation to transfer control of covert operations from the CIA to the Pentagon.⁶⁷
- *Add 10,000 military police, civil affairs experts, engineers, and medical personnel to the active-duty force.* The president should direct the secretary of defense to bolster the Army's capacity for peacekeeping, stabilization and nation-building duties and request sufficient funds in the Army budget to recruit, train, and equip at least 10,000 military police, civil affairs experts, engineers, and medical personnel for the active-duty force. Such capacity is desperately needed because most of these critical personnel are currently in the reserve.

Amend the "back-door draft" policies

Reduce the duration of the military service obligation. To accomplish this, the Congress should pass legislation to reduce the length of the military service obligation—which by law lasts eight years from the date of initial enlistment—to six years after enlistment or four years of active duty, whichever comes first. This change would prevent the men and women of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), who have already volunteered time to serve their country, from having their lives interrupted unfairly after they have completed their active-duty service. Not only is this a matter of equity, but it would also increase the willingness of people to join the active-duty Army for a four-year enlistment. Moreover, it would have little negative impact on military readiness, since members of the IRR do not receive any training, which means that their military proficiency has decayed.

Change stop-loss policy implementation. The president should direct the secretary of defense to change stop-loss policy implementation so that no person is subject to stop-loss on more than one occasion without his or her consent. Furthermore, enlisted people who are affected by stop-loss or whose tours in Iraq or Afghanistan are extended beyond one year should receive a bonus of \$2,000 per month for the duration of their extra service.

Issue a new executive order on selected reserve recall. The president should issue an executive order that directs the secretary of defense not to recall a selected reserve unit to active duty for more than one year out of every five unless the president has declared a national emergency. The current executive order allows the Pentagon to keep a selected reservist on active duty for up to two years, and does not limit the number of times an individual can be recalled. Activating the Guard and reserve more than once every five years will have a severe impact on retention as well as the willingness of individuals to join the Guard and reserve after leaving active duty.

The Pentagon is also having difficulty keeping enough experienced Special Forces personnel on active duty as more and more of these elite warriors are beginning to accept offers from private security contractors.

Maintain homeland security capability

Enlarge critical billets to include emergency responders. The president should direct the secretary of defense to add first responders, such as police and firefighters, to the list of those who hold critical jobs who are currently prohibited from joining or remaining in the selected reserve. Given the ongoing threat to the U.S. homeland, the Pentagon cannot continue to allow individuals with civilian jobs that are important to homeland security to join the National Guard and reserves and be called up to serve abroad. Homeland defense is as integral to national security as is attacking terrorists abroad, and it requires dedicated personnel who will not be called to military duty away from their own communities.

Establish a homeland security corps in each state. The president should direct the secretary of homeland security to work with the 50 governors to establish in each state a non-deployable homeland security corps of volunteer citizens with skills that are central to responding to a terrorist attack as well as to natural disasters. Such volunteers would include doctors, nurses, lawyers, construction workers, firefighters, police officers, communications experts, city planners, engineers, and social workers, among others. These units would serve as a backup for National Guard units, which will continue to be deployed away from their home states. The Congress should increase the Department of Homeland Security's budget by \$1 billion to pay for such a program.

Repeal the "don't ask, don't tell" policy

The Congress should repeal the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that prohibits openly gay men and women from remaining in the armed services. The "don't ask, don't tell" policy is counterproductive to military readiness. As Rear Admiral John D. Hutson, who retired as Navy Judge Advocate General in 2000, noted, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell is virtually unworkable in the military—legally, administratively, and socially. Rather than preserving cohesion, it fosters divisiveness."⁶⁸ Since

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1998, some 10,000 people have been discharged because of it.⁶⁹ The areas of expertise of a significant number of those who were discharged are the same as those in which the military has had personnel shortfalls and been forced to activate individuals from the Individual Ready Reserve.⁷⁰

The Uniform Code of Military Justice is more than adequate to prevent and sanction inappropriate behavior by members of the armed forces, no matter what their sexual orientation. While the issue of gays in the military was certainly very divisive twelve years ago, it appears that the opinions of many military personnel and the public have evolved since then.⁷¹ Seventy-nine percent of the public now favors allowing gay individuals to serve openly, and for the first time, a majority of junior enlisted personnel support that position.⁷² Moreover, an internal Ministry of Defense report

from Britain, whose military was forced by the European Court of Human Rights to allow openly gay people to serve, found that the policy change was a "solid achievement . . . with fewer problems than might have been expected."⁷³

Address quality-of-life issues to improve personnel readiness

Removing our troops' burden of worry about pay and benefits for themselves and their families would have a positive impact on morale as well as on retention and reenlistment rates. It is also necessary and appropriate given the sacrifices troops are making to protect our country. In particular:

- *Enable reservists and their families to enroll in TRICARE.* The president should support and Congress should pass legislation that would allow members of the selected reserve to enroll themselves and their families in the military's healthcare system, known as TRICARE. Enrollment in the TRICARE system would prevent reservists and their families from having to change healthcare plans when they are activated. Moreover, those members of the selected reserve who do not have health care insurance would be able to maintain their medical fitness for service without having to resort to paying for it out of their own pockets. Such access to the TRICARE system, which is much less costly than most private health care plans, would have a positive impact on both recruiting and retention for the Guard and reserve. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the cost of this would be about \$454 million in the first year and phase in over the next three years to cost \$1.8 billion in the fourth year.⁷⁴
- *Maintain troop pay and benefits.* The president should direct the secretary of defense to maintain quality of life benefits such as special pay, commissaries, and schools on military bases. The administration should also allow imminent danger and family separation allowances to maintain their real value by placing sufficient funds in the defense budget, and should call a moratorium on studies about closing commissaries and schools on military bases, at least as long as the U.S. military is trying to stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan.

Status Update as of December 2005

Since the original release of this report in December 2004, the Army recruiting situation has gone from bad to worse. Despite lowering its educational and aptitude standards, raising the maximum age for first-time enlistees, and increasing bonuses dramatically, all components of the total Army are failing to meet their recruitment goals. From October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005, the total Army needed to recruit 165,177 people. It actually recruited only 142,992—a shortage of 22,185 or 13 percent.⁷⁵

Retention, on the other hand, has exceeded expectations. At the end of FY 2005, the reenlistment rate for the active Army was eight percent, or 5,350 soldiers, above its goal. Career soldiers are reenlisting at higher rates than normal, but reenlistment rates for mid-career soldiers are below target.

Several bills have been introduced in Congress to increase the size of the active-duty Army permanently by up to 100,000 people. To date, none of these bills has become law.

Governors are still concerned about the overuse of the National Guard troops. In July 2005, Governor Mike Huckabee, a Republican from Arkansas, who is the newly elected head of the National Governors Association, said if the country suffered a major natural disaster we would be stretched thin. Less than two months later, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and proved the point.

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