Senators Nelson of Nebraska (Chairman), Kennedy, Lieberman, Webb, McCaskill, Graham, Collins, Chambliss, Dole

UNITED STATES SENATE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Sir/Madam:

There will be a meeting of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

Room SR-232A
Russell Senate Office Building

Wednesday, February 27, 2008 – 3:00 p.m.

OPEN

To receive testimony on Active component, Reserve component, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2009 and the Future Years Defense Program.

Witnesses:

Honorable David S.C. Chu
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Lieutenant General Michael D. Rochelle, USA
Deputy Chief of Staff, G1
United States Army

Vice Admiral John C. Harvey, Jr., USN
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, Training & Education)
United States Navy

Lieutenant General Roland S. Coleman, USMC
Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
United States Marine Corps

Lieutenant General Richard Y. Newton, III, USAF
Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel
United States Air Force

Notice #20

1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON

2 ACTIVE COMPONENT, RESERVE COMPONENT, AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

3 PROGRAMS IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR

4 FY 2009 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

5

6 Wednesday, February 27, 2008

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8 U.S. Senate

9 Subcommittee on Personnel

10 Committee on Armed Services

11 Washington, D.C.

12

13 The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:00 p.m.

14 in Room SR-232A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. E.

15 Benjamin Nelson, chairman of the subcommittee, presiding.

16 Members Present: Senators Ben Nelson [presiding],

17 Webb, and Graham.

18 Committee Staff Members Present: Leah C. Brewer,

19 Nominations and Hearings Clerk.

20 Majority Staff Members Present: Gabriella Eisen,

21 Counsel, Gerald J. Leeling, Counsel, and Peter K. Levine,

22 General Counsel.

23 Minority Staff Members Present: Lucian L. Niemeyer,

24 Professional Staff Member, Diana G. Tabler, Professional

25 Staff Member, and Richard F. Walsh, Minority Counsel.

1 Staff Assistants Present: Ali Z. Pasha, and Brian F.
2 Sebold.
3 Committee Members' Assistants Present: Jon Davey,
4 Assistant to Senator Bayh, Gordon I. Peterson, Assistant
5 to Senator Webb, Sandra Luff, Assistant to Senator Warner,
6 Clyde A. Taylor IV, Assistant to Senator Chambliss, and
7 Andrew King, Assistant to Senator Graham.
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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BEN NELSON, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM NEBRASKA
3 Senator Ben Nelson: Good afternoon. This Personnel
4 Subcommittee hearing will now come to order.
5 The subcommittee meets today to receive testimony on
6 the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs
7 in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal
8 Year 2009 and the Future Years Defense Program.
9 I'm honored to continue to serve as chairman of this
10 subcommittee, the subcommittee that's focused on the care
11 and well-being of our servicemembers, their families,
12 retirees, and Department of Defense civilians. No aspect of
13 our military programs is more important than taking care of
14 our people.
15 I'm privileged once again to be joined in this effort
16 by my ranking member, Senator Graham. He and I have worked
17 together for several years now to do what's right for our
18 servicemembers and their families, and will continue in this
19 never-ending effort.
20 I welcome our witnesses here today. Secretary Chu,
21 staff tells me this will be your tenth appearance before
22 this committee. Is that right? Or, who's counting?
23 Dr. Chu: Right, sir.
24 Senator Ben Nelson: Okay.
25 [Laughter.]

1 Senator Ben Nelson: We appreciate your service and
2 dedication to our servicemembers and their families, and
3 thank you for what you have done to provide continuity and
4 steady leadership during your time as the Under Secretary of
5 Defense for Personnel and Readiness.
6 We also welcome here today the military personnel
7 chiefs of each of the military branches: Lieutenant general
8 Michael D. Rochelle, United States Army; Vice Admiral John
9 C. Harvey, Jr., United States Navy; Lieutenant General
10 Ronald S. Coleman, United States Marine Corps; and
11 Lieutenant General Richard Newton III, United States Air
12 Force.
13 Admiral Harvey, this committee has already favorably
14 acted on your nomination for another position, and your
15 nomination is now before the full Senate, so I congratulate
16 you on your very successful service as the Chief of Naval
17 Personnel and your nomination to yet another position of
18 trust and importance. Congratulations.
19 Admiral Harvey: Thank you very much, sir.
20 Senator Ben Nelson: And, General Newton, this is your
21 first appearance before this subcommittee. As you know, you
22 follow a long tradition of successful Air Force chiefs of
23 personnel. I'm confident that General Brady gave you very
24 wise counsel as he moved on to --
25 [Laughter.]

1 Senator Ben Nelson: -- a four-star position. General
2 Rochelle and General Coleman, we welcome you back and thank
3 you for your continued service.
4 The current stress on the All-Volunteer Force, Active
5 and Reserve, is overwhelming and unprecedented. As we meet
6 here today, we're entering our seventh year of combat. It
7 is all the services can do to ensure the readiness and
8 mission capability of forces -- it's all that the services
9 can do to ensure the readiness and mission capability of
10 forces redeploying to Iraq and Afghanistan.
11 We continue the effort to increase the size of the Army
12 and Marine Corps. Growing the force raises obvious
13 questions about recruiting and retention, as well as the
14 right mix of pay, bonuses, and benefits to attract and
15 retain America's best young men and women.
16 Congress fully appreciates the sacrifices of -- our
17 servicemembers and their families are making. In
18 recognition of this, Congress continues to improve military
19 pay and benefits. The stress of military operations is not
20 limited to our servicemembers, as we know. We must never
21 lose sight of their families as we consider what measures to
22 take to enhance the safety and well-being of our
23 servicemembers. Their family is our family.
24 To help our military families, Congress passed a law
25 last year requiring the establishment of a Military Family

1 Readiness Council to assess the adequacy and effectiveness
2 of military family readiness programs and to recommend
3 improvements. Congress also passed the Wounded Warrior Act.
4 This comprehensive, bipartisan, legislation advances the
5 care, management, and transition of wounded and ill
6 servicemembers, enhances healthcare and benefits for their
7 families, and begins the process of fundamental reform for
8 the disability evaluation systems of the Department of
9 Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.
10 All of this reflects the reality that we face today.
11 Our servicemembers shoulder more responsibility and are
12 increasingly asked to do more. With the increased
13 requirements comes a cost that is difficult to bear. We
14 absolutely must take care of our servicemembers, especially
15 those who are wounded, and their families. We must ensure
16 that our servicemembers are properly trained and equipped to
17 perform the tasks we ask them to perform. On these issues,
18 there can be no compromise. The issues we face, going
19 forward, are difficult, but not insurmountable.
20 So, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today
21 on the programs and priorities the Department has identified
22 to overcome these challenges.
23 With that, thank you. Senator Graham, do you have any
24 -- an opening statement?
25

1 STATEMENT OF HON. LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM SOUTH CAROLINA
3 Senator Graham: Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, and it
4 will begin the way all of 'em have, and that's thanking you.
5 We've swapped roles a couple of times here, but nothing has
6 really changed. I've thoroughly, thoroughly enjoyed working
7 with you and your staff on this committee, as sort of a
8 respite from partisanship. We seem to figure it out, how to
9 get along for the common good here, and nothing could bring
10 you together more quickly than the needs of the men and
11 women in uniform and their families. So, I look forward to
12 another year of trying to help those who are making us all
13 safe.
14 Dr. Chu, thank you very much for your service. You've
15 got a very demanding job, and you have been here many times,
16 and I appreciate the knowledge and expertise you bring to
17 the table in serving your country. I'm sure you could go
18 other places and make more money. I just really appreciate
19 you staying around and helping us figure out the challenges
20 that we face.
21 Vice Admiral Harvey, good job.
22 [Laughter.]
23 Senator Graham: You know, the proof's in the pudding.
24 People recognized your work and your accomplishments, and --
25 well done, and we look forward to dealing with you in

1 another capacity, down the road, and definitely looking
2 forward to hearing from you as -- in terms of where we need
3 to go this year.
4 General Newton, you're the new guy. I know how that
5 feels. I can't think of a more important task right now --
6 for the Air Force, in particular -- to try to figure out,
7 you know, the balance between planes and people and ever-
8 increasing healthcare costs, how y'all reconcile that with
9 the missions we assign you.
10 We have a great staff. I look forward to working with
11 everybody. One of the highlights of our time together, I
12 think, has been the Wounded Warrior Act. I think this
13 committee, our staffs, put together the Wounded Warrior Act
14 in a way that received a lot of bipartisan support, and
15 hopefully will continue to deliver good service to those who
16 have been terribly wounded, and the families who suffer
17 alongside.
18 There's so much more to be done, and the question, I
19 think, for the country, is, How much of the healthcare role
20 should DoD provide? Should we, long term, look at having
21 retiree healthcare separated and just focus on a very
22 limited healthcare function within the military? I don't
23 know the answer to that, but I do believe that the biggest
24 challenge facing all of us is how to deal with the growing
25 personnel costs, particularly in the area of healthcare,

1 because, as you said, Senator Nelson, no one wants to
2 retreat from quality, availability, and access, but, when
3 you look at the demographic changes in the pie chart, the
4 personnel costs, particularly the healthcare costs, are
5 growing at a dramatic rate. And we're going to have to
6 figure out how to balance that out.
7 So, I'll look forward to listening to the testimony, in
8 terms of force structure, the number of people we have, the
9 number of people we'll need -- Who are we getting in, what
10 kind of level of education do they provide, and is the force
11 ready for the fight? The answer, to me, is overwhelmingly
12 yes, because we're winning the fight; but, as Senator Nelson
13 said, it's been a long, hard struggle for many years, and
14 we're all aware of what the strain's been.
15 So, I'll look forward to receiving your testimony and
16 working with Senator Nelson, put together a good package.
17 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, thank you, Senator Graham.
18 And, Dr. Chu, I hope you weren't listening too closely
19 when he said you could make more money elsewhere.
20 [Laughter.]
21 Senator Ben Nelson: We certainly -- that's not an
22 invitation to go anywhere, for sure.
23 The military coalition has submitted a written
24 statement for the record, and, without objection, it will be
25 included in the record.

1 [The information referred to follows:]

2 [SUBCOMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Senator Ben Nelson: With that, Dr. Chu, would you like
2 to begin?
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1 STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID S. CHU, UNDER SECRETARY OF
2 DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS
3 Dr. Chu: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Senator
4 Graham. It's a great privilege to be testifying before you
5 again, and I thank you for your kind words.
6 I am honored to be joined by my colleagues, the Deputy
7 Chiefs of Staff for Manpower Personnel of the four services.
8 We each have a formal statement, which we would like to
9 submit for the record, if we may.
10 Senator Ben Nelson: That will be -- that will be
11 permitted.
12 Dr. Chu: Thank you, sir.
13 As you suggested in your opening comments, Mr.
14 Chairman, this is a joint force. It's composed of our
15 civilians, our Active Duty military, and our Reserve
16 components. It's a force composed entirely of volunteers,
17 and that All-Volunteer Force, I would argue, has served us
18 very well. We do set high standards for quality and
19 entrance. We set high standards for motivation. I think
20 we've seen the rewards of those high standards in the
21 exemplary performance of American forces in the field, as
22 celebrated in Senator Graham's comments, and we intend to
23 maintain those high standards for this Department as we go
24 forward.
25 The fact that we've been successful in sustaining this

1 All-Volunteer Force across the last 7 years is due, I think,
2 to the strong partnership between the executive and
3 legislative branches to which you referred in your opening
4 statements. You have given us authority for a new national
5 security personnel system for our civilian. That's of
6 extraordinary value to us as we try to reshape the civil
7 workforce toward one that is more deployment, willing to go
8 forward. And, just yesterday, I had the privilege of
9 participating in the seminar in which the first of the
10 Secretary of Defense Global War on Terrorism medals for
11 civilians was awarded to 15 representative civilians of the
12 16,000 who have served forward in the current conflict.
13 Across the board, for both military and civil
14 personnel, you have given this Department increased
15 flexibility. You've enlarged the scope of our authority.
16 You've given us greater limits, for example, in terms of age
17 for entrance to military service; higher ceilings, in terms
18 of bonuses and re-enlistment incentives; you've given us
19 broad authority to reform the special incentive pays that we
20 use to direct personnel to the high-priority and critical
21 occupations of the Department.
22 If there is one single explanation that undergirds the
23 success, I think it is this willingness to accord a
24 substantial measure of flexibility to the Department. And,
25 as you look at our fiscal 2009 proposals, I think you'll see

1 that theme repeated, in terms of specific areas where we
2 think there are remaining issues that it would be
3 constructive to address.
4 You spoke about families in your opening statement. We
5 could not agree more about their importance to our success.
6 As was -- as is observed frequently, it is really the family
7 that makes the retention decision together. If the family
8 is not satisfied with the military lifestyle, the military
9 person is going to find it very hard to continue serving our
10 country. We recognize that we ask a lot of the families,
11 and we also recognize that it's our responsibility to, in
12 turn, support them in the burdens that they are asked to
13 carry, and the most important burden, of course, being the
14 absence of their loved one in a risky and dangerous
15 environment.
16 The President, in his State of the Union Address, as I
17 know you appreciate, addressed two elements that we believe
18 are most important to contemporary military families, in
19 terms of their willingness to serve and see their family
20 member don the Nation's uniform, and that -- those two
21 elements are the education of their children and the
22 opportunity for a career for the spouse -- not just a job,
23 but a career, something that has growth and aspires to more
24 important responsibilities over time. And the President
25 advocated for a series of changes that we hope the Congress

1 will enact, to allow, for example, the transferability of
2 the individual members' GI Bill benefits to the spouse and
3 children if that family should so desire, to give spouses a
4 preferred status, in terms of Federal hiring and Federal
5 career opportunities, and to accelerate our already strong
6 program of daycare for the children of military families by
7 accelerating the construction of our daycare centers, which
8 will require, we believe, some modest adjustment of statute,
9 and by encouraging us to enter public/private partnerships
10 for off-post daycare that would meet the same high standards
11 that we set in the military, which, again, would require
12 some changes to current authorities the Department enjoys.
13 Mr. Chairman, Senator Graham, we very much appreciate
14 the partnership with this subcommittee, and the Congress as
15 a whole, that has allowed us to continue to have, for this
16 country, the finest military the world has seen.
17 Thank you, sir.
18 [The prepared statement of Dr. Chu follows:]
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1 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

2 General Rochelle?

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL MICHAEL D. ROCHELLE,
2 USA, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, G1, UNITED STATES ARMY
3 General Rochelle: Thank you, sir. Thank you for the
4 opportunity to appear before the committee once again.
5 Chairman Nelson, Senator Graham, distinguished members
6 of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to report on
7 the Army's personnel posture for 2008 and entering 2009.
8 And thank you for your continued support of America's Army.
9 Without question, our Nation's Army remains the best-
10 trained, best-equipped, best-led Army in the world; and, I
11 might add, quite resilient. And as we enter the seventh
12 year of conflict, however, the third-longest period of armed
13 conflict in our Nation's history, there's little question
14 that our Army is, today, out of balance. Your Army soldiers
15 and their families are remarkable, having endured lengthy
16 and repeated deployments and hardships. Many have been
17 injured, and many have made the ultimate sacrifice.
18 In spite of the tremendous burdens they bear, they
19 remain resilient and committed to serving our Nation.
20 Indeed, they are our Nation's heroes, truly a national
21 treasure. And I look forward to our dialogue today
22 regarding how best to support and sustain them. And thank
23 you for this opportunity, once again.
24 Restoring balance and creating readiness is our top
25 priority after winning the global war on terror. Regaining

1 our "boxer stance," if you will, the ability to shift our
2 weight and respond decisively, requires that we apply the
3 Army Chief of the Staff of the Army's four imperatives:
4 sustain, prepare, reset, and transform.
5 He is growing the Army to 547,000 -- point four -- as
6 soon as possible, and we are on track to do that by the end
7 of fiscal '10. We are on target to meet this goal by '10,
8 as I said, thanks largely to the support from this
9 committee. Army growth will help us return to shorter
10 deployments, increased time at home between deployments, and
11 greater predictability for soldiers and families in both the
12 Active and Reserve components. We must grow, to become a
13 modular, expeditionary force that is fully capable of
14 supporting combatant commanders in meeting the full spectrum
15 of contingencies.
16 Our efforts to grow the Army are challenging. Only
17 three in ten of our 18- to 24-year-olds today are fully
18 eligible for enlistment. The remainder fall short in some
19 element of standards for health, education, or character.
20 Our recruiting mission is difficult, given the lowest
21 propensity for military service in two decades, declining
22 support from those who influence our youth, opportunities
23 for post-secondary education, and a competitive job market.
24 In spite of what is happening in the United States, we are
25 on track to meet our recruiting goal for fiscal '08.

1 I'm concerned about the Nation's ability to produce the
2 highest-possible caliber of military recruits, and, I might
3 add, the citizens that we will need to be competitive in the
4 21st and 22nd century. Declining high school graduation
5 rates and alarming rates for -- of obesity in our young
6 adult population constitute a pending human capital crisis,
7 a crisis that is -- not only has the potential to undermine
8 military readiness, but threatens our Nation's well-being,
9 as a whole. I share your concerns about quality, and am
10 committed to recruiting a quality force with the highest-
11 possible educational attainment and aptitude scores.
12 Our current analysis and our commanders in the field
13 tell us that soldiers assessed in fiscal '06 and '07 are
14 performing exceptionally, and I would emphasize
15 "exceptionally." Every one of these soldiers is qualified
16 in his or her military occupational specialty, and their
17 demonstrated performance on the battlefield speaks for
18 itself.
19 I believe that a willingness to serve in the Army
20 today, a nation at war, at this place in time, portends a
21 very unique aspect of quality that accession metrics simply
22 cannot measure: the heart of a well-led, well-trained
23 volunteer soldier.
24 While equipment and technology are certainly vital to
25 readiness and transformation, people are the Army.

1 Retaining soldiers starts at home. We must sustain soldiers
2 and their families, as you both have spoken to, with a
3 quality of life commensurate with the quality of the service
4 they provide. This is absolutely essential to both near-
5 term and long-term readiness.
6 With support from this committee and the Congress, the
7 Army has made tremendous strides in this regard, from
8 funding for improved housing facilities and essential
9 services, to increased pay and benefits, and all are
10 appreciated. Our soldiers and their families recognize, and
11 deeply appreciate, actions taken by their military and
12 civilian leadership, especially the Congress. These
13 targeted improvements to policies, programs, and services
14 delivery mitigate risks exacerbated by a prolonged conflict
15 and the many stresses that conflict entails. We ask for
16 continued congressional support for these programs that
17 provide our soldiers and families with the quality of life
18 they so richly deserve.
19 In closing, I thank you for the opportunity to appear
20 before you today. I thank you for the continued support.
21 And I look forward to taking your questions.
22 [The prepared statement of General Rochelle follows:]
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1 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, General.

2 Admiral Harvey?

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1 STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL JOHN C. HARVEY, JR., USN,
2 DEPUTY CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS (MANPOWER, PERSONNEL,
3 TRAINING, AND EDUCATION), UNITED STATES NAVY
4 Admiral Harvey: Yes, sir. Chairman Nelson, Ranking
5 Member Graham, distinguished members of this committee, I
6 appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today on
7 behalf of the 330,000 Active Duty and 70,000 Reserve-
8 component sailors currently serving our Nation.
9 Thanks in no small part to the extraordinary support
10 and work of this committee and its professional staff, your
11 Navy today is ready, relevant, and responsive. We are
12 recruiting a high-quality force, and we are retaining those
13 sailors we need to sustain a high-quality force, and we
14 intend to keep it that way.
15 We're sustaining our Nation's engagement in Iraq and
16 Afghanistan, both directly and in support of Army and Marine
17 ground forces, and we are simultaneously strengthening our
18 engagement around the world, in keeping with the guidance in
19 our new Cooperative Maritime Strategy for the 21st Century.
20 I would like to give you an example of what your Navy
21 is doing on any given day. Last week, on the 20th of
22 February, the Nation's attention was focused on the USS Lake
23 Erie, one of our Aegis cruisers, as it successfully engaged
24 a failing satellite with a Navy standard missile launched by
25 Fire Controlman Second Class Andrew Jackson, of Raytown,

1 Missouri. But, also on the 20th of February, just as Lake
2 Erie was engaging the satellite in an extremely challenging
3 and complex real-world scenario, our Navy was also operating
4 newly developed riverine forces in the Euphrates River, near
5 the Haditha Dam. Navy SEALs were pursuing al Qaeda deep in
6 Afghanistan and throughout Iraq, and the Harry S. Truman
7 Carrier Strike Group and the Tarawa Expeditionary Strike
8 Group, just entered through the Straits of Hormuz into the
9 Gulf, supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation
10 Enduring Freedom.
11 20 February was a day on which 127 of our 279 ships --
12 about 46 percent -- were underway or deployed, including two
13 aircraft carriers and five big-deck expeditionary warfare
14 ships. That day, your Navy had 54,000 sailors forward
15 deployed overseas, including about 24,000 sailors in the
16 CENTCOM area of operations, of whom 10,000 were afloat and
17 14,000 were boots-on-ground in various capacities. On that
18 day, 1700 sailors from our Navy medical team -- doctors,
19 nurses, and corpsmen, of whom 400 are reservists -- are
20 deployed -- were deployed to the EUCOM and CENTCOM AOR in
21 support of OIF and OEF, from Landstuhl to Balad.
22 And on 20th of February, we had approximately 10,000
23 sailors on individual augmentation missions, serving in
24 roles ranging from our traditional areas of expertise in
25 intelligence, medical support, explosive ordnance disposal,

1 and combat-zone construction, to delivering new capabilities
2 in areas like civil affairs, Provincial Reconstruction
3 Teams, running detainee operations, and combating IEDs while
4 embedded in Army and Marine tactical units.
5 Also in the CENTCOM AOR on 20 February, three of our
6 surface combatants were engaged in anti-piracy operations in
7 and around the Horn of Africa, attempting to ensure the flow
8 of relief for famine and drought conditions in those
9 bereaved countries.
10 Sailors in the NAVEUR region supported President Bush's
11 trip to Africa with Operation Nomad Fire, while the USS Fort
12 McHenry and highspeed vessel Swift continued the inaugural
13 deployment in support of Africa partnership stationing in
14 the Gulf of Guinea, where 14 percent of our Nation's oil is
15 generated.
16 On the 20th of February, we had frigates and P-3s
17 partnering with the Coast Guard, conducting counternarcotics
18 operations in the Caribbean and off the coast of South
19 America, an operation which has resulted in seizing 4.4
20 metric tons of drugs, just since December and January.
21 Closer to home, in Newport News, on the 20th, we saw
22 construction continuing on our newest nuclear-powered
23 aircraft carrier, the USS George H. W. Bush. And, finally,
24 on that day, we had about 870 of our newest recruits
25 conducting the battle stations-21 exercise at Great Lakes,

1 the culminating experience of their initial training at boot
2 camp.
3 Now, on the 20th of February, the common element in all
4 these missions, from the high-end operations of our Aegis
5 weapon system, to the low-tech, but far more demanding,
6 riverine mission in the combat zone, was our people. It is
7 the Navy's people who are making it all happen, executing
8 these important missions, and achieving great success. And
9 it is that same Navy that accomplishes all these diverse
10 tasks; and our Navy's people, our young men and women who
11 have volunteered to serve a cause much larger than
12 themselves, deserve all the credit and our gratitude for the
13 immeasurable achievements made in the defense of our Nation.
14 In the years that have passed since 9/11, your Navy has
15 undertaken a truly significant reshaping in order to develop
16 the capability to engage worldwide at every level of warfare
17 and peace maintenance, while still maintaining our ability
18 to dominate the blue water anywhere around the globe.
19 And so, as we approach our steady-state force levels of
20 about 322,000 sailors in the Active component and 68,000
21 sailors in the Reserve component, it is clear we have not --
22 we will not become just a smaller Navy, we will be a
23 different Navy. And to get the essential manpower,
24 personnel, training, and education pieces of this different
25 Navy right, we are putting together all the component parts

1 of our value chain for people to ensure we have the right
2 sailor in the right job at the right time with the right
3 experience, a concept we call "Fit." Our efforts will
4 ensure we are still ready to respond to any mission at any
5 time, anywhere, from the deep ocean to well beyond the
6 shoreline. Your Navy is a service whose routine forward
7 presence around the world, actively supporting friends and
8 allies, pursuing our enemies, and maintaining the global
9 maritime stability upon which our economic well-being
10 depends, clearly illustrated by the many missions we
11 accomplish on a typical day, is a fact now, and will
12 certainly remain so for the indefinite future.
13 On behalf of all our sailors, Active and Reserve, I
14 wish to thank this committee for their steadfast support of
15 all our Navy people who are doing so much for so many every
16 day. I am standing ready to respond to your questions, sir.
17 Thank you.
18 [The prepared statement of Admiral Harvey follows:]
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1 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

2 General Coleman?

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1 STATEMENT OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROLAND S. COLEMAN,
2 USMC, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS,
3 UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
4 General Coleman: Thank you, sir.
5 Chairman Nelson, Representative Graham, distinguished
6 members of the subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear
7 before you today to discuss Marine Corps recruiting,
8 retention, and other personnel issues. Today, I would like
9 to make just a few key points.
10 First, in regard to our end-strength growth, the
11 Marine Corps achieved unprecedented success in Fiscal Year
12 '07. We exceeded our goal of growing to 184,000 marines,
13 ending the Fiscal Year with an Active Duty end strength of
14 186,492, and we fully expect to exceed our next milestone of
15 189,000 during Fiscal Year '08 as we set our sights towards
16 202K without lowering our standards. We owe our success, in
17 large part, to our recruiters, who met all accession goals
18 in Fiscal Year '07, while maintaining our high-quality
19 standards. We expect to make this challenge again this
20 Fiscal Year. Thank you for your support of our enlistment
21 incentives which made these achievements possible.
22 Retention should also be viewed as a success. We re-
23 enlisted 3,700 more marines in '07 than in the prior fiscal
24 year -- again, without lowering standards. Nevertheless,
25 retention will continue to pose a significant challenge as

1 our goals become more and more aggressive. We thank you for
2 your support of our selective re-enlistment bonus program.
3 It is the foundation of our retention efforts. The funds
4 provided to us have increasingly significantly in recent
5 years and is money extremely well spent. These funds have
6 enabled us to increase retention in targeted and specialized
7 military occupational specialties so that we maintain the
8 leadership and experience necessary for combat and other
9 operational requirements, as well as for the new units stood
10 up in our support of our 202K growth.
11 I also want to emphasize today our efforts toward
12 Marine families. Thanks to your support, we are putting our
13 family readiness programs on a wartime footing, increasing
14 steady-state funding, and making a host of improvements. We
15 are establishing school liaison officer capability at every
16 Marine Corps installation to advocate for our Marine
17 children. We're also expanding our exceptional family
18 member programs to improve support and provide respite care
19 to these special families. These and other initiatives will
20 help ensure that we fulfill our obligation to our Marine
21 spouses, children, and other family members.
22 Lastly, but certainly not least, I want to tout our
23 Wounded Warrior Regiment. It is quickly becoming what you
24 envisioned, a comprehensive and integrated approach to
25 caring for our wounded, ill, and injured marines and sailors

1 through all phases of their recovery. We have recently
2 implemented a 24-by-7 Wounded Warrior Call Center to reach
3 out to our wounded warriors, including those who have
4 already left the service, and a job transition cell to help
5 them find satisfactory -- satisfying work. We're very proud
6 of how the regiment has progressed in such a short time, and
7 are thankful for the high priority you have given it.
8 Overall, the commitment of Congress to supporting our
9 202K end-strength growth and to improve the quality of life
10 for marines and their families is central to the strength
11 that your Marine Corps enjoys today.
12 Thanks to you, your Marine Corps remains the Nation's
13 force in readiness, and will continue to fulfill its mission
14 of being the most ready when the Nation is least ready.
15 I look forward to answering your questions.
16 [The prepared statement of General Coleman follows:]
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1 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

2 General Newton?

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1 STATEMENT LIEUTENANT GENERAL RICHARD Y. NEWTON III,
2 USAF, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, MANPOWER, AND PERSONNEL, UNITED
3 STATES AIR FORCE
4 General Newton: Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member
5 Graham, it's noted that this is my first opportunity to
6 testify before this committee. I can tell you that I'm
7 honored to be here today. I'm honored to be here today,
8 certainly with Dr. Chu and my teammates here on this joint
9 team, the other services, MILPER teammates. And so, I want
10 to thank you also for this opportunity to discuss the airmen
11 who serve the world's most respected airspace and cyberspace
12 force.
13 Our airmen have been continuously deployed and globally
14 engaged in combat missions for over 17 straight years since
15 that first day that an F-15 touched down over in Saudi
16 Arabia, in August of 1990, in the beginning Desert Shield.
17 Today, airmen are fully engaged in the interdependent joint
18 fight, and stand prepared for rapid response in conflict
19 across the globe, to provide capabilities for our joint
20 combatant commanders.
21 Our priorities are clear: winning today's fight,
22 developing and caring for our airmen and their families, and
23 preparing for tomorrow's challenges.
24 Today's airmen are doing amazing things to execute the
25 Air Force mission and certainly to meet Air Force

1 commitments and keep the Air Force on a vector for success
2 against potential future threats in a very uncertain world.
3 Our aim is to improve capability while maintaining the
4 greatest combat-ready air force in the world.
5 I look forward to accomplish through the lens of five
6 key focus areas that I'm taking on as your Air Force Deputy
7 Chief of Staff for Manpower and Personnel: managing end
8 strength efficiently to maximize capability; recruit and
9 train the highest-quality airmen, maximizing the continuum
10 of learning throughout the airmen life cycle; continue on
11 focusing on quality-of-life programs for airmen and their
12 families; and to maximize the efficiencies through evolving
13 smart business solutions.
14 Due to increased operations, maintenance, and personnel
15 costs, we've been forced to self-finance a centerpiece of
16 future dominance, the massive and critical recapitalization
17 and modernization effort for our aging air and space force.
18 As we prepare for an uncertain future, we are
19 transforming the force to ensure we are the right size and
20 shape to meet emerging global threats with joint and battle-
21 trained airmen. In order to dominate in the domains or air
22 and space and cyberspace throughout the 21st century, we
23 must recruit and develop and organize America's diverse and
24 brightest talent for complex multinational and joint
25 interagency operations of the future.

1 Our recruiting force has met their enlisted recruiting
2 mission through persistence and dedication. And since 2000,
3 the Air Force has enlisted over 258,000 airmen, against a
4 goal of approximately 255,000 airmen, for nearly 101-percent
5 mission accomplishment.
6 For Fiscal Year 2008, the Active Duty requirement is
7 27,800, and just over 9,000 airmen have been assessed, up to
8 this point, with an additional 9,500 awaiting basic military
9 training, down at Laughlin Air Force Base, outside of San
10 Antonio, Texas. So, we're on track to meet our goals this
11 year.
12 For Fiscal Year '07, Active Duty Air Force officer
13 retention finished 11 percent above the goal, while enlisted
14 retention fell short, about 8 percent below the goal. The
15 Air Force Reserve fell short of its enlisted retention goal
16 by 3 percent, and was -- but was less than one-half-percent
17 shy of the officer retention goal. The Air National Guard
18 met their overall officer enlisted retention goals for
19 Fiscal Year '07.
20 Even with these successes, some enlisted specialties in
21 the Active Air Force did not achieve their overall retention
22 goal, including air traffic control and Mid-East crypto-
23 linguists, structural civilian engineering, pavement and
24 construction equipment, vehicle operations, and contracting.
25 As part of our ongoing Air Force transformation, we are

1 reviewing and synchronizing our development efforts to
2 realize efficiencies in how well we put into play
3 developmental tools -- education, training, and experiential
4 -- to produce our stellar airmen, our military and civilian,
5 our officer enlisted, our Active and Reserve components.
6 We're dedicating resources to ensure our most important
7 weapon system, our airmen, are prepared to deliver airspace
8 and cyberspace power wherever and whenever it's needed.
9 I'm excited that my new duties as your Air Force A-1
10 enables me to also be the quality-of-life champion for the
11 Air Force. Qualify of life is not necessarily a system of
12 -- or a list of programs and services; it's the way we take
13 care of our airmen through these programs, and how they know
14 that we're supporting them and their families, who, every
15 day, make the sacrifices for America. We know airmen focus
16 more on their mission when they have a positive way to
17 rejuvenate from stress, when they have the knowledge that
18 their families are in good hands, and when they are
19 comfortable, and also confident, in being part of the larger
20 Air Force team.
21 To achieve the Secretary of Defense's objective to
22 shift resources from bureaucracy to battlefield, we are
23 overhauling Air Force personnel services. Our total force
24 personnel services delivery initiative modernizes the
25 processes, the organizations, takes advantage of new

1 technologies through which we are able to support our airmen
2 and their commanders. Our goal is to deliver higher-quality
3 personnel services with greater access, speed, accuracy,
4 reliability, and efficiency.
5 The Air Force plans to program the resulting manpower
6 savings to other compelling needs over the next 6 years.
7 This initiative enhances our ability to acquire, train,
8 educate, deliver, employ, and empower airmen with the needed
9 skills and knowledge and experience to accomplish the
10 diverse set of Air Force missions.
11 In conclusion, your Air Force is often the first to
12 leave -- the first to the fight, rather, and the last to
13 leave. We give unique options to all Joint Force
14 commanders. The Air Force must safeguard our ability to see
15 anything on the face of the Earth, range it, observe it, or
16 hold it at risk; supply, rescue, support, or destroy it;
17 assess the effects and exercise global command and control
18 over all of these activities.
19 Rising to the 21st-century challenge is not a choice,
20 it's our responsibility to bequeath a dominant Air Force to
21 America's joint team that will allow us in service -- that
22 will follow us in service to the Nation.
23 And, again, we appreciate your unfailing support to the
24 United States Air Force. And, again, I'm honored to be here
25 this afternoon, and I look forward to your questions and

1 discussion.

2 [The prepared statement of General Newton follows:]

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1 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

2 Secretary Chu, we've spent time showing concern, and
3 looking for solutions, to the sexual assault issues in the
4 armed services today, because preventing those assaults in
5 the military remains -- maintains -- remains a high priority
6 in the Congress, and I'm sure it is with the military, as
7 well, and Congress is going to continue to monitor the
8 Department of Defense actions on this issue.

9 In that regard, in the Ronald Reagan National Defense
10 Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005, Congress required
11 the Secretary of Defense to expand the mission of the Task
12 Force on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the military
13 service academies to examine sexual-assault matters
14 throughout the entire Armed Forces, and to report findings
15 and recommendations to the Secretary of Defense within 12
16 months of its initial meeting. The Secretary of Defense is
17 then required to report to Congress.

18 In the statement of managers accompanying this
19 legislative requirement, the conferees stated, "Given the
20 urgency of the need for effective action to prevent and
21 resolve sexual-assault offenses against military members,
22 the conferees expect the task force will provide an
23 independent assessment of the effectiveness of policies and
24 programs developed by the Department, as well as the success
25 of the military services at all levels, in achieving their

1 implementation."

2 What's the status of the task force, at this point?

3 Dr. Chu: Sir, thank you for that question. It

4 is a very important issue. And we agree with your

5 presumption, that the first priority is prevention, not

6 simply reaction after a terrible event has occurred.

7 The task force has been appointed. We are in the

8 process of putting in place a more senior executive director

9 to give it greater heft within the Department. It's held

10 its first -- it's held its administrative meeting, which I

11 believe, advised by lawyers, doesn't count as the "clock

12 starting" that you mentioned.

13 I do think coming into force at this time is helpful,

14 because we've had time for the policies to be implemented

15 across the force, as a whole, time to begin to assess their

16 effects to see, Are we in the right place? Are we doing the

17 right things? What further steps should we pursue?

18 We have, of course, conducted the surveys that are

19 required by statute. We have transmitted to you the academy

20 surveys, specifically. I have spent some time perusing the

21 focus-group report, which is part of the package we have

22 sent you, at the military academies, in which the

23 interviewers have sat down with the young men and women at

24 those institutions.

25 I am encouraged -- substantially encouraged by what

1 those cadets/midshipmen have told us. It's a very different
2 picture from what was true 3 or 4 years ago, when I think
3 there was considerable fear in some quarters, and distrust.
4 They may not use all the fancy bureaucratic terms that we
5 employ, but they know we've put counselors in place, they
6 know the procedures for reporting incidents, they feel --
7 I'm particularly struck by the comments of the women at
8 these academies; at least in my judgment, they feel that we
9 have created a safe environment for them with our various
10 policies. They're not all the same -- there are some
11 amusing differences across the services, about how
12 they've addressed this issue, but I do believe substantial
13 progress has been made.
14 Senator Ben Nelson: Do you have any idea of when we
15 might expect a report from the group?
16 Dr. Chu: From the task force?
17 Senator Ben Nelson: Yes.
18 Dr. Chu: Since it's just getting started, I do
19 think it's going to be toward the end of this year before
20 we'll see substantive material.
21 Senator Ben Nelson: And will that report include more
22 than the service academies?
23 Dr. Chu: Yes, sir, absolutely. As directed, it
24 is to be across-the-board look at all our policies. And we
25 have put, as I know you appreciate, a great deal of training

1 emphasis on this issue, starting with basic training for
2 both officers and enlisted personnel.
3 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.
4 In terms of suicide prevention, I know the Army has
5 recently experienced an increase in the number of suicides,
6 and some are holding up the Air Force suicide program as a
7 successful model for the Army and other services to emulate.
8 General Newton, can you briefly describe the Air Force's
9 suicide prevention policy and your assessment of its success
10 to date? I realize you're new into it, but you may have
11 some thoughts about it, at this point.
12 General Newton: Yes, sir. Thank you for that
13 question. And I'll be brief. But, from a standpoint of
14 where it starts in the Air Force, it starts down at the base
15 level, down at the unit level, and that's -- and other
16 programs, much like the suicide programs that we've had in
17 the past, or other programs similar, that's where we find a
18 lot of success, down at the unit level, not only from -- it
19 -- therefore, rather than being a top-down, it's a bottom-
20 up, point one.
21 The second point is how we communicate. How do we
22 convey to, not only our airmen -- and, by the way, it's
23 Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve, but also to our civilians,
24 as well -- communication showing that, not only at the unit
25 commander level, but, again, now top-down, that we, as a

1 service, put a lot of great value. And, again, I think the
2 fact that we are able to communicate to people, to have them
3 actually understand that we can discuss things that perhaps
4 have been held back in years gone by, particularly in a very
5 high operations-tempo environment, and with the
6 expeditionary nature of Air Force today.
7 My last point on this is that we have discovered that,
8 not only does it work in garrison or at our -- generally, on
9 base, in a traditional sense, but it also fits an
10 expeditionary model. And so -- and then, let me draw one
11 more last point of -- the fact is that it isn't a -- just a
12 Office of the Surgeon General program, it's one that --
13 really is a commanders' program. And so, we approach it
14 with some -- obviously, some medical expertise involved with
15 this, particularly with our mental health professionals.
16 But, truly it is a commanders program, from the unit level
17 up.
18 Senator Ben Nelson: General Rochelle and General
19 Coleman and Admiral Harvey, can you give us some idea of
20 what your experience is with the programs you have in your
21 -- each of your services, and how effective you think that
22 they are at the present time?
23 General Rochelle: Happy to do that, Chairman Nelson.
24 First of all, I should mention that it's clear that the
25 increase in suicide, as well as other measures that we track

1 very, very closely, are a reflection of the amount of stress
2 that's on the force. There has been a task force -- Suicide
3 Prevention Task Force -- in existence for quite some time.
4 But, what the Secretary and the Chief have directed is
5 greater Surgeon General, chaplain, Army G-1, provo marshal,
6 and other specialist oversight and steerage of that effort,
7 focused on four things:
8 First is removal of the stigma that is associated with
9 seeking mental health counseling and support. And our most
10 recent military MHAT, Military Health Assessment Team --
11 Awareness Team, excuse me -- Military -- Mental Health
12 Awareness Team -- trip into theater has borne out some very
13 good results of the elimination of that stigma -- the
14 reduction of that stigma.
15 The second is exactly what General Newton spoke to, at
16 sensitizing our junior-most leaders, not only of how to
17 identify and respond to soldiers who are in danger, but,
18 more importantly, re-emphasizing that this is a part of our
19 Army values, it's one of our -- the tenets of our Army
20 values, never leaving a fallen or falling comrade behind.
21 Third is increasing the mental health professionals in
22 direct support of our soldiers.
23 And then, finally, providing commanders, at every
24 level, actionable intelligence when prevention measures fail
25 -- with intelligence that they can use to then prevent --

1 and ideally prevent the next one.

2 Senator Ben Nelson: Do you have any data that would

3 establish the tracking of high ops tempo with the increase?

4 In other words, are there any statistics, Dr. Chu, that

5 would establish that there is some correlation between the

6 high ops tempo and the increased suicide rate?

7 General Rochelle: Was that to me, sir?

8 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, I was going to see if Dr.

9 Chu had it for the entire --

10 Dr. Chu: I do --

11 Senator Ben Nelson: -- all the forces, together.

12 Dr. Chu: We have looked at suicide rates for all

13 four, sir. We have tracked them for years, actually. And

14 the chairman has testified to the quality of DoD suicide

15 prevention programs, which I think have been recognized in

16 the civil sector, recently with some awards.

17 I do think it is still speculative to ascribe causality

18 to "Why has the Army rate started to rise?" because the

19 Marine Corps rate has not risen. So, it's not quite the

20 same in each service.

21 Also, the majority of the suicides really are here at

22 home. And, of those today, the majority are people

23 are on their first deployment. So, it's, I think, a more

24 complex picture. I would be very hesitant to ascribe to any

25 one cause. We do know a fair amount about precipitating

1 factors. So, failed relationships are a key factor across
2 the board. Financial difficulty is a key factor across the
3 board. But, I think I would be careful about drawing any
4 immediate conclusions about, "Why has the Army rate gone
5 up?" and, "Why at this particular time?"
6 Senator Ben Nelson: My time is up, but, maybe, Admiral
7 and General Coleman, you might briefly -- General Coleman,
8 I'll give you a chance to go first, because your numbers
9 apparently are with -- are not increasing, at some level,
10 even with a high ops tempo.
11 General Coleman: Yes, sir. That is correct, sir.
12 And, again, thanks for allowing me to answer the question.
13 Over the last -- since about 2001, our numbers are --
14 when we look at 'em, our numbers have remained relatively
15 low; meaning, they have -- they did not increase. We do not
16 see a correlation between ops tempo and suicide rate.
17 Obviously, one suicide is one too many. Our ethos is a
18 small unit -- at the small unit level, and emphasizing that
19 it's not weak to seek help or to seek assistance. But, our
20 main focus is on that small unit, small unit leader, the
21 buddy system. And we see no correlation between
22 deployments. Whether a marine that committed suicide had
23 been to the fight or had not been, there's no increase in
24 the numbers since 2001, sir.
25 Thank you, sir.

1 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

2 Admiral?

3 Admiral Harvey: Yes, sir. Our suicide rate is -- for
4 details, since 2004, is about 10.3 or so per 100,000, down
5 to about 9.5 per 100,000 now. So, fairly steady, with a
6 robust operations tempo throughout that period of time. Our
7 focus has been on unit training. Interestingly enough, if
8 you look at the demographics of, sadly, who are the most
9 likely to take their own life, it is a relatively senior
10 individual, not the young kid, not the one who's been around
11 for a while. It's that mid-grade petty officer, that chief
12 petty officer, who's in positions of authority, which makes
13 this a little more unique, because the traditional "looking
14 after your people" -- who's looking after those who's
15 looking after the people? And so, it's a matter of unit
16 training on awareness, unit training on the ability to
17 intervene, the concept of a shipmate as someone who will
18 step forward at the right time in order to prevent something
19 from happening, and not just react to something that's
20 happening. So, it's intense training on this part,
21 understanding the demographics, and making sure we're ready
22 to put forward with the mental health professionals
23 available to us to help guide those efforts.

24 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

25 Dr. Chu: Mr. Chairman, could I add just one

1 comment, again on the empirics, it is, I think, useful to
2 underscore that, although each one of these is a tragedy,
3 that our rate in the military is, and has been, at or below
4 the gender- and age-adjusted rate for American society, as a
5 whole. And we've also seen in civil society that's
6 been reported in news media, where older -- in some
7 ways, this parallels with Admiral Harvey must be --
8 older suicide rates have been rising in civil society. So,
9 again, I do not think we fully understand the causality of
10 all these troubles. We are concerned by the fact that
11 the Army's rate has been rising. Let me underscore that
12 point.
13 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.
14 Senator Graham?
15 Senator Graham: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
16 Dr. Chu, I think you're pretty well aware of the fact
17 that, last year, the -- this committee and the Congress as a
18 whole passed a provision that would promote the Judge
19 Advocate Generals to three-star rank, Lieutenant General or
20 Vice Admiral, and I think that was effective January 28th.
21 Do you know the status of attempts to comply with that
22 legislation? Are there any problems that I need to be made
23 aware of?
24 Dr. Chu: No, sir, I don't believe there are any
25 problems. We are very much aware of the provision. It has

1 the Secretary's personal interest, and he is asking the
2 Department to act in a unified way, since it affects all
3 three services -- all three --
4 Senator Graham: Thank you very much.
5 Dr. Chu: -- all three --
6 Senator Graham: If you have any problems, please let
7 me know.
8 Now, pharmacy costs. We've been trying to deal with
9 ways to lower our pharmacy costs without hurting quality,
10 and actually improving access. Can you tell me where we
11 stand now with trying to come up with a new pharmaceutical
12 system?
13 Dr. Chu: We will, of course, implement the
14 statutory provisions that you have enacted. We are looking
15 at, again, the question, and we very much hope for
16 partnership with the Congress of, How do we address the
17 overall TRICARE structure, as you signaled in your opening
18 comments.
19 We do believe that the report of the task force that
20 Congress required that we constitute does provide a roadmap
21 for the way ahead. We can change the specifics, obviously,
22 and that needs to be a constant process, and we're very
23 glad that you have agreed to receive that briefing, because
24 I do think it provides us with a guide -- set of guidelines
25 as to how to think about other issues.

1 Senator Graham: Thank you very much.

2 Admiral Harvey, one of the issues facing, I think, all
3 services is healthcare professionals. You're competing in a
4 very tough market out there. Maybe just very briefly, each
5 of you, starting with the Navy, could you tell me what your
6 biggest challenge is, in terms of your healthcare costs and
7 obligations in your healthcare professionals, of recruiting
8 and retaining those professionals? And is there anything we
9 can do?

10 Admiral Harvey: Sir, I'm very pleased to tell you that
11 this committee and this Congress have done an awful lot in
12 2007 and 2008 authorization bills that have enabled us to, I
13 believe, turn the corner, for the first time in 5 years, and
14 put ourselves on a path to success in recruiting in every
15 area for our medical professionals. Let me just give you a
16 quick hit on what's come out of those bills that give us the
17 tools that we needed to have in what is a very, very tough
18 market.

19 Our 4-year active nurse corps accession bonus, gone
20 from 15,000 in '05 to 25,000 in '07. I'm going to make
21 nurse corps accession goals this year.

22 Critical wartime specialty accession bonuses for
23 medical corps, dental corps officers, up to $400,000;
24 general surgeons, 300,000; psychiatrists, 175,000; emergency
25 medicine, 175,000. I am 40 percent ahead of where I was

1 last year on medical corps accessions. We have 80 accepted
2 and 92 in process, against a goal of 358.
3 The dental officer accession bonus has increased to
4 $75,000. I expect to make goal for dental corps accessions
5 this year, against a goal of 141.
6 The Health Profession Scholarship Program increased to
7 a maximum amount of 30,000 per year, and the Health
8 Professions Loan Repayment Program, critical action that you
9 all put into the bills, increased to 60,000 a year.
10 So, I see tremendous movement on the part -- that these
11 tools are being received very well. We have made medical
12 recruiting the number-one priority in our recruiting
13 command, and it's my number-one priority in my job, as Chief
14 of Naval Personnel. We've got the Surgeon General and his
15 team onboard. Doctors are helping us recruit doctors.
16 Nurses are helping us recruit nurses. And our medical
17 service corps are helping us recruit those healthcare
18 professionals.
19 So, I'm not declaring victory, sir, but I am saying,
20 after 4 to 5 years of missing every goal in every year, we
21 -- I believe we have turned the corner on this one, and I'm
22 really looking forward to when we get the results of medical
23 school decisions here, in the next 2 months, that we'll be
24 able to come back and tell you, yes, we are definitely on
25 the path to success.

1 Senator Graham: Well, that's great. And one of the
2 unsung heroes of this war, that our men and women in uniform
3 and, I guess, some contractors, but primarily men and women
4 in uniform, who are handling combat casualties, it's just an
5 amazing story.
6 General Rochelle?
7 General Rochelle: Senator Graham, I thank you for that
8 question. And I would like to echo Admiral Harvey's
9 comments about the increases in incentives. But, I would
10 take a slightly different tack with respect to where the
11 Congress has been most helpful, in terms of our medical
12 recruiting, and that is, echoing Dr. Chu's comments about
13 authorities, giving us the flexibility -- the Army, in
14 particular, in 2005 -- to pilot inventive and innovative
15 programs that would allow us to be able to stretch out and
16 do things in quite a different way.
17 We -- two examples -- we are about to launch, in the
18 Army, a program to grow our own nurses, in partnership --
19 registered nurses -- bachelor of science in nursing
20 graduates -- in partnership with university. The second is,
21 we will soon launch, as part of our pilot authorities
22 granted by this committee, by the Congress, a waiver of the
23 military service obligation that accrues to every
24 commissioned officer in the Army -- as a pilot. We think
25 this will be a huge increase -- will give us a huge

1 increase, in terms of the challenges in the marketplace.

2 So, I would echo everything that Admiral Harvey has

3 said; most especially, the Health Professional Scholarship

4 Program and the increase in those incentives; but, the

5 authorities, by far, have been the most effective.

6 Senator Graham: I'll be very brief, here. I know

7 Senator Webb has questions.

8 General Coleman, we're growing the Marine Corps; it

9 seems to be we're on track to grow the numbers we need.

10 General Coleman: Yes, sir.

11 Senator Graham: The quality is being maintained. Is

12 there any major deviation in quality, here, as we try to

13 grow our numbers?

14 General Coleman: Thank you, sir. Sir, we have not

15 lowered our standards one bit. Our goal, last year, was 184

16 end strength. I believe we came in at 186-plus, and we have

17 not lowered our standards in any way, shape, or form, or

18 fashion.

19 Senator Graham: Is the Marine Corps generally in good

20 shape, here?

21 General Coleman: Marine Corps is in great shape, sir.

22 Senator Graham: Personnelwise?

23 General Coleman: Yes, sir. Yes, sir, great shape.

24 Senator Graham: All right. Anything we can do for

25 you, let us know.

1 General Newton, the Air Forces sort of have a dilemma,
2 here. We're, I think, 5 percent short of where we need to
3 be, in terms of --
4 General Newton: Yes, sir.
5 Senator Graham: -- personnel and -- tell me your
6 dilemma and what we can do to help you, here.
7 General Newton: Yes, sir. We made a conscious
8 decision, as we look at striving to recapitalize our force
9 and modernize our force, the average aircraft age -- I'm
10 sure you're heard reported, is over 24 and a half years old.
11 And so, we've made the conscious decision, as we look at our
12 program force, of decreasing end strength by reducing
13 40,000. And so, we're on a glide slope, by the end of FY-
14 09, to get down to about 316,600, I believe is the number,
15 for Active Duty end strength.
16 Senator Graham: Is that wise, given the operational
17 tempo?
18 General Newton: Sir, it's a balance between --
19 obviously, between cost and risk. I'll tell you that we
20 submitted a report to Congress, just several weeks ago, with
21 regard to what -- as I just indicated, what the program
22 force is, versus the required force. The required force, in
23 order to meet our global commitments, with new emerging
24 missions, with the growth of end strength, the United States
25 Army and the United States Marine Corps, appears to be about

1 330,000, if you look at the POM, starting around Fiscal Year
2 '10 and through '15. If you're asking me the question, "Are
3 we incurring more risk by staying on glide path to a reduced
4 end strength for program force down to 316,000?" I would
5 say, yes, sir, we are. But, again, though, it comes down to
6 the challenge between the costs of -- so forth and -- as
7 well as the need -- the overarching need, at this juncture,
8 to recapitalize and modernize.
9 Senator Graham: So, you're having, really, to cut your
10 personnel cost to pay for your capital needs, is that the
11 deal, here?
12 General Newton: Sir, we -- if you think of it in terms
13 of the number of banks we went to, in this case we made the
14 decision in PBD 720, back in, I believe, around November of
15 '05, to make that very touch recapitalization call, and went
16 into the personnel account.
17 Again, the backdrop of that is, with new emerging
18 missions -- I didn't mention, but, you know, we've got a new
19 combatant command standing up, in U.S. Africa Command. Not
20 only are we striving to dominate in air and space, by
21 cyberspace, as well, with our plans to stand up a new
22 cyberspace command. But, if you look at the QDR report that
23 came out around that same time period, which reports that
24 the Air Force is to maintain 86 modern combat wings, and so
25 forth -- and so, yes, the -- it's the difference between,

1 obviously the cost and the risk, but also the difference
2 between where we are, programmatically, but also in terms of
3 required -- requirements.
4 Senator Graham: Thank you.
5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
6 Senator Ben Nelson: Senator Webb?
7 Senator Webb: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
8 Gentlemen, first, I would like to just start by saying
9 -- listening to the reactions on the question about suicide
10 prevention and your programs and the information that you
11 have, I -- I've been watching this for 6 years now, through
12 three different family relationships, from the enlisted
13 infantry, you know, company level, looking up, and I don't
14 have the -- you know, the servicewide data that you have,
15 but I do have a serious concern about this. And the things
16 that I have seen are admittedly anecdotal, but they, kind
17 of, contravene all of the things you're just saying, in
18 terms of age and ops tempo and these -- these sorts of
19 things. And, because they are personal in nature, and
20 because they're anecdotal, I don't think it's appropriate
21 for me to go into it in a hearing, but I would like the
22 opportunity to have you come and sit in my office for about
23 10 minutes and explain some of the concerns that I have. I
24 don't believe I'd be doing my job if I didn't say this. You
25 know, we really have, obviously, a responsibility to make

1 sure we examine the potential, as it exists. And sometimes,
2 as data filters up to the top -- you know, having spent 5
3 years in the Pentagon, 4 of them with Dr. Chu, I know how
4 that can go. So, I'd -- at some point, I would enjoy being
5 able to sit down and talk to you all about that.
6 Dr. Chu: Delighted, Senator.
7 Senator Webb: One statistic that, kind of, jumps out
8 at me, David, from all the years that I've been involved in
9 this, is this notion that fewer than three out of ten of
10 America's youth are deemed fully qualified to serve in the
11 military. That just, kind of, astounds me, because when you
12 look back, for instance, at the Vietnam era, one out of
13 every three males in the age group actually served, and
14 there were many more, as we know, who would have been
15 physically qualified. To what do you attribute this number?
16 Dr. Chu: I think there are two principal
17 factors, in my judgment. One is, we have set, in the
18 military, far higher standards, particularly for educational
19 achievement, than was true before, and far higher standards
20 than we set in the force in the early days of the Volunteer
21 Force, when Congress rebuked us, as you recall, in the '70s,
22 for the low fraction of high school diploma graduates and
23 the weak performance on the Armed Forces Qualification Test.
24 And so, we really have set ourselves to be Lake Woebegone.
25 We have set a standard that 90 percent, as you know, should

1 be high school diploma graduates. The estimates -- and they
2 are only estimates -- of the high school diploma graduation
3 in the country hover between 70 and 80 percent. Everybody
4 in the military, as I know you appreciate, is a high school
5 graduate, either through diploma or GED. That didn't used
6 to be true. Similarly, in the AFQT, we aim to have 60
7 percent or more -- and three of the four services are really
8 in the 70-percent range -- of scores above average. And we
9 limit mental category-4 to 4 percent of accessions.
10 Whereas, Project 100,000, for example, in the '60s,
11 deliberately took mental category-4 individuals, in the
12 hopes that -- in high school dropouts -- in the hopes we
13 could rehabilitate them and put them on a more productive
14 track.
15 So, one major element is --
16 Senator Webb: Right, but just to recall the history of
17 that, you know, 30 years ago, during the Carter
18 administration, we redefined what category 4 was. We
19 created category 3A and then category 3B, and a whole lot of
20 the 3B's were category 4's previously.
21 Dr. Chu: I think -- well, let me double check,
22 but I think the category limits were kept more or less the
23 same.
24 The other big factor, I do think -- and this is
25 something that is a national challenge -- is the issue of

1 physical fitness, and particularly obesity. And a large
2 fraction of the loss of the cohort, that is described in
3 this study that has been done, is because they're not
4 medically qualified. This is not the draft-era failing-the-
5 physical issue, this is reset standards for physical fitness
6 and obesity that are sufficiently tight that large numbers
7 of young Americans can't comply.
8 It doesn't necessarily mean -- I mean, and this is one
9 of the internal issues that we are examining in -- the Army
10 is examining in pilot, that we're necessarily in the right
11 place on some of those standards. And the Army does have a
12 so-called ARMS experiment, where we're -- instead of looking
13 at the indicators as -- we ask the person to actually
14 perform for us -- do a step test, I think, is one of the key
15 ingredients. And if they can do that well, even if they
16 might be a larger girth than the rules would otherwise argue
17 should be the case --
18 Senator Webb: Well, it would seem to me, you know -- I
19 have a very limited amount of time here, and I know where
20 you're going on this -- you know, it would seem to me that
21 if you take, for instance, truly disqualifying conditions,
22 such as disease or systemic disorders and those sorts of
23 things, you've still got a pretty large group of people that
24 you're potentially missing out on, here. You know, the
25 Marine Corps used to have what we called "Fat Boy Platoons,"

1 where they would take people who were overweight, and run
2 them through a pre-boot-camp conditioning program, and put
3 them in. And, in terms of high school graduates, I've
4 always been of a mind that if you take someone, with a
5 higher mental category on their testing, who happens to be a
6 non-high-school grad, you can make very fine military people
7 out of them, and help 'em redirect their life.
8 Walter Anderson, who's the CEO of Parade Magazine
9 Enterprises, was a high school dropout who enlisted in the
10 Marine Corps and became valedictorian of his college class
11 after he got out.
12 So, I would like -- I want to ask another question,
13 here, so I don't want to lose all my time on this, but I
14 would hope that you could find ways to expand the potential
15 recruitment base and take advantage of that.
16 Dr. Chu: And we agree, sir. And, just very
17 quickly to say, the Army is running another pilot -- so-
18 called TTAS -- two tier -- Tier Two Attrition Screen --
19 where we are looking at other indicators -- and,
20 specifically, some combination of test scores and other
21 attributes, to say, Could they substitute for the diploma as
22 a predictor of success in the military? So, we agree, we
23 want to enlarge that pool.
24 Senator Webb: General Rochelle, I'm interested in this
25 notion that -- and, actually, for Dr. Chu, as well,

1 potentially -- this notion of transferability with the
2 educational benefits. First of all, has that been costed?
3 Has anybody put a cost on this?
4 Dr. Chu: The -- if I may answer that part, sir
5 -- the specifics of the program are still being debated
6 within the administration, issues of, you know, "Should you
7 have served a certain number of years before you can do
8 this?" and so on, so forth. And so, the cost estimates
9 depend on that set of answers.
10 Senator Webb: So, we have a program that the President
11 mentioned in his State of the Union Address, and Secretary
12 Gates mentioned when he testified, that we really don't have
13 a cost for. Is that --
14 Dr. Chu: No, we do have --
15 Senator Webb: -- is that correct?
16 Dr. Chu: -- cost for it, sir.
17 Senator Webb: You do have? What's the projected cost.
18 Dr. Chu: It depends on the parameters of the
19 program.
20 Senator Webb: Well, what's the low and the high?
21 Dr. Chu: The low ranges from on the order of
22 half a billion dollars a year to above a billion dollars a
23 year, depending, again, on the parameter choices that you're
24 making
25 Senator Webb: Just for the transferability prediction.

1 Dr. Chu: Transferability, yes, sir.

2 Senator Webb: Okay. Let me make two suggestions to
3 you, here. Number one, having served on the House Veterans
4 Committee for 4 years, there was a lot of wisdom over there
5 when this idea came up, 30 years ago, that you have to be
6 very careful, because you're taking a benefit away from a
7 veteran. You know, there's one point in your life you may
8 want to transfer this off to a family member, and 9 years
9 later you're divorced and you're out on the economy, and you
10 want to get an education, and your benefit's gone, then what
11 do you do? That's point number one.

12 Point number two is, I've been working really hard,
13 here, to try to get the right kind of a GI Bill, instead of
14 this Montgomery GI Bill, that would actually allow you to
15 expand your potential recruitment base in an area where
16 you're not really able to recruit, that individual who's --
17 who has a propensity to come into the military, for family
18 tradition, because they love their country, but not
19 necessarily because they want to become a part of a career
20 force, when they know they're going to get a full boat out
21 of it, the same way that people in World War II got, if they
22 get on the other end of it. And that total cost is about --
23 we're trying to get a firm estimate, but it's about 2
24 billion, to dramatically change the GI Bill and really help
25 recruitment, here.

1 Dr. Chu: Sir, you raise two very important
2 issues. Let me respond very briefly.
3 First, on your concern with the irrevocable nature of
4 it and perhaps having deep regret at some later point, yes,
5 that is one of the issues that we are, likewise, concerned
6 with. We want to structure this so that we protect that --
7 protect the serviceperson from what might not always be a
8 decision that he or she would sustain over time.
9 Senator Webb: How do you do that?
10 Dr. Chu: I'd rather not comment yet, sir, if I
11 may.
12 [Laughter.]
13 Dr. Chu: But, we do have some ideas on that
14 point.
15 Second, on the cost estimates, VA did testify, last
16 year, when your bill was first introduced, that, at least as
17 then structured, it was more like 7 and a half billion
18 dollars, here -- $75 billion over a 10-year period, 2008 to
19 --
20 Senator Webb: What, my bill? S. 22?
21 Dr. Chu: Your bill, yes, sir. That was --
22 Senator Webb: You know, they --
23 Dr. Chu: -- the testimony --
24 Senator Webb: -- they also testified that it would be
25 technically complex to carry out, when people did it in 1944

1 --

2 Dr. Chu: Yes, sir. I don't think that --

3 Senator Webb: -- on the back of a --

4 Dr. Chu: I don't --

5 Senator Webb: -- memo pad. And the best --

6 Dr. Chu: -- that's necessarily --

7 Senator Webb: -- the best estimate we have now from

8 CBO is 2 billion.

9 Dr. Chu: Then, I believe you've revised the

10 parameters, but I -- I defer to CBO.

11 Senator Webb: Okay. Well, we haven't an official

12 estimate out anywhere. I don't know where the DVA got 7 and

13 a half billion, other than the fact that the administration

14 opposes the program because they're saying that DoD believes

15 it will affect retention, which --

16 Dr. Chu: No, sir. I have looked --

17 Senator Webb: -- I believe is --

18 Dr. Chu: -- I have looked at the VA's estimates

19 for the bill, as then drafted. I understand you've made

20 some proposed changes to it. I do think the 75-billion

21 number over 10 years is in the ballpark, so to speak. Now,

22 one could structure a less-expensive proposal, that's

23 absolutely true.

24 Senator Graham: Senator Webb, I don't mean to

25 interrupt, but could you tell me what your bill does? I

1 apologize, but I don't know.

2 Senator Webb: The bill basically gives a mirror

3 benefit to the people who have been serving since 9/11 as

4 those people who came back from World War II received. It

5 pays tuition, buys their books, and gives them a monthly

6 stipend. The bill, as originally introduced -- and, Dr.

7 Chu, you're correct on this -- had a room-and-board

8 provision in it, and also had a provision where all private

9 schools would give a full tuition. And we've modified it on

10 that -- or that's -- but that, I don't think, would in any

11 way bring the bill to the cost that people say that it has.

12 And I -- you know, I would just strongly urge you to --

13 you know, to take a look at what that might do, in terms of

14 your potential recruitment pool.

15 And my time's way up, but -- thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you, Senator Webb.

17 I have a question for Senator McCaskill -- from Senator

18 McCaskill, who had planned to attend, but she is presiding

19 over the Senate from 3:00 to 5:00 today, and so, she's asked

20 that I ask the question on her behalf, which I'm happy to

21 do.

22 And this is her question, "I want to next address the

23 issue of administrative personality disorder discharges in

24 the Department of Defense. My colleague Senators McCaskill

25 and Lieberman have taken particular leadership on these

1 issues. As you know, they have raised concerns with the
2 propriety of use of these discharges, which lead to a
3 discharge of a servicemember for what is deemed a, quote,
4 'pre-existing,' unquote, personality disorder. The
5 discharge, unlike a medical discharge, is not accompanied by
6 a medical or a monetary compensation, and, in some ways, may
7 be viewed as a black mark on the servicemember's permanent
8 military discharge file. In the case of combat veterans, it
9 seems that a post-combat finding that a servicemember's
10 mental health problems are not combat related, but rather
11 pre-existed service, may be suspect.
12 "In July 2007, Dr. Sally Satel, a resident scholar at
13 the American Enterprise Instituted noted, in her testimony
14 at the House Veterans Affairs Committee, that, quote, 'The
15 controversy surrounding Chapter 5 to 13 discharges would
16 suggest the need for a reevaluation of screening protocols
17 currently used by DoD. Misappropriate -- misapplication of
18 the Chapter 5/13 discharge sets up the kind of Catch 22 for
19 the DoD. First, the military deems a recruit sufficiently
20 mentally fit to be sent into training and then into a war
21 zone, but then, when psychiatric problems arise, it turns
22 around and claims that those problems were there all along,
23 problems that should have shown up earlier in their tour of
24 duty,' end of the quote.
25 "Further, the summer 2007 report of the Mental Health

1 Task Force found that servicemembers may be being pressured
2 to accept personality disorder discharges instead of
3 awaiting more thorough medical diagnoses and gaining
4 compensation through the MEB and PEB process.
5 "Finally, it's my understanding that the DoD
6 instruction on personality disorder charges has not been
7 updated since 1982.
8 "Secretary Chu, are you concerned that the
9 administrative personality disorder discharges are being
10 misused in the DoD?"
11 Dr. Chu: The shorter answer, sir, is no. But,
12 let me first underscore two points that I know you're
13 familiar with. One, these are only reached upon the advice
14 of fairly senior clinicians; this is not something
15 cavalierly adopted. Second, it's basically a no-fault
16 discharge for the individual. In a number of these cases,
17 discharge could be on another basis, but it might not --
18 but, it's an honorable discharge, basically.
19 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, it is, but doesn't it carry
20 a stigma?
21 Dr. Chu: Well, I'm not so sure. It depends on
22 the -- whether people can read the codes and so on, so
23 forth. I don't think it's a big -- I don't think that's the
24 big issue.
25 That all said, we are looking at whether it would be

1 wise to require yet more significant review before such a
2 discharge is employed, and whether, in particular, some of
3 that review should be triggered if the person has served in
4 a combat theater.
5 So, we agree it's an area we ought to relook at. We
6 are engaged in that with our colleagues in the military
7 departments. I would urge we be careful not to rule out the
8 use of this discharge, you know, because in some cases for
9 the individual it is actually a better basis for discharge
10 than some of the alternatives.
11 Senator Ben Nelson: I don't think that there would be
12 any expectation to rule it out altogether, just perhaps
13 updating the 1982 --
14 Dr. Chu: We are in the process --
15 Senator Ben Nelson: -- approach.
16 Dr. Chu: -- doing that, yes, sir. And that's
17 appropriate to ask.
18 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.
19 There was a recent series, in the Denver Post, relating
20 to deploying medically unfit soldiers. And this would be to
21 you, General Rochelle. That -- those reports -- those
22 articles reported that 79 soldiers, who were determined to
23 be medical no-goes, were knowingly deployed to Iraq. The
24 most recent article described the soldier being pulled out
25 of a hospital, where he was being treated for bipolar

1 disorder and alcohol abuse, so that he could be deployed to
2 Kuwait. Thirty-one days later, he was returned to Fort
3 Carson because healthcare professionals in Kuwait determined
4 that he shouldn't have been sent there in the first place.
5 These articles quote an e-mail from Fort Carson's 3rd
6 Brigade Combat Team as saying, quote, "We've been having
7 issues reaching deployable strength, and thus, have been
8 taking along some borderline soldiers who we would otherwise
9 have left behind for continued treatment." That's the end
10 of that quote.
11 I suspect that catches all of us a little bit
12 flatfooted, that that kind of a situation could be
13 occurring. Have you been able to look into that? Because
14 I'm sure it's been brought to your attention, since it was
15 reported so widely in the papers.
16 General Rochelle: It has, Mr. Chairman. I am familiar
17 with the incident. And let me say that that particular
18 incident is under review -- the Fort Carson case.
19 Senator Ben Nelson: Yes.
20 General Rochelle: Therefore, it would be inappropriate
21 for me to comment on it.
22 Senator Ben Nelson: Yes.
23 General Rochelle: But, from a policy perspective, I
24 will say two things that are significant.
25 First, every soldier who has a questionable

1 deployability status, medical or otherwise, is reviewed not
2 only by -- certainly, medical is reviewed by a clinician and
3 then that review, subject to the review also of the chain of
4 command. We would not knowingly deploy a soldier into
5 combat who should not be deployed. And I have absolute
6 confidence in the judgment of commanders on the ground who
7 not only are --
8 Senator Ben Nelson: Excuse me. What about borderline?
9 I mean, that was the from the combat team who had -- along
10 some borderline soldiers.
11 General Rochelle: Well, "borderline" may very well, in
12 this case, mean an area of judgment within a range. But, I
13 say again, sir, with absolute affirmation, that I have
14 confidence that commanders would not knowingly deploy a
15 soldier who would be dangerous to himself, to the unit, or
16 the mission.
17 Senator Ben Nelson: As you finish -- complete the
18 investigation and review of this current situation, could
19 you get in touch with us to let us know --
20 General Rochelle: Yes, sir.
21 Senator Ben Nelson: -- what you found out?
22 General Rochelle: Yes, sir.
23 Senator Ben Nelson: And I would imagine that the
24 question would apply to all the other services, as well.
25 It's not -- this might have been an example, citing the

1 Army, but we'd want to make sure that there wouldn't be any
2 situation for any of the services. So, if we can sure of
3 that, I -- that would be helpful.
4 General Coleman, during Secretary Gates' recent trip
5 abroad, he made comments regarding NATO forces not being
6 able to combat a guerrilla insurgency. The Marine Corps is
7 now preparing to send an additional 3200 marines to
8 Afghanistan. Is the Marine Corps' end strength sufficient
9 to send an additional 3200 marines to Afghanistan with --
10 asking you the question without expecting to get crosswise
11 with the SECDEF, but you are here to give us your opinion,
12 as you know.
13 [Laughter.]
14 General Coleman: Thank you, sir.
15 Yes, sir, we are well prepared. Certainly, the plan
16 has been done. Last week, I was in both Iraq and
17 Afghanistan. We looked at some of the areas where our
18 forces may go. There was a number of areas that we could
19 not visit because of weather, but our 3200, plus or minus,
20 marines are ready -- prepared and ready to go. They will be
21 combat ready and 100-percent-up round when it is time to --
22 when it is time to deploy.
23 Senator Ben Nelson: And that "combat ready" would mean
24 that they would have the equipment, including body armor or
25 whatever is required, to qualify them as combat ready. Is

1 that correct?

2 General Coleman: That's correct, sir. We would say

3 they were a full-up round, which means they were 100-percent

4 prepared, sir.

5 Senator Ben Nelson: Do you have any thought on what

6 the impact could be, of this deployment, on recruiting and

7 retaining -- the recruitment in the Marine Corps?

8 General Coleman: Sir, we're doing better than expected

9 in our recruiting. We're not having -- our goal is 189 at

10 the end of September 30th for this year. We have every

11 reason to believe that we will be -- we will exceed 189 end

12 strength, and that we'll be -- without lowering our

13 standards. So, yes, sir, we are -- we're -- there are no

14 concerns about how this will affect --

15 Now, I would venture to say that there is a -- there

16 was a -- there was an end date to this -- a planned end date

17 to this deployment. If that end date were extended, and

18 other things weren't adjusted, then that may cause some

19 concerns. But, as it stands right now, this mission, we're

20 fully capable and fully ready to take on, sir.

21 Senator Ben Nelson: Yesterday, General Casey, in

22 testifying before the Senate Armed Services full committee,

23 stated that one of the top five areas that the Army families

24 expressed concern about was access to quality healthcare.

25 He said that soldiers and their families are dealing with an

1 inundated healthcare system, and those stationed in more
2 remote areas may not have access to as many providers as
3 they would consider adequate.
4 Maybe, Dr. Chu and General Rochelle, can you tell us a
5 bit more about the problems that the Army families are
6 having with healthcare coverage? Senator Graham made some
7 reference to, maybe, splitting off the programs into
8 different programs for retirees versus Active members and
9 their families, but perhaps you could just tell us a little
10 bit more, because this is obviously something very
11 important, and General Casey, in expressing, and now has
12 raised it to attention, where maybe there's something we can
13 do about it.
14 Dr. Chu: Yes, sir. Thank you for raising that
15 issue.
16 We do poll our people repeatedly about their
17 satisfaction with the healthcare that they receive.
18 Generally, the system gets quite good grades.
19 It is the case, interestingly, that the Active Duty
20 members, the younger members in the patient population, tend
21 to be more critical. The retired population tends to be
22 much more satisfied, even though it doesn't have quite the
23 same access rights as the Active Duty population. There's
24 an interesting relationship here to how you perceive the
25 world.

1 There is an issue, in some areas, with the ease of
2 access to specialty care. I think, in general, access to
3 primary care is quite good. The services set high
4 standards, in terms of primary care rehabilitee, and
5 generally meet those standards. We will be looking at those
6 posts where General Casey, Army, have identified issues as
7 to whether we have enough uniformed providers in that area.
8 Do we have enough -- a strong enough network for the TRICARE
9 program, where we go to the civil sector -- and that's
10 particularly true for the specialty care -- to support that?
11 Certainly, there have been issues in the past about
12 reimbursement rates from the government under TRICARE.
13 We're prepared to address those.
14 I have heard, more recently from Secretary Geren, that
15 some providers in some areas of the country are distrustful
16 of the government. And so, whatever the rates may be,
17 that's not the issue; it's that -- so, it's alleged some
18 providers simply don't want too many government patients in
19 their practice, for fear that a future set of decisionmakers
20 will be less generous, I presume. I don't know what
21 it might be. If that's true, we need to, together,
22 advocate to the Nation's clinicians that, "This is a
23 national responsibility. You shouldn't be here." And
24 several of your colleagues have been very gracious in doing
25 that in their home States. We're prepared to work with the

1 Governors through the National Governors Association, if
2 that proves to be an important issue.
3 Senator Ben Nelson: General?
4 General Rochelle: Yes, sir. Please allow me to add
5 just three fine points to that.
6 First of all, I'm pleased to report that the Secretary
7 of the Army and General Casey have added -- added, in fiscal
8 '07, $1.4 billion, double what we submitted in the past, to
9 our Army Family Action Plan, recognizing that the resiliency
10 of our families is not without limits. And in the '09
11 budget which is before the Congress this -- at present --
12 $1.2 billion to address family well-being needs.
13 Social-work services is the number-one area in which
14 General Casey and Mrs. Casey, as they traveled about, and
15 Secretary Geren, as he travels now, as well, here, with
16 respect to the pressures of deployment on children. And so,
17 social-work services, we are aggressively, with the
18 resources the Congress has given us, increasing that
19 coverage in and around our military installations, most
20 especially with the schools that are attended by military
21 youth.
22 The third and final point, the network, especially in
23 specialty-care services, is sorely in need of some beefing
24 up, and that's what our -- that's what our families tell us,
25 sir.

1 Senator Ben Nelson: Admiral, do you have any
2 particular points you'd like to make on family healthcare?
3 Admiral Harvey: Yes, sir. The interesting issue for
4 us -- well, it's all interesting, but, I mean, the
5 particular issue for us, in terms of this point, is the
6 medical support to the Marine Corps bases that we routinely
7 provide. And so, part of what I talked about in the medical
8 recruiting, we've really gone after the psychiatrists,
9 psychologists, social workers, et cetera. I'm pleased to
10 see we're getting the same results there.
11 The issue for us has been keeping them, once we get
12 them. We saw, over the last 3 years, a lot higher loss rate
13 than we'd like, and particularly in the areas that then
14 impact, you know, at Pendleton and Lejeune, with the tempo
15 and the fight that they're sustaining in CENTCOM. So, I
16 think we see the movement. We're getting in the right
17 direction and getting them in there. We know where we've
18 got to get them to. We have some end-strength issues that
19 we're working through right now, in terms of the shape of
20 the medical corps, the talent that we have in there, and the
21 talent we need to keep. I think we've got some road ahead
22 on that. And so, I'm confident that we're going to improve
23 in this area, but clearly we have improvements to make.
24 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, General Coleman, here's your
25 chance. The Navy doing a good for you, or not?

1 General Coleman: The Navy truly is doing an
2 outstanding job. But, a lot of that becomes -- is because
3 of the help -- the budgetary help that they're receiving.
4 So, yes, sir, they're doing a fantastic job.
5 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.
6 General Coleman: Did I answer that well?
7 [Laughter.]
8 Admiral Harvey: You've always been a great shipmate,
9 I'll tell you.
10 [Laughter.]
11 General Coleman: It's all right.
12 Senator Ben Nelson: General Newton?
13 General Newton: Mr. Chairman, in terms of medical
14 recruiting and so forth, as well as retention, we've got
15 some challenges. I know the Navy mentioned that they're
16 going to be -- I think, to take your point -- pretty much on
17 track, in terms of recruitment. Recruitment, overall in the
18 United States Air Force, is in good shape. So is retention.
19 But, if you look into our -- the health professionals and so
20 forth, we've got some challenges with regard to both
21 recruiting, as well as retention, the same issues that were
22 just raised in the Navy about retention and so forth. So,
23 that is a -- that's a prime focus for us.
24 I would also add the fact that we are, again, a very
25 high operations tempo Air Force, we're also an expeditionary

1 force. And, to go back to the mental health discussion we
2 had, perhaps what would have been thought of in the past, in
3 terms of the health environment or the health professionals,
4 now needs to be added, certainly with our psychiatrists and
5 psychologists, as well as our social workers and so forth.
6 So, it's become a much more broad aspect of the health
7 community, that we see needs, in terms of that.
8 What affects our airmen -- Active Duty, Guard, and
9 Reserve -- to a degree, our civilians, but also --
10 principally, those in uniform -- affects our family members,
11 as well. And so, the stresses that our airmen have, you
12 know, can obviously have a dramatic impact, perhaps that
13 we've not seen before.
14 And I'll close on this point -- is that what we are
15 also discovering, as well as -- quite frankly, we still have
16 to continue to strive for -- and that is to create an
17 environment, to create -- either at our bases at home or
18 deployed -- whereby mental health becomes something that is
19 no longer the stigma, but it's something that is certainly
20 -- that we can all understand and relate to, and it becomes
21 strictly -- on only within the health professionals, but the
22 commanders' challenge, as well.
23 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, I guess I'd ask this of all
24 of you. If we are able to even out the time at home and the
25 deployment, in terms of the number of months, so that

1 there's less time deployed, more time at home, will that
2 help some of the mental stress that we're seeing on the
3 families, as well as on the servicemembers? Obviously, it's
4 going to help some, but will we see anything appreciable
5 coming from that?
6 Let's -- Dr. Chu?
7 Dr. Chu: First, I should emphasize that the --
8 again, we survey the military person about his or her
9 perception of a family's support for that military career
10 choice. We also do survey the spouses about their outlook.
11 And those indicators have held up remarkably well across
12 this period of time. Now, that's not to say there isn't
13 stress there. I don't want to suggest that. But, when you
14 take into account the kind of energy that, for example,
15 General Rochelle described the Army is putting in some of
16 these support programs, net -- net -- the military family is
17 reasonably satisfied with where it stands.
18 Certainly, they would like to see the military person
19 spend more time at home. That is a constant complaint.
20 I would not, however, overemphasize that attitude to
21 the exclusion of what I think is an equally important
22 factor, and that's predictability. I think the whole issue
23 of expectations is a central element here. What do we
24 promise -- or what do we lead people to believe will be the
25 compact between us and them? And what do we deliver? And I

1 would hope that we'd pay equal attention to that issue. We
2 ask our military persons, properly, to do a lot of tough,
3 demanding things, spend a lot of time away from home. The
4 military is there to be deployed, in the end. I don't think
5 we want to shrink from that reality. We want to be honest
6 with our families about it. But, we want to be constant, so
7 much as world events permit us, in honoring whatever
8 expectation we set. And I think that's really the issue out
9 there. Can we set a reasonable set of expectations? Can we
10 honor those expectations? Can we avoid breaking our word to
11 our people? That, I think, above all, is the most important
12 thing.
13 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, as you know, I think -- I'm
14 trying to remember whether it was April, where the extension
15 was put in place, and that many of the servicemembers in the
16 war zones -- war zone found out about it, because it came
17 through the news back here at home, and they found out about
18 it from their families.
19 Dr. Chu: Yes, and that -- if you're going to
20 have bad news, you're obviously right, sir, you want to
21 communicate it to the affected parties first. That -- we
22 have tightened up those procedures. It is tough, given the
23 time-zone differences, given notification requirements here
24 on the Hill, and so on and so forth, to tell everybody
25 first. I mean, that is a challenging assignment, I would

1 acknowledge.

2 General Rochelle: If I may, Mr. Chairman, we were

3 particularly displeased with the way that announcement went,

4 the way it occurred. And we're striving very, very

5 aggressively to make sure that never happens again, in terms

6 of notifying families. That's leader responsibility, and

7 that's exactly how we view it.

8 To your question, predictability is key.

9 Predictability for the soldier, predictability for the

10 family. And I would not want us to perceive the lack of

11 predictability as anything other than a stressor, in and of

12 itself. So, the answer to your question is yes.

13 Senator Ben Nelson: Thank you.

14 In terms of the wounded warrior issues, Secretary Chu,

15 the committee recently received a letter signed by your

16 principal deputy, Secretary Dominguez, and Secretary Cooper,

17 from the Veterans Administration, saying that they couldn't

18 meet the February 1 statutory requirement for an interim

19 report on the policy, as required by the Wounded Warrior

20 Act, and stating that the interim report would be submitted

21 by February 15th. I'm not going to quarrel over a few days,

22 but can you tell us -- since the 15th has passed, whether

23 there's another extension that you're going to talk about,

24 or you could tell us that there might be a date that we

25 might expect it?

1 Dr. Chu: Let me go back and check why we're late
2 against the late date. That's not excusable.
3 [INFORMATION]
4 Senator Ben Nelson: Yeah. Now, I wasn't trying to
5 catch you --
6 Dr. Chu: No, no. I don't have a good answer for
7 you, sir. I don't know.
8 Senator Ben Nelson: Okay.
9 The President, in his -- and this is, again, for Dr.
10 Chu -- in the State of the Union speech, the President
11 referred to the importance of implementing the
12 recommendations of the Dole-Shalala Commission to Improve
13 the Care and Treatment of our Wounded Warriors. And I
14 believe that the Wounded Warrior Act included in the
15 National defense Authorization Act that the President signed
16 into law on the 28th of this year -- of January -- addresses
17 all but one of the recommendations of that Commission. The
18 recommendation that the Wounded Warrior Act does not address
19 is the recommendation to restructure the VA disability
20 payments into three payments: transition payments, earnings
21 lost payments, and quality of life payments. The VA
22 Committees of the House and the Senate are holding hearings
23 to address this recommendation.
24 Well, first let me ask you, Do you agree that the
25 Wounded Warrior Act addresses all but one of the

1 recommendations of the Commission? I -- we have to
2 establish some groundwork, first of all. Is there only
3 remaining that hasn't been --
4 Dr. Chu: I think the way I would see it, sir, is
5 that the central proposition of Dole-Shalala was not
6 addressed. That is this big issue, What should the annuity
7 and disability system look like? And as you have
8 summarized, there would be several changes for VA. And VA
9 has launched the studies, even though Congress did not adopt
10 the recommendation. Likewise, the other provision is that
11 we would vastly simplify the medical retirement decision in
12 Defense. If you're not fit for duty and you're medically
13 retired, you get a much smaller annuity, but it would not be
14 subject to concurrent receipts; you would actually receive
15 it, and we would end a lot of the quarreling that goes on
16 about what your status is. I do think the Department's view
17 of this is, this is the central provision, this is the heart
18 of other Dole-Shalala proposition. We hope the Congress
19 would enact it. We also recognize that one of its benefits
20 is, it sets up a sharper division of labor between DoD and
21 VA. Our job then becomes focused on, Is this medical
22 condition unfitting for military service? If the answer is
23 yes, "Thank you for your service," you move over to the VA,
24 and they deal with the remaining issues.
25 So, I do hope that Congress will act on this important

1 issue.

2 Senator Ben Nelson: And, of course, we're all going to

3 call that "seamless," because it's going to happen

4 automatically, as --

5 Dr. Chu: I do think part of the advantage of

6 what Dole-Shalala have recommended is that it's a much

7 simpler sort of decision, as far as DoD is concerned. And

8 it basically -- and there is some controversy about this, I

9 would acknowledge -- but, basically removes DoD from the

10 rehabilitation business. And I think that's part of where

11 some of the current issues arise.

12 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, the -- your determination by

13 DoD, versus VA, was, in many instances, for different

14 reasons. And we understand.

15 Dr. Chu: Yes, sir.

16 Senator Ben Nelson: This will --

17 Dr. Chu: And that's statutory in --

18 Senator Ben Nelson: Yes.

19 Dr. Chu: -- its foundation. And, therefore, we

20 need your action to clarify the roles.

21 Senator Ben Nelson: Now, as that legislation gets

22 introduced, should I assume that the funding for it is

23 already included in the DoD budget?

24 Dr. Chu: Since it's not yet enacted -- well --

25 Senator Ben Nelson: In anticipation --

1 Dr. Chu: The way it would affect the DoD budget
2 is through the normal cost percentage for the retirement
3 account, which would change. And that requires, under the
4 laws that affect that account, the actuaries to pronounce --
5 and I believe the situation is, until it's enacted, they
6 won't actually make that change.
7 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, the -- but, would they have
8 some idea of what --
9 Dr. Chu: Yes, we do have -- yes, sir, we do have
10 estimates of what the net cost would be.
11 Senator Ben Nelson: Okay.
12 Dr. Chu: Not necessarily sanctioned by the actuaries,
13 I emphasize. This is what we have done --
14 Senator Ben Nelson: Actuarial, yeah.
15 Dr. Chu: -- we have done.
16 Senator Ben Nelson: I understand the difference
17 between estimates and actuarial science. One's by an
18 estimator, the other is by an actuary, or something like
19 that.
20 [Laughter.]
21 Senator Ben Nelson: That's what they would tell you.
22 [Laughter.]
23 Dr. Chu: We love our actuaries, sir.
24 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, there's nothing better than
25 trying to figure out the algorithms, I do know that from my

1 own prior experience.

2 Question about the Fiscal Year budget 2009 of the

3 Departments that includes 2,036 military-to-civilian

4 conversions for medical military billets. It appears

5 inconsistent with Section 721 of the conference report for

6 the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008,

7 which expressly prohibits the Department from converting any

8 additional military medical and dental positions to civilian

9 positions in -- until September 30, 2012. Is -- are we

10 misreading this, or is this actually happening?

11 Dr. Chu: Sir, we, of course, will obey the law,

12 as it's written. The budget was prepared before the

13 enactment of the authorization bill, which didn't come til

14 January, as you well --

15 Senator Ben Nelson: Right.

16 Dr. Chu: -- are aware. We are also -- we will

17 also be submitting a legislative proposal to change back to

18 the prior regime. Obviously, that would be, ultimately,

19 your decision. So, we recognize that, unless the law

20 changes, we can't actually make the conversions, but we

21 would like to be able to pursue some of those conversions in

22 the future.

23 Senator Ben Nelson: So, we won't have the conversions

24 in the future unless we have the actual authorization, and

25 have it handled by legislation.

1 Dr. Chu: We will be sending you a -- we will be
2 sending you a legislative proposal to reverse the action
3 just taken. If it should receive favorable action by the
4 Congress, then we would be able to make some of these
5 conversions.
6 Admiral Harvey: Dr. Chu, may I add something on that?
7 Senator Ben Nelson: Oh, sure.
8 Admiral Harvey: Sir, we --
9 Senator Ben Nelson: Anybody -- feel free to --
10 Admiral Harvey: Yes, sir. We certainly got the
11 message. It's been receipted and acknowledged for, and we
12 will carry out the law.
13 One thing I would just put on the table for you, sir,
14 is that the appropriations to support the end strength that
15 we're going to have to carry are not there. And so, it will
16 require, in a long term -- in the short term, we're going to
17 do what we have to do to provide medical care across the
18 board to where we have to do it, but, in the long term, we
19 do have an issue here, in that the appropriations that we
20 have do not match what is now going to be the end strength
21 we need to carry with the current force structure. So,
22 something either changes in our operational force structure,
23 in terms of end strength to support the increased military
24 end strength we'll carry, or, you know, we have to find some
25 other means here. But, it is a significant issue for us, as

1 we carry out the law.

2 General Rochelle: If I may, Mr. Chairman.

3 Senator Ben Nelson: Sure.

4 General Rochelle: Another nuance, not at all

5 insignificant, to piggyback on my colleagues' comments, we

6 may also require, in addition to the appropriations to

7 accompany the reversal back military spaces, standard-of-

8 grade relief, just to highlight something, because, as we

9 bring the military structure back in, we're going to bump --

10 inside the same end-strength structure -- we're going to

11 bump against standard-of-grade ceilings. So, I mention

12 that, if you please, for the record.

13 Senator Ben Nelson: Sure. Okay, thank you.

14 Well, I was hoping that we didn't have the situation

15 where the -- developed, where we now had a fourth branch of

16 government. When I was Governor, I always knew we had three

17 branches of government -- executive, legislative, and

18 judiciary -- and then the fourth branch, the Department of

19 Roads.

20 [Laughter.]

21 Senator Ben Nelson: They did whatever they felt they

22 wanted to do. So, I didn't think we had that developing

23 here. We'll find a way to smooth that out, to the best

24 extent possible.

25 In terms of respite care, General Coleman, in your

1 written statement, you said that the Marine Corps offers
2 Active Duty families enrolled in the Exceptional Family
3 Member Program up to 40 hours of free respite care per month
4 to enable caregivers to get breaks while still nurturing the
5 needs of family members with special needs. This sounds
6 like a very important program for these families with
7 special needs. Can you give us a little bit more about it
8 and how it -- who it covers and --
9 General Coleman: Yes, sir.
10 Senator Ben Nelson: -- and how you are able to fund
11 it?
12 General Coleman: Yes, sir. This is a great success
13 and news story. The Commandant was able to procure some
14 funds for this, and some given from OSD, some from the --
15 from within the Marine Corps, that allows these special
16 needs -- and I think we're all special needs when it comes
17 to that -- but, to give the caregivers -- to give the
18 homemaker some time away. One of my dearest friends, his
19 son has autism, and his wife is there all the time. A thing
20 like this allows her some downtime, some alone time, some
21 "Let me get myself together" time. And this is -- I believe
22 it's in the 36- to 40-hours-a-month time, where she can get
23 away and get some well-needed -- she or he -- some well-
24 needed rest. And it's a great program.
25 We stole it from the Army, because we weren't as

1 involved in it as the Army was. And Mrs. Conway, the
2 Commandant's wife, read an article, where the Army was all
3 over this, and she said, "Hey, Marine Corps, we need some of
4 this, too." So, it's a great, great news story, sir.
5 Senator Ben Nelson: It certainly is family-friendly
6 and -- and in recognition of reality for people with --
7 families with those special needs. So -- maybe the other
8 two services -- well, you stole it from the Army, so --
9 [Laughter.]
10 Senator Ben Nelson: -- maybe you can give it to the
11 Navy and give it to the Air Force.
12 [Laughter.]
13 General Rochelle: I'd like to thank the -- my
14 colleague for the acknowledgment.
15 [Laughter.]
16 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, there is nothing better than
17 to find good programs on what you would call the exceptional
18 programs that are there, that's certainly available for
19 others to look at. And I -- one of those, I commented about
20 yesterday with Secretary Geren, and that is maternity leave
21 -- maternity time, after delivering the baby, for the mother
22 not to be deployed sooner than 12 months, I think is the
23 Navy's --
24 Admiral Harvey: Yes, sir.
25 Senator Ben Nelson: -- standard; 6 months, the Marine;

1 and, I think, 4 months for the Army and the Air Force, at
2 the moment, and suggested that that be reviewed because of
3 -- well, a variety of different reasons, all of which makes
4 some sense, that if we want to be a family-friendly force,
5 the last thing we need to do is create a -- let a situation
6 develop, or continue to be there, that might cause a choice
7 between having a family and not having a family, if you can
8 -- if you can keep the spouse that's a member, both as a
9 mother and as a servicemember. I mean, that's the
10 objective. We don't want to train people and then have, as
11 you know, those kinds of roadblocks or those kinds of
12 hindrances that would cause people to say, "Well, at some
13 point, I guess I'll just have to hang it up, because I want
14 to have a family, and 4 months is not enough in between
15 deployments," not knowing what future deployments may be.
16 Dr. Chu, would you have some thoughts --
17 Dr. Chu: Let me comment on that --
18 Senator Ben Nelson: -- on that?
19 Dr. Chu: -- sir. I do think -- I'd like to make
20 several points. First of all, 4 months is a minimum.
21 Services are free to adopt more. You've noted some have.
22 Second, the services -- and I've spoken to both the Army and
23 Air Force Assistant Secretaries for Manpower on this matter
24 -- will use waivers to deal with individual situations. I
25 do think we need to be a little careful that we don't damage

1 the standing of women as a key element of the force, in
2 saying that they should not share their part of the overall
3 force burdens, in terms of how we utilize them, and that's
4 the reason that Department has looked at it in the past,
5 and, I think, end judgments, they would be -- should look at
6 it again, the notion of a sabbatic period for -- which I
7 think may be a superior alternative for those who would like
8 room within which to develop a family. Maybe -- and the
9 Navy has expressed interest in this before. The Department
10 has never really come to a good conclusion about this. It
11 would require statutory assistance, in my judgment, in order
12 to have a successful program, so people could step out of
13 their military role, maintain some degree of benefit support
14 during that period of time -- perhaps most importantly,
15 healthcare -- but not be part of the Active Force for a
16 period of 1 or 2 years. And that may really be the
17 solution, for those who need more time off, whether it's to
18 care for a relative or to start a family or for other
19 purposes.
20 Senator Ben Nelson: That was going to be my next
21 question. If you -- if you're going to have maternity
22 leave, is it possible, without absolutely adversely
23 affecting the possibility of a deployment of a person, other
24 conditions where you might grant a waiver to keep them in
25 the military; otherwise -- they have a choice. They could

1 leave --

2 Dr. Chu: Right.

3 Senator Ben Nelson: -- and we lose the --

4 Dr. Chu: Right

5 Senator Ben Nelson: -- training and --

6 Dr. Chu: Right. And we don't want to lose the

7 trained personnel. On the other hand --

8 Senator Ben Nelson: Right

9 Dr. Chu: -- I do think we have to remember, the

10 military is there as a deployable force. That is its

11 primary mission.

12 I should add, also into the record, that mothers all

13 receive 6 weeks maternity leave.

14 Senator Ben Nelson: Yes.

15 Dr. Chu: It's a separate matter.

16 Senator Ben Nelson: We worked on that, so that now, I

17 believe, we've got something for adoptive mother -- adoptive

18 parents, as well, recognizing that it's not just the

19 biological situation that we're recognizing, but also the

20 family relationship that's developing and bonding that's

21 required, as well. And, otherwise, we run into other

22 issues. And I was glad to find that particular situation

23 that we could cite as a reason to change the policy?

24 General?

25 General Rochelle: Mr. Chairman, may I simply state,

1 for the record, that, at the direction of the Secretary --
2 Secretary Geren and General Casey -- our policy is actively
3 under review.
4 Admiral Harvey: Sir, this is a not a small issue. You
5 know, we have -- 17 percent of the Navy right now is made up
6 of women, and our incoming classes in ROTC and the Naval
7 Academy is about 22-23 percent. And I expect that the
8 percentage of women in the Navy will grow steadily over the
9 next few years. So, they'll be picking up a larger and
10 larger contribution of our overall effort.
11 So, we have to be able to come up with the means and
12 the manner in which we will also get the retention of this
13 group that is equivalent to the male sailors that we now
14 enjoy. The sad fact is that female retention in our surface
15 warfare and aviation communities is about one-third of their
16 male counterparts. So, we run up against this issue every
17 day, and we have to keep pushing forward on this aspect of
18 our service, and the nature of our service, to ensure that
19 we reach all the talent we have to have to deliver the
20 capabilities we must, and find a way to keep that talent
21 with us, regardless of gender.
22 So, this is a very big issue, and I think it's going to
23 get bigger for us over time.
24 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, if we don't get it right, we
25 lose our investment in personnel, the cost of training, and

1 then we're faced with replacement -- replacing those trained
2 personnel. We don't have to perform miracles, we just have
3 to figure out what works and what will keep us in the mix as
4 they make decisions about family. And if we've got those
5 things that are roadblocks or inhibitors, we're obviously
6 going to -- we're going to pay the price of the loss of --
7 in retention.
8 Admiral Harvey: And I think we can do this in a way to
9 express the concern, that Dr. Chu so rightly expressed, that
10 we can never forget, we are an expeditionary force. We are
11 routinely forward-deployed. We are expected to go forward
12 and do hard things in hard places. That's never going to
13 change. That's the core element of who we are and what we
14 do. But, I do believe that we can find a way to bring these
15 two issues together that will result in the kind of outcomes
16 we need to sustain this force in the future with the
17 demographics that simply are before us.
18 Senator Ben Nelson: And, General Newton, I think you
19 might have been at -- or, out at STRATCOM at the time that
20 we found out about the Air Force couple that were -- served
21 as the example for why we were able to get this --
22 General Newton: Yes, sir.
23 Senator Ben Nelson: -- policy changed.
24 General Newton: Yes, sir. I think -- just to echo
25 some of the comments made here -- is that we, too, are

1 expeditionary Air Force with unique challenges that we have
2 in the 21st century. We constantly survey, from commander
3 surveys and so forth, throughout our force, both Active
4 Duty, Guard, and Reserve, to make sure that we are certainly
5 in touch with the realities that our airmen and their
6 families face. In this case, that -- and we also stand tall
7 and not take for granted the fact that we -- it's an All-
8 Volunteer Force, and that it's just unique circumstances we
9 have. So, constantly, it's under review and assessment to
10 make sure that we're on the mark.
11 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, thank you.
12 Those are generally the questions that I have. Would
13 there be any comments that anybody would like to make before
14 we adjourn the hearing?
15 Now, I would say thank you for what you do, day in and
16 day out. Thank you for the members of your service, for
17 what they do.
18 Thank you, Dr. Chu, for what you, at the Pentagon, do
19 to keep our country safe, to keep our military functioning
20 as an expeditionary force and ready to go and deploy as the
21 need requires.
22 I appreciate the fact that we don't ignore reality just
23 to try to stay ready to go. And there are other
24 considerations about how we can go about doing it that will
25 not get in the way. And moving toward programs of

1 transferability of education, of other opportunities, just
2 simply enhance the ability of the military to stay an All-
3 Volunteer Force. Competition is such that they're -- you're
4 up against the corporate world, against the government of --
5 local governments and others to -- for the same young
6 people, and to retain the ones you have. So, it just
7 behooves us all to continue to work together to try to find
8 ways to just make it that much more friendly.
9 And it's easy to say that in a hostile world, but
10 that's what we have to do. We have to have this military-
11 friendly for the people so we can protect ourselves from a
12 hostile world.
13 Dr. Chu: Mr. Chairman, thank you --
14 Senator Ben Nelson: General?
15 Dr. Chu: -- for the actions you and your
16 subcommittee members have taken in support of the military
17 forces, the partnership that has allowed us, I think, to
18 sustain this fine force over the course of the last 7 years.
19 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, thank you. And --
20 General?
21 General Coleman: Sir, I would like to jump onto your
22 kind nature there, and also Senator Graham, when you asked
23 if there's anything you can do. My mother used to say, "If
24 you want something fixed, you go to the people that can fix
25 it." So, if I may, back in --

1 Senator Ben Nelson: Yes, go right ahead.

2 General Coleman: -- back in December, the Commandant,
3 General Conway, discussed with me, in a one-way discussion
4 where I was listening, that the Army -- and I've already
5 vetted this with my good friend and colleague, Lieutenant
6 General Rochelle, so there's no hard feelings here -- but
7 the Army is having a little bit of concern with their
8 company-grade officers staying on Active Duty. And there's
9 a couple of programs where they give upwards of $30,000,
10 depending on the specialty, so that they -- so that they
11 stay. Well, we, in the Marine Corps, aren't having that
12 problem -- knock on wood -- and -- but, the Commandant, in
13 December, said, "Ron, I'd like to reward our company-grade
14 officers. Is there some way that I can say to those
15 officers, to all the company-grade officers that are
16 staying, 'Hey, I'd like to -- here's 2,000 -- here's $3,000,
17 you know, go do something. Thank you for staying. No
18 commitment.'"

19 Senator Ben Nelson: A reward, as opposed to, perhaps,
20 an incentive?

21 General Coleman: Yes, sir. Or, sir, what -- it
22 reminds me of, when I returned from Vietnam in 1970, the
23 great State of Pennsylvania gave me a whopping $300 and
24 said, "Thanks for your service." So, we vetted that, and
25 we've come up against quite a few roadblocks. We were told

1 that we could do that if we made them sign on for another 1,
2 2, or 3 years. And that's not the -- that's not what we
3 want to do. We don't -- they're already staying for the 1
4 or 2 or 3 years that we want. All the Commandant would like
5 to do is say, "Thank you for your service." So, if you
6 could -- if you could give us a hand there, sir, in either
7 pointing me in the right direction or at least acknowledging
8 to the Commandant that I said that, so I don't have any more
9 one-way --
10 [Laughter.]
11 General Coleman: -- one-way conversations, I certainly
12 would appreciate it, sir.
13 Senator Ben Nelson: I suspect he's going to know, by
14 the end of the day.
15 [Laughter.]
16 Senator Ben Nelson: Well, that is a worthy
17 consideration, because we talk about incentives, but we
18 ought to also think about it in terms of "thank you"
19 recognition, as well. A pat on the back is helpful, but
20 very often there are other things that you could do to make
21 it even better. So, we will take that under consideration,
22 under advisement, clearly
23 And, once again, thank you, everybody, for being here.
24 I appreciate, so much, your input. As you know, and as my
25 colleague and I -- clearly indicate that this is a

1 bipartisan effort here. There's nothing partisan about
2 making sure that our men and women in uniform are receiving
3 the best and having the best opportunity to do their job,
4 and to be able to do it well, and also for us to be able to
5 say "thank you" in a number of different ways, all of which,
6 I hope, are helpful and express our appreciation for what
7 they do and what you do.
8 So, with that, unless there's anything else, I'll call
9 it adjourned, ahead of time.
10 [Whereupon, at 4:57 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]
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12
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