

STATEMENT BY

**THE HONORABLE LOUIS CALDERA
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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**ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2001 BUDGET
AND POSTURE OF
THE UNITED STATES ARMY**

FEBRUARY 10, 2000

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: It is an honor and a pleasure to testify once again before you. I am very pleased to report to you on the state of the U.S. Army and to explain where we are trying to lead it for the future.

Let me first express my great appreciation, however, to this Committee for its role in developing and passing the FY 2000 budget for the Army. This funding, together with the FY 1999 Supplemental for Kosovo, is helping address many of the Army's most immediate needs, from training, to maintenance, to modernization.

The military compensation and retirement improvements Congress enacted this past year are particularly noteworthy. Your adoption of the benefits package sent a strong message of support to our troops; it has had a positive impact in attracting new soldiers and retaining experienced ones. No doubt in large measure because of these initiatives, last year was one of the most successful years ever for Army retention.

This year, I respectfully request your continued support for the Army's programs. Our budget carefully balances near-term readiness and quality of life with long-term modernization. It provides needed funding for contingency operations, training, base operations, housing and barracks initiatives, depot maintenance, research and development, and many other priorities.

Most importantly, the budget includes jump-start funding for our transformation initiative, the most important organizational development for the Army in a generation. This initiative will help the Army remain a strategically relevant force well into this new century.

In Part I of my testimony, I will describe some of what the Army accomplished in the last year to meet the needs of our Nation's current security requirements and how, through the transformation process, we will be better prepared to meet future requirements. In Part II, I will briefly describe how the budget request supports Army programs, including transformation.

As always, I welcome your comments on every aspect of how the Army is doing. I also respectfully urge this Committee to move expeditiously on our budget request for FY 2001 as well as the FY 2000 supplemental for Kosovo. Expeditious adoption of the Kosovo measure will help us sustain the readiness

investments that Congress approved in the FY 2000 budget by reimbursing the Army for funds needed to execute our fourth quarter training and maintenance plans.

PART I

The Army and the Current Environment

Mr. Chairman, today's Army is a complex enterprise comprising some 1.3 million people, including, in round numbers, 480,000 active duty soldiers, 565,000 Guard and Reserve personnel, and 225,000 civilians. The Army is the largest service component of the Nation's armed forces, with 40 percent of all Department of Defense personnel. In terms of force structure, we field no fewer than 10 active component divisions, with another 8 divisions and 18 separate brigades available in reserve.

The Army is the most powerful conventional force on Earth. Trained to the most exacting standards and armed with lethal and efficient weapons, our soldiers are feared by our enemies and trusted by our allies—and respected by all. The Army is the decisive landpower element of our Nation's military, the only service able to conduct coordinated, sustained, offensive and defensive operations on land to seize and maintain control of territory, people, and resources for as long as our country's interests warrant.

Men and women of the U.S. Army serve our Nation throughout the world, from Kosovo to Korea, Bangkok to Bahrain. More than 100,000 soldiers are permanently forward stationed to deter aggression and to be on hand in the event of a crisis; nearly 30,000 are deployed in scores of contingency operations and training in 70 to 80 different countries on any given day. Hundreds of thousands more are stationed at posts around the nation, training hard, developing and testing new weapons systems, and providing the administrative, planning, and logistical support necessary to prepare our soldiers for battle and maintain them in the field. And everywhere our soldiers serve, they do so with spirit, dedication and resolve, and in the best traditions of the Nation's most venerable military service.

The Army supports our national interests by maintaining a force capable of responding to the full spectrum of operations, ranging from humanitarian missions on the low end to the capability to fight two nearly simultaneous major theater wars on the high end. Meeting this requirement entails a force of high quality people, with modern equipment, trained in the broad range of skills (more than 500 specialties) demanded of modern military operations. The nature of this force, in turn, enables the Army to provide support for the three major pillars of our National Military Strategy—shaping the international environment, responding to the full spectrum of crises, and preparing for an uncertain future.

Shaping the International Environment

Throughout 1999, the Army conducted a wide range of shaping operations that enhanced regional stability and reassured our allies.

In Bosnia, 4,600 Army soldiers comprise a substantial part of the NATO force that supports implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, monitors crossing points on the Bosnia-Herzegovina and Yugoslavia borders, and provides security for displaced persons and refugees. In Kosovo, the Army also assumed the principal responsibility for U.S. participation in the NATO peace implementation mission at the completion of Operation Allied Force in June 1999. Today, more than ten thousand soldiers overall are currently serving in the Balkans, doing the hard and dangerous work necessary to achieve our Nation's goals of bringing stability and progress to this troubled region.

In Southwest Asia, the continuous presence of an Army task force that includes attack helicopters, Patriot missile units, and other forces helped deter aggression, reassured regional allies, and supported implementation of UN resolutions against Saddam Hussein. Forward positioning of Patriot missile units by Operations Desert Falcon and Desert Focus forces maintained our ability to respond to crises in the region. Army forces deployed in support Operation Southern Watch worked with the other Services and allied forces to enforce UN sanctions against Iraq. In the Middle East, the Army also maintained an infantry battalion and headquarters group in the Sinai as part of the Multinational Force and Observers.

In Korea, 25,000 soldiers served as a major bulwark of stability in this critical region, which includes some of our largest trading partners. Their presence underscored our commitment to the defense of South Korea and strengthened the United States/Republic of Korea position in talks with North Korea, and deterred adventurism by them. U.S. Army forces in Japan also contributed to regional stability and participated closely in combined exercises with Japan Self Defense Forces.

In Colombia, the critical single-source nation for illicit narcotics entering the United States, the Army helped establish a counter narcotics battalion to fight drug criminals in the narcotics producing areas of the country. In my recent visit there, I observed first-hand how critical our aid has been in this effort. The military assistance proposed as part of the President's recently-announced \$1.6 billion Colombian aid package will significantly enhance Colombian security forces' ability to eradicate drugs over a wider area of cultivation by improving their intelligence capability, airlift mobility, and ability to plan and execute larger scale counterdrug operations, among other things. The aid will allow the U.S. Army to provide training for two new Colombian Army counter narcotics battalions. The improved operational capabilities of the Colombian military and police forces are key to reducing the massive increase in the acreage under coca and poppy cultivation that has occurred over the last three years. The Army is

prepared to do its part in this stepped-up campaign to address the drug scourge at its source, once Congress passes this vital package.

Training of foreign military personnel constituted a significant portion of U.S. military engagement activities. Special Operations Forces deployed to 22 nations to conduct various activities, including humanitarian demining training. They also trained several African armies for peacekeeping operations and humanitarian response under the African Crisis Response Initiative. The Army Guard and Reserve, the Corps of Engineers, and the Army Surgeon General also participated in various endeavors in Africa designed to support democratic transition and to improve infrastructure and health.

The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program served as an outstanding vehicle for promoting cooperation and democratic values by training over 7,600 students from 134 countries. Most of this training took place in the United States, fostering personal and professional ties between American sponsors and foreign students.

An especially valuable IMET program is the U.S. Army School of the Americas, an institution that has trained tens of thousands of Latin American military personnel over the last 54 years. In addition to traditional military professional development courses, the School offers instruction in natural disaster response, peacekeeping, human rights, and the role of the military in a democracy. Several investigations by outside agencies have confirmed that the School's curriculum is consistent with U.S. human rights policy. Nevertheless, our goal is to have a training environment that permits us to accomplish our engagement mission while garnering the full support of Congress and the American people. I will recommend changes this year that will ensure all such professional development training for foreign officers and soldiers supports our national security goals in Latin America, promotes respect for human rights and the rule of law, and strengthens the development of democratic institutions and civil society.

In addition to these activities, the Army helped shape the international environment in ways favorable to U.S. interests by combining training with civic assistance projects. For example, last year Army engineers fixed a hospital roof in Mongolia and repaired roads and schools in the Marshall Islands. In Ukraine, a medical brigade provided surplus Army medical equipment to civilian hospitals. These types of initiatives enhance American credibility and goodwill abroad and provide important training opportunities for selected Army units.

Responding to the Full Spectrum of Crises

While engagement and training activities prevent and deter wars, the Army's core function is to remain ready to fight and win our Nation's wars. The Army's ability to respond to the full spectrum of crises is evident in several recent operations the Army led or in which it played a significant role.

The Army employed forces in support of the NATO bombing campaign against Serbia last spring. In addition to augmenting Joint Task Force Noble Anvil, the U.S. component of the NATO force that conducted the bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, the Army deployed the 5,000 strong Task Force Hawk to Albania to provide attack helicopter capabilities within striking range of Yugoslavia. This deployment reflected the Army's ability to send warfighting units anywhere in the world, in the most difficult weather and terrain conditions. Although never employed in the fighting, Task Force Hawk gave the national command authorities unique additional capabilities for prosecuting the war in Kosovo.

Two other Army deployments provided critical support to U.S. policy in the Balkans. In Europe, Army personnel expanded the base camp that would later prove indispensable as a staging base for the U.S. contingent of the Kosovo Force or KFOR, the NATO force underwriting peace in Kosovo. Closer to home, a unit from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, formed the nucleus of a joint task force assisting in caring for more than 4,000 displaced Kosovars at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

When U.S. forces crossed into Kosovo to begin the difficult task of bringing stability to that troubled region, elements of the Army's 1st Infantry Division led the way. This division has provided the bulk of the U.S. contingent (Task Force Falcon) since implementation of the treaty last June. On a daily basis, soldiers are working face to face with the people of Kosovo, conducting the dangerous work of disarming former combatants, resettling refugees, protecting minority populations from retribution, and establishing fertile conditions in which civil society can take root and thrive.

In Central America, the Army led efforts to assist victims of Hurricanes Georges and Mitch throughout most of FY 1999 via initiatives that entailed massive logistical assistance. In Asia, American soldiers performed critical medical, intelligence, communications, and civil affairs tasks as part of the U.S. contingent supporting Operation Stabilize in East Timor, in response to the violence that occurred after the people of East Timor voted overwhelmingly for independence from Indonesia. These and similar operations underscored the Army's continued responsiveness and utility to national policy.

Preparing for an Uncertain Future

The 21st century holds great promise, but also potential menace, for our Nation. The dream of information age prosperity will also see an array of potential dangers to our national security interests. These include regional of the kind we see in the Balkans, in Southwest Asia, and on the Korean Peninsula; threats that cut across geographical and ideological boundaries, including the drug trade, ethnic, tribal, and religious strife, and organized crime; and "asymmetric" dangers, such as terrorism, the threatened use of weapons of mass destruction, and information warfare.

The Army has prepared for this uncertain future by developing a bold new Vision for the 21st century. The Vision calls for our transformation to a force that is more responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable, and sustainable. The force will be more strategically dominant across the entire spectrum of operations, and will be capable of reversing the conditions of human suffering rapidly and resolving conflicts decisively. The Army's deployment is the surest sign of America's commitment to accomplishing any mission that occurs on land.

The new force must be responsive to allow the Army to meet frequent contingency requirements with any element of the force. To be responsive requires the ability to put forces where needed on the ground, to affect directly the outcome of the situation or crisis at hand within hours of a decision. The forces must be prepared to that accomplish their mission regardless of the environment, the nature or scope of the proposed operation, or other commitments. They should also have the ability to employ force from low to high intensity.

To achieve this responsiveness, the force must be more deployable—capable of rapid strategic movement to create the opportunity to avert conflict through deterrence and confront potential adversaries before they can achieve their goals. The Vision calls for a capability to put a brigade on the ground within 96 hours after liftoff, a division within 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days.

The new force will be more mentally and physically agile, to move forces from stability and support operations to warfight and back again. Our organizational structures will be redesigned, so that our force is more versatile—able to generate formations which can dominate at any point on the spectrum of operations, with minimal adjustment and minimum time. It will be lethal—every element in the warfighting formation will be capable of generating combat power and contributing decisively to the fight. We will retain today's light force deployability while providing it the lethality and mobility for decisive outcomes that our heavy forces currently enjoy. The force will be survivable, by employing technology that provides maximum protection to our forces at the individual soldier level, whether that soldier is dismounted or mounted.

Finally, the force must be more sustainable. We will aggressively reduce our logistics footprint and replenishment demand. This will require us to control the numbers of vehicles we deploy, leverage reach back capabilities, invest in a systems approach to the weapons and equipment we design, and revolutionize the manner in which we transport and sustain our people and materiel.

The Army's transformation strategy envisions the development of initial and Interim Forces on the way to achieving the Objective Force capabilities that are called for in the Vision. The initial forces will comprise two brigade combat teams whose purpose is to validate the operational and organizational model of future tactical units and to generate insights for further transformation of the force. As I speak, these brigades are being formed at Fort Lewis, Washington.

These initial brigade combat teams will equip themselves with surrogate and loaned hardware, even as we begin to identify the best “off the shelf” platforms for the Interim Force. At the same time we are beginning to make, along with DARPA, the Science and Technology investments that will lead to development of the main Objective Force platform, known as the Future Combat System. This system will be delivered around 2012.

The initial brigade combat teams will serve as the lead-in to, and eventually comprise the first units of, an Interim Force that will seek the characteristics of the Objective Force within the constraints of available and emerging technology. The Interim Force will be organized as a rapidly-deployable, full-spectrum force that is highly mobile at the strategic and tactical levels. Current plans call for the Interim Force to be C-130-transportable and equipped with a family of Interim Armored Vehicles, lightweight artillery, and other available technology.

Throughout the Initial and Interim Capability phases, the Army will revise key concepts, doctrine, and strategic plans as well as begin the transformation of the Institutional Army. This transformation will address the systems, organizations, and processes by which the Army supports training, leader development, infrastructure, management, combat and materiel development, and well-being.

Even as we push the transformation process to develop Objective Force capabilities, we must continue to recapitalize some of our legacy systems, including the Abrams tank and Apache helicopters, and bring on-line new systems like the Comanche helicopter and Crusader howitzer that we are counting on to have as part of our warfighting capability through at least the year 2025. At each stage of the transformation process, we have the right mix of weapons systems and force structure to be able to respond to the full spectrum of operations, including high-intensity conflict. Until the Objective Force is fielded throughout the Army, it is likely that we will need to maintain heavy, digitized divisions with the capacity to win against Soviet-era armor that may be employed against us in places like Korea or Southwest Asia.

To improve responsiveness for the full spectrum of operations, the Army will also attempt to fill all operational and institutional organizations to 100 percent of authorizations, by grade and skill, by the end of FY 2003. Matching skills with responsibilities will improve our readiness to respond during the transformation period.

Transformation is and will be the central activity of the Army for the foreseeable future. All our energies are directed to the task of fielding an Objective Force whose capabilities will give the Nation the land force options and responsiveness needed to meet the challenges of an uncertain era. But getting there, to the Objective Force, requires that we begin here, now, with our current Army. Transformation cannot occur, and the Nation cannot reap its benefits, if we do not continue to sustain and build on the Army of today.

PART II

Supporting Today's Army

The Fiscal Year 2001 budget achieves three ends: It includes funding for programs that safeguard America and its allies, including selected smaller scale contingency operations; it advances transformation of the Army into a more strategically responsive force, and it balances near-term readiness and quality of life with long-term modernization. A quick glance at some major areas of interest offers a broad sense of the Army's priorities.

Smaller Scale Contingency Operations

Our engagement abroad is a source of pride and valuable experience for our soldiers. The Army is proud of its work in shaping the international environment in the interests of peace and democracy. As previously described, between 20,000 and 30,000 soldiers are deployed every day around the world in support of America's interests. Our ability to respond quickly and effectively when these unforeseen crises develop depends on the continued timely support of Congress in funding such deployments.

The FY 2001 budget includes \$1.0 billion to support operations in Bosnia. Operation Joint Forge not only continues to provide the security necessary to allow time for that country to become self sufficient, but it is also providing The Army with the opportunity to hone the skills of our active and reserve units. Next month, for the first time, we will deploy elements of a National Guard division, the 49th Infantry Division (Texas ARNG), for a six-month tour of duty.

We fully expect to achieve the same results in Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo. At this point in the operation, we are still establishing the infrastructure and training base to support our presence. The timely passage of the FY 2000 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations request for Kosovo, \$2.0 billion (OSD) and \$1.5 billion (Army), is critical not only to the success of that operation, but to ensuring the execution of planned training events throughout the rest of the Army. Early passage of the Supplemental will enable our commanders to confidently keep on track planned fourth quarter training.

Our commanders and soldiers have demonstrated unprecedented flexibility and resourcefulness in preparing for unplanned operations while maintaining the fighting edge required for combat. During the past three years, the Overseas Contingency Transfer Account has been instrumental to our ability to conduct unplanned operations without interrupting funded training.

Transformation

This budget provides nearly \$1 billion for the Army to pursue its transformation initiative. The \$100 million Congress provided for transformation at the end of last year, together with the savings generated through the hard choices we made to cancel or cutback important programs in order to fund transformation, will enable us to stand up the initial Brigade Combat Teams. We will use loaned and leased equipment for these initial brigades while we begin acquisition of the off-the-shelf vehicles for the Interim Force brigades. A few weeks ago, we conducted a vehicle demonstration at Fort Knox, Kentucky, to evaluate these potential Interim Force vehicles.

Additionally, the FY 2001 appropriations will make it possible for us to make the initial science and technology investments in the Future Combat System as the weapons platform for the Objective Force around 2012. We intend to bring the new system on-line as soon as technology allows.

Even as we fund the new bills created by the transformation process, we must continue to recapitalize our aging equipment and modernize our forces through our investments in digitization and procurement of new platforms for warfighting. The Army will continue to find ways to help itself, as we have already demonstrated in the short months since we announced our Vision. However, a critical component of funding shortages in the out years is the savings that can be accrued by eliminating excess infrastructure. I strongly encourage another round of base closures as a means of supporting our transformation efforts.

Modernization

As the Army implements its transformation strategy, development and funding of an affordable, fully integrated modernization program is an essential element of that plan. Two key components of our modernization strategy are worthy of note here because of their impact on the budget recapitalization and digitization.

Recapitalization: Recapitalizing our legacy systems is equally important as the development of the Future Combat System. We must increase the service life of key existing systems while we move to the Objective Force. Recapitalization also reduces maintenance requirements and streamlines logistics support.

Recapitalization is one area in which we will need the continued assistance of Congress as we anticipate sustaining many of these legacy systems through 2025. This budget will help us make the critical investments in weapons systems necessary to sustain our ability to meet current security obligations, including fighting and winning major theater wars, even as we transform our force. A few examples will suffice to illustrate our programs.

Critical to modernization of legacy forces are the upgrades for the Abrams Tank and Bradley Fighting Vehicle. We need to replace the Abrams' engine to reduce fuel consumption by about 30 percent, to make it easier to maintain and less costly to operate, as well as equip it with new electronics. We will modify our Bradley's to make them more lethal and survivable through digitization, night vision capabilities, and other improvements.

Support for the continued development of the Comanche helicopter and Crusader howitzer are also critical to our modernization program. The Crusader program was restructured to gain vital improvements in indirect fire support capability and reducing the weight of the system while maintaining key performance parameters. The Army generated \$11.2 billion for transformation between FY 2000 and FY 2014 by reducing the number of Crusaders from 1,138 to 480. The restructure strategy partially satisfied the Army howitzer requirement for warfighting by continuing the use of Paladin and Lightweight 155mm howitzer platforms.

The Comanche (RAH-66) helicopter will provide the Army with a new capability to conduct armed reconnaissance during both day and night and in adverse weather conditions. It will significantly expand the Army's capability to conduct operations in a wider range of scenarios. The FY 2001 budget supports testing of two prototypes and the development of the advanced T801 engine, composite air vehicle, and Mission Equipment Package.

Digitization: We have not slowed our efforts and we remain committed to incorporating digital capabilities to support our soldiers, our units, and our ability to communicate securely. The process of applying information technologies to allow warfighters to share a constantly updated common view of the battlefield is an ongoing modernization priority that is separate from but related to transformation. Digitization involves across-the-board software and hardware improvements to weapons and communications systems that will vastly improve the capabilities of our forces. We will incorporate digital features in the more responsive, lethal, and agile forces of the future; digital advances are already being used to modify the structure of selected divisions. This budget continues our commitment to digitize the first corps by the end of 2004.

These modernization initiatives will require the long-term commitment of the Administration and Congress. Army modernization accounts for only \$9.4 billion of the Department of Defense's \$60 billion modernization budget. Indeed, modernization funding has decreased more than 40 percent in the period FY 1989 to FY 1999. But even adjusting for decreases in the size of the Army, we will spend about \$5,000 less per soldier for modernization this year than we did only a decade ago.

We need to reverse this alarming trend, if the Army is to remain the premier force the Nation requires for influencing events and maintaining peace. The President's FY 2001 budget makes the necessary investments in critical

modernization initiatives that are central to the Army's modernization and transformation initiatives.

Readiness

The FY 2001 budget supports our most pressing readiness requirements. The budget protects critical areas including training, operations tempo (OPTEMPO), and infrastructure requirements. Resources have been maximized to ensure our forces are trained, equipped, and ready to fight.

Training: Training is the heartbeat of the Army and a major component of readiness. The Army's training management system allows units to conduct training on key tasks with enough frequency to sustain their ability to perform, in spite of personnel turnover. A function of this system is to identify the resources necessary to conduct live and simulated training on mission-essential tasks. Operations tempo (OPTEMPO) is one measure of these needed training resources.

OPTEMPO: The President's FY 2001 budget request assumes funding to permit all active units and most reserve units to achieve 100 percent of our OPTEMPO training standards. Force Package 1 through 3 units are funded at 100 percent OPTEMPO and Force Package 4 units at 100 percent for individual and crew training. We have also funded adequate Combat Training Center rotations, Battle Command Training Program rotations, and flying hours for both active and reserve component aviation units. Passage of the Kosovo Supplemental is important to preserving the benefits of this funding.

Infrastructure: The Army is maintaining its base operations support at minimum essential levels this year. However, Real Property Maintenance (RPM) funding for the active Army is only 69 percent of known requirements and our aging infrastructure continues to deteriorate. The FY 2001 budget assumes some risk, yet sustains, the real property inventory. We continue to reduce excess infrastructure by using RPM funds to resource the Facilities Reduction Program, while focusing Military Construction investments on specific priorities such as barracks and strategic mobility projects.

The President's Military Construction request of \$1 billion focuses on upgrading all permanent party barracks to the top 1 plus 1 standard by FY 2008. Using FY 2001 funds, we will build barracks that will house 5,000 active duty soldiers at facilities in the U.S. as well as in Korea and Germany. The requested funds would also be used to improve rail yards and other facilities to enhance our strategic mobility program, another important building block in our transformation architecture. If the Army is not able to mobilize our troops and supplies, we cannot respond to our designated missions as quickly or effectively as we would like.

Finally, the budget will allow us to continue our efforts to provide high quality family housing, an element of military life that will certainly affect the morale and readiness of the future force. We do not have enough housing to meet current needs, and much of what we do have is in need of revitalization. The President's request of \$1.1 billion for family housing will give us some of the resources necessary to meet our shortfalls in this area.

The Army is also continuing apace with efforts to privatize family housing, but at the direction of Congress, we are moving with prudence and deliberation. Reauthorization of the privatization program, which expires next February, is critical to meeting our housing needs.

Quality of Life

The FY 2001 budget maintains historic funding levels for base operations support services. Our soldiers and their families continue to affirm the importance of this course of action. Frequent deployments and training exercises mandate that we provide the best services to sustain morale. Army installations continue to seek new efficiencies through A-76 studies, outsourcing, and adopting most efficient organization practices (MEO). Critical to maintaining high quality of life in the Army are: fully manning the force through recruiting and retention and adequate health care. We especially appreciate the Office of the Secretary of Defense's and Congress' efforts to zero the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) differential, improve health care, and improve benefits.

Recruiting and Retention: The bedrock of the Army remains its people. Without quality people, it does not matter how lethal our weapons are or how strategically responsive our formations are. But today's growth economy and high employment market have challenged us to attract and keep individuals who possess the knowledge and skills to run the machinery of the modern Army, especially as we move toward transformation.

In FY 1999, the Army essentially met (within a 1 percent tolerance factor) its required endstrength of 480,000, thanks to a vigorous retention effort that exceeded our goals by more than 6,100 soldiers. This success can be attributed to an enhanced bonus program we recently implemented, as well as to the compensation and benefits improvements that Congress adopted last year.

On the recruiting front, we are aggressively restructuring our operations, including reviewing our advertising strategy and improving recruiter training. We are also implementing two new innovative programs that hold great promise. The College First program offers college-bound candidates up-front education benefits in exchange for a promise to serve. The Army High School Completion program, which we launched a week ago today, helps highly qualified young people who are interested in serving to obtain their GED, so that they can meet the Army's quality standards for entry.

The Army will continue to develop and employ creative solutions like these to ensure that as transformation takes place, our ranks are regularly replenished with qualified, motivated individuals. We hope that Congress will continue to support these efforts as well as additional initiatives to improve compensation, benefits, and quality of life for our soldiers that are addressed in our budget and which are key to the Army's enlistment and reenlistment strategies.

Health Care: A key quality of life issue with our soldiers and family members is health care. TRICARE, the Department of Defense healthcare program, has been implemented worldwide. TRICARE was designed to make quality healthcare more accessible and easier to use, and to lower costs for those who use it. We have many dedicated people in our military treatment facilities across the globe who are working to make these objectives a daily reality. Most of our beneficiaries report satisfaction with the quality of care they receive.

We are measuring the performance of various aspects of the TRICARE program to ensure it remains the health plan of choice. We are working collaboratively with the Department of Defense and the Joint Staff to address improvements in areas such as access, claims processing, portability, and the management of complex medical cases. Additionally, we are fully supportive of some key enhancements for our soldiers and family members, like the TRICARE Prime Remote Program for family members, throughout the continental United States. Accordingly, we encourage the necessary legislative changes needed to facilitate them becoming a reality.

Conclusion

The Army's transformation will provide the National Command Authority increased capabilities to meet 21st century threats to our national interests. As we stated in our Vision, *The Army* will be more responsive and dominant at every point on the spectrum of operations, from humanitarian assistance to major theater wars. We solicit your support of our transformation efforts and look forward to working with you to ensure that we remain the world's finest land force for the next crisis, the next war, and an uncertain future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I look forward to your questions.