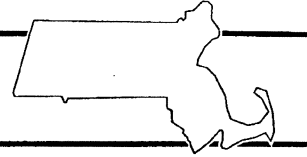


N E W S F R O M

John F. Kerry



UNITED STATES SENATOR

A DANGEROUSLY OVERSTRETCHED MILITARY THAT MUST BE STRENGTHENED

TODAY'S PROBLEMS WILL CONTINUE TO AFFECT MILITARY

Troops' Health is a Concern. "We're growing increasingly concerned about the health of the force," an Army personnel officer says. "These deployments are really beginning to take a toll." [Time Magazine, 1/17/05]

Long-Term Health of Military At Risk. "The length and number of their tours and the numbers killed and wounded have already imposed stresses on the force that raise concerns about retention and recruiting." "I am very concerned about our ability to fill the wartime requirements," Reserve Chief General Lt. Gen. James Helmly said. "But I have greater concern about the long-term health of the force." [NYT, 8/23/04]

Current Strain Only the Beginning. "The Army's wheels are going to come off in the next 24 months," Barry McCaffrey, a retired four-star Army general, said last week. "The data are now beginning to come in to support that." McCaffrey said the service needs to add 80,000 troops to ease the strain brought on by the Iraq war. "We are in a period of considerable strategic peril," he said. "And it's because Rumsfeld has dug in his heels and said, 'I cannot retreat from my position.'" [Time Magazine, 1/17/05]

Overstretch Military Has Snowball Effect—More Leave and Fewer Join. "But last week the military's taut tendons--at the breaking point for better than a year--could be heard painfully snapping from the Pentagon to the Sunni triangle. First came a warning from the head of the Army Reserve that those troops are 'rapidly degenerating into a broken force.' Then Army officials, speaking privately, conceded that a long-standing policy limiting deployments of National Guard and Army Reserve forces is likely to be scrapped. That's going to make the already difficult job of recruiting--and retaining--such part-time soldiers even tougher." [Time Magazine, 1/17/05]

Government Study Says Bush has Overstretched the Guard/Reserves; Long-term Retention Rates May Suffer As a Result. A recent GAO report says the Bush Administration has overstretched the Guard and Reserves, creating "uncertainties for reserve component members concerning the likelihood of their mobilization, the length of their service commitments, the length of their overseas rotations, and the types of missions that they would be asked to perform... There are already indications that some portions of the force are being stressed. For example, the Army National Guard failed to meet its recruiting goal during 14 of 20 months from October 2002 through May 2004, and ended fiscal year 2003 approximately 7,800 soldiers below its recruiting goal." [GAO Report, "Military Personnel," GAO-04-1031, 9/04]

GAO Report Says Bush Administration's Actions May Hurt Long-Term Global War on Terror. "Under DOD's current implementation of the authority, reserve component members

can be involuntarily mobilized more than once, but involuntary mobilizations are limited to a cumulative total of 24 months. If DOD's implementation of the partial mobilization authority restricts the cumulative time that reserve component forces can be mobilized, then it is possible that DOD will run out of forces. . . it is unclear how DOD plans to meet its longer-term requirements for the Global War on Terrorism." [GAO Report, "Military Personnel," GAO-04-1031, 9/04]

Army Reserve Chief Said Reserves Are Degenerating Into "Broken Force." The Army Reserve, a force of 200,000 part-time soldiers that provides key support in Iraq and Afghanistan with medics, engineers and truck drivers, "is rapidly degenerating into a 'broken' force," its top general told senior Army leaders. In a blunt memo, Lt. Gen. James R. "Ron" Helmly, chief of the Army Reserve, noted the demands of overseas commitments and the unwillingness of Army and Pentagon officials to change "dysfunctional" policies that hamper the Reserve on issues such as training, extension of service and the mobilization of his soldiers. The Dec. 20 memo, which was obtained by The Sun, says "current demands" in Iraq and Afghanistan put his command in "grave danger" of being unable to meet other potential Pentagon missions or help with domestic emergencies, and that the Army Reserve "is rapidly degenerating into a 'broken' force." [Baltimore Sun, 1/5/05]

Former Bush Administrator in Iraq Said Army Is "In Terrible Shape." "There is no question that the Army personnel system is stressed. 'I think the Army is in terrible shape,' said retired Army Lt. Gen. Jay M. Garner, who served last year as the Bush administration's first administrator in postwar Iraq. 'I think people are worn out, equipment is run down and we've overstressed the reserves. We're drastically short [of] infantry and MPs because the Army is too small.'" [Washington Post, 7/6/04]

Army Health Survey Team Documents Low Troop Morale. During a visit in the fall of 2003, a 12-member Army Mental Health Advisory Team surveyed 756 soldiers in Iraq, finding 52 percent reported low or very low personal morale and 72 percent complained of low or very low unit morale. Additionally, it reported a suicide rate in 2003 of 17.3 per 100,000 troops -- 35% higher than the rate among Army troops worldwide. Since the war in Iraq began a year ago, 24 soldiers have committed suicide. The suicide rate for Army soldiers in the Iraq campaign in 2003 was 17.3 per 100,000, compared with an overall Army rate of 12.8 for 2003 and 11.9 from 1995 through 2002. The study, the first of its kind undertaken in a war zone, was ordered by the Army surgeon general, Lt. Gen. James B. Peake, after a sharp rise in suicides in July and an influx of soldiers with mental health problems at Landstuhl medical center in Germany. [LA Times, 3/26/04; Chicago Tribune, 3/26/04; NY Times, 3/26/04]

Fewer Reservists Declare Intentions To Stay In the Army. "The results also indicated that the desire of the part-time soldiers to stay in the Reserves and National Guard is eroding. About 59% of Army Reservists and 62% of Army National Guard soldiers said they intended to stay in the military, down about 10 percentage points from 12 months earlier. As a result of the survey, the Pentagon in some instances tripled enlistment bonuses to as much as \$15,000 for a six-year commitment, Dr. Chu said." [WSJ, 10/19/04]

Shoomaker Warned in November He Was In Danger of Running Out of Troops. "Guard officials are not denying the obvious. "There's no question that when you have a sustained ground-combat operation going that the Guard's participating in, that makes recruiting more difficult," says Lieut. General Steven Blum, the Guard's top officer. Roughly one-fourth of the Guard's members have served in Iraq. General Peter Schoomaker, the Army Chief of Staff who was plucked from retirement by Rumsfeld in 2003, told Congress in November that he was in danger of running out of troops. "It's going to get harder the longer we go with this, no question about it," he said. He pledged to do his best to meet the demand of commanders in Iraq for fresh bodies, but added, "I can't promise more than I've got. . . If the Army National Guard or Army Reserve cannot muster and provide the formations that are required, perhaps we need to increase the size of the regular Army." [[Time Magazine](#), 1/17/05]

HURTS MILITARY FAMILIES

Hurts Military Families. "While part-time troops have served with distinction, the year-in, year-out deployments have often come at the cost of financial hardships, broken businesses, health problems and family strains." [[USA Today](#), 2/7/05]

Iraqi Servicemembers Return Home Face Loss of Old Jobs. The [AP](#) reported, "Increasing numbers of National Guard and Reserve troops who have returned from war in Iraq and Afghanistan are encountering new battles with their civilian employers at home. Jobs were eliminated, benefits reduced and promotions forgotten." In all, approximately 4,000 Guardsmen and reservists have filed job complaints with the Labor Department since 9-11. [[AP](#), 8/15/04]

Increasing Numbers of Reservists/Guardsmen Encounter Difficulty Regaining Jobs Upon Return From Iraq. Thousands of Reserve and National Guard troops returning from active duty in the war on terrorism are complaining that their civilian employers don't always welcome them home with open arms. Federal law requires employers to immediately give returning men and women of the National Guard and Reserves their civilian jobs back, along with any pay raises, promotions, pension contributions and other benefits they missed while away on duty. The Labor Department was receiving about 900 formal complaints a year from reservists and Guardsmen before September 11, 2001. "The statistical picture since then, based on fiscal years ending Sept. 30: 1,218 cases opened in 2002; 1,327 cases in 2003; 1,200 cases from Oct. 1, 2003 through July 31. If projected over 12 months, the figure would be 1,440, the department said." [[AP](#), 8/15/04]

Bush Administration's Extension Order Contributed to Loss of Jobs. In 2003, government officials said such problems were likely to worsen because Bush has ordered extended tours of duty for 20,000 personnel serving in Iraq and elsewhere. The Pentagon's Employers Support of the Guard and Reserves committee, known as ESGR, was receiving 20 complaints per month from reservists and Guard members in Louisiana. As of September 2003, the Labor Department had received nearly 3,200 job-related complaints from returning Guard and Reserve soldiers since 9-11. [[AP](#), 3/25/04; [Times-Picayune](#), 9/21/03]

Soldiers Suffer Financial Loss From Increased Duty. The [LA Times](#) reported, "Many soldiers have drained their savings to support their families while they are gone. Some have lost their

homes. Others have lost their jobs at small businesses, which say they can't afford to keep the positions open — even though they're breaking the law. And numerous small-business owners have shut down their companies or have had to declare bankruptcy.” [LA Times, 5/12/04]

Fails to fund the increase in the death benefit. The budget fails to include funding for the promised increase in death benefits for families of the servicemen and women who are killed in action. Although funding may be included in the upcoming supplemental, those funds will only cover fiscal year 2005. Our efforts overseas will not end with the fiscal year on September 30, 2005— and so should this funding.

Fails to end the Military Families' Tax. The Survivor Benefit Plan penalizes survivors, mostly widows of those killed as a result of combat. These widows lose their survivor benefits if they receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits because their spouse has died of a service-connected injury. The President's budget forces these 53,000 spouses to continue to pay this unfair tax, even though these families have made the greatest sacrifice for our country.

Soldiers Bear Burden of Overstressed Military. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told senators in early February that the U.S. military is so overstressed that he is using emergency powers to expand it by 33,000 troops and that he will increase it further if required by the war on terrorism. “There is no question that the Army is stressed,” Gen. Peter Schoomaker, the Army chief of staff, told a hearing of the House Armed Services Committee in January 2004. The Pentagon already has instituted “stop-loss” and “stop-move” orders to maintain U.S. troop strength in Iraq and Afghanistan. A “stop-loss” order prevents troops from retiring or leaving the service at the end of their enlistments, while “stop-move” holds them overseas beyond the original end of their tours. About 40,000 servicemen and women have been affected by the “stop-loss” and “stop-move” orders. Of these, about 16,000 are Reservists. [Chicago Tribune, 2/5/04]

Administration's Failure Burdens Military Families. House appropriators wrote in October 2003 that some active-duty soldiers and reservists are spending as much as \$650 out of pocket to buy Interceptor Body Armor vests and Small Arms Protective Insert plates to replace the Vietnam-era flak vests issued when they arrived in Iraq. The Lloyd family in Carroll County, Ohio is one of many families that is considering digging into their personal finances to ensure their family servicemember is equipped with the vest. Ohio Democratic state Senators Marc Dann and Robert Hagan have introduced legislation to provide the Ohio National Guard with \$500,000 to buy body armor for troops in Iraq; they expect the federal government will reimburse the state for that money. [Columbus Dispatch, 1/11/04; The News & Observer, 1/4/04; Defense Week, 10/14/03]

GAO Report Cites Massive and Widespread Pay Problems for Activated National Guard Soldiers. A January 2004 GAO report studied six different Army Guard units and found Army Guard soldiers were being denied timely and accurate payroll payments. The report found that, “Overall, 450 of the 481 (94 percent) Army Guard soldiers from our six case study units had at least one pay problem associated with their mobilization. In addition, our limited review of the pay experiences of the soldiers in the Colorado Army Guard's 220th Military Police Company, who are currently deployed to Iraq, indicated that some of the same types of pay problems that we found in our six case study units continued to occur.” [GAO Report, “Army National Guard Personnel Mobilized to Active Duty Experienced Significant Pay Problems,” 1/28/04]

Families Suffer to Overcome Pay Problems, According to Report. The GAO report also found, “The consequences of inaccurate, late, and, missing pays, and associated erroneous debts had a profound financial impact on individual soldiers and their families. One soldier’s spouse had to obtain a grant to pay bills while her husband was in Afghanistan.” The report discovered “Four Virginia Special forces soldiers injured in Afghanistan, unable to resume their civilian jobs, experienced problems in receiving entitled active duty pays and related health care.” Maj. Kenneth Chavez of the Colorado National Guard told a Congressional committee of the problems faced by the unit he commanded: “All 62 soldiers encountered pay problems...During extremely limited phone contact, soldiers called home only to find families in chaos because of the inability to pay bills due to erroneous military pay.” [GAO Report, 1/28/04; New York Times, Bob Herbert, 3/15/04]

Troops Slow To Receive Disability Payments. “The military’s system for compensating soldiers who become sick, injured or wounded can be as unforgiving as the battlefield: Fewer than one in 10 applicants receives the long-term disability payments they request. Nearly one-third of injured National Guard and Reserve veterans returning from the Iraqi and Afghan wars are being forced to wait more than four months to learn if they will even be compensated.” [AP, 8/1/04]

Troops Lack Key Resources, Forced to Pay Their Way Home. The AP reported, “Only time can tell whether Bush’s promises in the [State of the Union] will be kept. But the context in which he made them Tuesday was missing on occasion. For example, he thanked troops and the families for their service and said: ‘And my Administration, and this Congress, will give you the resources you need to fight and win the war on terror.’ To date, troops have lacked some key resources. The Pentagon has struggled with delays in the production and distribution of the latest body armor to troops in Iraq, among other supply problems. Troops reuniting with their families have had to pay for their own airfare home and other travel costs once they are flown free to a small selection of cities while on leave.” [AP, 1/20/04; Albuquerque Journal, 12/13/03]

CONFLICT IN IRAQ TO BLAME FOR PROBLEMS OCCURING NOW

70% of Decline in Guard Due to Fear of Being Sent Right Back to Iraq. “Lieut. Colonel Michael Jones, the Guard’s No. 2 recruiting officer, says 70% of the deficit in sign-ups is the result of soldiers’ declining to join the Guard when they leave active duty because they don’t want to be sent right back to Iraq. In peacetime, many active-duty soldiers go into the Guard for the extra money and camaraderie. Some of the shortage is due to the Army’s ‘stop-loss’ orders, which keep soldiers on active duty past their agreed-on commitments and thus make them unable to join the Guard. But there is another factor in the case of young people right out of high school: parents often steer their kids away from the military. ‘Mom and Dad understand they’re going to go right into basic training,’ Jones says, ‘and then be eligible to deploy right away.’” [Time Magazine, 1/17/05]

Marine Shortages Directly Related to Iraq. “Even as the Marine Corps strains to meet its recruiting targets, the Air Force and Navy are flush with recruits and are actually shrinking their

overall ranks. Military personnel experts say there are indications that young people interested in joining the military may be turning to the Air Force and Navy, which have suffered relatively few casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan. In contrast, the Marines make up about 21 percent of the fighting force in Iraq now but have suffered 31 percent of the military deaths there, according to Pentagon statistics.” [New York Times, 2/3/05]

Due to Iraq. “military officials say ... an exodus of experienced troops, many weary from the longest war-zone rotations since the since the Vietnam War.” [Washington Post, 2/8/05]

Overwhelming Evidence Army Worn Down by Iraq Conflict. "The evidence is overwhelming that the Army is slowly being worn down by its commitment in Iraq. It's a valiant force, and it's working hard, but it can't go on like this," said Loren Thompson, a Pentagon adviser and military analyst at the Lexington Institute, a conservative think tank. 'I think it's unlikely, given the trend we see, that this can be sustained indefinitely, and that's not even counting challenges in other parts of the world.' Lt. Gen. James Lovelace, the Army's deputy chief of staff for operations, acknowledged to reporters yesterday at the Pentagon that the Army Guard and Reserves already have called on their most combat-ready units for Iraq. The National Guard has about 86,000 troops available for future Iraq tours, and the Army Reserve has about one-fifth of its total strength, or 37,500 deployable soldiers.” [Newsday, 1/25/05]

Iraq Conflict is Misusing the Reserve and Guard. “The call-ups piled extraordinary stresses onto a part-time military that even top Reserve and Guard commanders say was never designed to be driven so long or so hard. 'The system was designed, absolutely, not to be used this way,' says Lt. Gen. Steve Blum, head of the National Guard Bureau. Part-time troops were intended to be short-term emergency help, citizen-soldiers who could add strength and skills to the slimmed-down active-duty military long enough to win the war, and then go home.” [USA Today, 2/7/05]

Navy Captain Said Iraq War Has Wrecked the Armed Forces. “The strain on Army troops, families and equipment has been extensively reported and is likely to intensify as some units head back to Iraq for a second tour. ‘The war in Iraq is wrecking the Army and the Marine Corps,’ retired Navy Capt. John Byron asserts in the July issue of Proceedings, the professional journal of Navy officers. ‘Troop rotations are in shambles and the all-volunteer force is starting to crumble as we extend combat tours and struggle to get enough boots on the ground.’” [Washington Post, 7/6/04]

Rumsfeld Didn't Want to Spend the Money. “For Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who has resisted demands to increase the size of the full-time military, part-time troops have been a cost-effective way to fight the war on terrorism, saving billions that would have been spent on a larger active-duty force.” [USA Today, 2/7/05]

In April, Rumsfeld Extended Stay of 20,000 Soldiers in Iraq. Rumsfeld announced in April that he was extending the stay of 20,000 soldiers serving in Iraq. The soldiers will be required to serve 90 days more but may not get home for 120 days, according to Rumsfeld. The extended stay order applies to troops from the 1st Armored Division, the 2nd Light Cavalry Regiment, and about “3,500 Army National Guard and 2,800 Army Reserve personnel from about 20 states.” Of the 20,000 troops who received orders to

remain in Iraq for at least 90 days, about a quarter of them are in the National Guard or Army Reserve. [[San Francisco Chronicle](#), 5/9/04; [Dallas Morning News](#), 4/16/04]

Nearly Entire Army Has Served in Iraq. The [Associated Press](#) reported in late April 2004, “The Army could have a tough time finding more combat troops if they are needed in Iraq. Of the service’s 10 active-duty divisions, all or parts of nine are either already in Iraq to serve 12-month tours of duty, or have just returned home in recent weeks after a year’s duty...Looked at another way, the Army has 33 active-duty brigades within the 10-division structure. Of those 33 brigades, 27 are either in Iraq or Afghanistan or just returned home. Of the six others, three are in the 3rd Infantry [which is undergoing a reorganization], and two are on duty in South Korea. [[AP](#), 4/28/04]

Pentagon Issues Order Forcing Troops to Stay In Afghanistan Longer Than Expected. Thousands of soldiers who had expected to retire or otherwise leave the military will be required to stay if their units are ordered to Iraq or Afghanistan. NBC Nightly News reported, “The order delays routine discharges if a soldier’s unit is headed to a war zone. Forty-three thousand troops now putting on hold plans for college, marriage or a new job.” The announcement, “an expansion of a program called ‘stop-loss,’ affects units that are 90 days or less from deploying, said Lt. Gen. Frank L. ‘Buster’ Hagenbeck, the Army’s deputy chief of staff for personnel... Initially, the expanded order will affect several units about to go to Iraq: most of the 2nd Brigade of the 10th Mountain Division, from Fort Drum, N.Y.; the 265th Infantry Brigade of the Louisiana National Guard; the 116th Armored Brigade of the Idaho National Guard; the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment of the Tennessee National Guard, and the 42nd Infantry Division’s headquarters staff, from the New York National Guard. The 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, a South Korea-based unit, is expected to deploy later this summer and will be subject to the expanded stop-loss program as well, officials said.” [NBC Nightly News, 6/15/04; [AP](#), 6/3/04]

Army Announces That All Future Deployments Will Be Subject to Stop-Loss and Stop-Move Orders. “From now on, all Army units tapped to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan will be placed under stop-loss and stop-move restrictions that prevent soldiers from switching assignments or voluntarily leaving the service, according to an order signed June 1 by Reginald Brown, the Army’s assistant secretary for manpower and reserve affairs.” [[Stars & Stripes](#), 6/3/04]

Personnel Shortage Could “Dull the Military’s Fighting Edge.” “The war and its impact on personnel are forcing the Pentagon to cut corners in ways that could dull the military’s fighting edge. The Guard, for example, can no longer count, as in the past, on half its troops’ having had military experience. If current trends persist, soon only one-third will be veterans. ‘They’ll be able to make their numbers, but the question is, How effective is the Guard going to be if its troops don’t have much military experience?’ says Lawrence Korb, Pentagon personnel chief during the Reagan Administration. What’s more, the military may have to begin promoting soldiers with inadequate experience if senior sergeants flee. ‘Promoting more rapidly leads to a less effective military,’ Korb says. ‘We’re going to end up with a less effective force and, in another year, I think we could break it.’” [[Time Magazine](#), 1/17/05]

Army Training Units Being Sent. “The Army tapped two elite training units for overseas duty that usually do their fighting on the practice field. Some units are heading back to Iraq after just nine months at home.” [USA Today, 2/7/05]

DANGEROUS SHORTCOMINGS OCCURING

Marines Missed Recruiting Goal for First Time in Nearly Decade. “For the first time in nearly a decade, the Marine Corps in January missed its monthly recruiting goal, in what military officials said was the latest troubling indicator of the Iraq war's impact on the armed services. The struggles of the Army, the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard to recruit and retain soldiers have received national attention in recent months. But the recent failure of the Marines, who historically have had the luxury of turning away willing recruits, is a potential problem for the service.” [New York Times, 2/3/05]

Marine Shortages Indicate How Serious the Problem Is. “Richard H. Kohn, a military historian at the University of North Carolina, said, ‘It's most troubling because the Marines tend to attract people who are the most macho, seek the most danger and are attracted by the service most likely to put them into combat.’” [New York Times, 2/3/05]

Army Fails To Meet Recruiting Goals For Second Straight Year. “For the second straight year, U.S. Army recruiters fell short of their goal for signing up enlistees in the first month of a new recruiting cycle. For the first 30-day period in its new recruiting year, the Army was 30% shy of its goal of signing up 7,274 recruits. The Army had a particularly hard time recruiting for the Army Reserve, on which the Pentagon has relied heavily in Iraq and Afghanistan. Enlistments for the reserves were 45% below the target. In the same period last year, the Army came up 25% short in its goal in the first month for enlisting 6,220 regular recruits and 40% short of its reserve enlistment goal.” [WSJ, 10/20/04]