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Deficit panel chairmen lay out proposals to curb government spending.

The co-chairmen of President Barack Obama's Commission to Eliminate the Federal Deficit laid out their draft proposal to hold down the growth of the federal government by about \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years by capping entitlements—such as raising the age in which individuals can receive their full Social Security benefits—cutting the federal work force by 10 percent and cutting major defense programs by \$100 billion, such as the Army's manned ground combat vehicle.

Former Sen. Alan Simpson, a Wyoming Republican and one co-chair, said at a press conference Nov. 10, "We have harpooned every whale in the ocean and some of the minnows." Adding, "No one has ever done that before."

Erskine Bowles, a chief of staff under President Bill Clinton, was the other co-chair.

The 18-member bipartisan commission was drawn from Congress, business and other leaders. The panel is to submit its final proposals for congressional consideration Dec. 1.

To send a proposal forward at least 14 commissioners must support it.

Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., who is leaving the Senate and was a member of the commission, said the proposals are "a genuine product that deserves very serious attention."

But Sen. Richard Durbin, D-Ill., also a member of the commission, countered, "There are things in there that I hate like the devil hates holy water."

Commission officials said that if the plan were adopted as proposed, the deficit would be cut to 2.2 percent of gross domestic product by 2015. The deficit was 8.9 percent of the GDP at the end of the last fiscal year.

Gregg, the senior Republican on the Senate Budget Committee, said the goal is to reduce federal spending and revenue to 21 percent of GDP.

Defense spending at \$700 billion this fiscal year is the largest section of discretionary spending in the federal budget. In addition to terminating weapons' programs, the co-chairmen's proposals include raising co-pays and fees in the TRICARE health program. TRICARE spending in this fiscal year was about \$50 billion.

Army launches yearlong 'profession of arms' study.

The Army has launched an ambitious year-long study of the "profession of arms" that will encompass leader development and ethics for all ranks, Department of the Army civilians and contractors.

Lt. Gen. Robert Caslen, commanding general of the Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, Kan., quoted the chief of staff's 2010 GREEN BOOK article in explaining the rationale for the campaign after almost a decade of war. He was speaking at the Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting and Exposition.

In directing the Army Training and Doctrine Command "to conduct a study and lead the dialogue," Gen. George W. Casey Jr. wrote: "Our soldiers are experts, skilled in the profession of arms, bonded with comrades in a shared culture of sacrifice and service to the nation and Constitution, who adhere to the highest ethical standards and values and who live the Army Ethos."

Caslen said that earlier studies had been "officer-centric and designed to address a problem," but this campaign will begin with assessments and dialogue and move into reviewing and revisions of what the entire Army is now and what it will be in the future.

Adding, "Our study today is to validate what our profession is" looking at the positive achievements in the recent past and, in the words of Gen. Martin Dempsey, TRADOC commander, the "weak signals," such as the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib and investigating officers in cases of civilian deaths. "A secondary effect [of such a large review] is to prevent a problem."

The biggest difference in today's Army versus the Army of 40 years ago is the professionalization of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps, he said, and that is a key reason for the comprehensive approach to the study whose results will be discussed at the 2011 AUSA Annual Meeting, and a final report delivered by the end of the year.

In addition, the relationship between "those in the military and the Defense Department" to civilian authority will be a central area of examination. "We swear an oath to the Constitution," not to the senior uniformed officers or the commander in chief. "We are the servants of the American people," and "it has to be a relationship built on trust."

Change in basic training emphasizes developing soldiers. Changes have been made to the Army's initial military training program to encourage drill sergeants to focus less on blind obedience, and more on developing soldiers "who want to be part of your team," Command Sgt. Maj. John Calpena, initial military training, said.

Calpena spoke during the NCO Professional Development Forum at the Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting and Exposition.

Calpena said the Army has evolved to recognize that an effective fighting force needs soldiers who can think clearly and make good decisions—particularly when they are under the stress of combat—instead of soldiers who simply do what they are told.

Calpena added that changes have been made primarily to physical readiness and rifle marksmanship training, and then he turned the program over to the active duty and reserve drill sergeants of the year.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Sarvis, the active duty drill sergeant of the year, explained changes in physical-readiness training (PRT). Much as elite athletes prepare for competition, Sarvis said, soldiers must prepare for combat.

Sarvis said the PRT program now places more emphasis on fundamental movement skills to build agility, balance, coordination and flexibility, among other attributes. Four soldiers demonstrated various movements including the power jump, single-leg pushup and half-jack.

Sarvis also noted that physical training includes resiliency training—"that is a huge deal," he said—as well as training on the core Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage.

Sarvis added for all the training, the Army is moving away from Power Point presentations and toward interactive, scenario-based training with videos. He also said that young recruits can particularly relate to gaming as well as using technology such as smart phone apps.

Staff Sgt. Melissa Solomon, the reserve drill sergeant of the year, explained changes in the basic and advanced rifle marksmanship training. "We now know that every soldier can't get behind the weapon the same way," she said.

Solomon said the new BRM strategy has 10 stages, with the first teaching the soldier to become comfortable with his or her weapon and the tenth being the soldier qualifies with 23 out of 40 hits. With 13 days of BRM followed by seven days of advanced training, "In 20 days, we have taken a civilian and trained them to engage in multiple 'gets' wearing a full kit," she said.

'Checklist mentality' is product of industrial age. The commanding general of the Maneuver Center of Excellence contrasted today's Army with the service several decades back and concluded, "In the industrial age we could get by with the checklist mentality."

As the Army embarks on a yearlong campaign of studying the profession of arms, Maj. Gen. Robert Brown said the emphasis now is on agility and how to "solve the problem in a timely manner."

"[Junior officers and NCOs] are solving complex problems with creative and agile solutions. A [young soldier] is now doing the kind of work a sergeant first class may have done, and a lieutenant is doing what a captain used to do." That has meant empowering young soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers to act. "We empower. We get these great results! We empower. Oh, oh!"

Brown said, "We have to incorporate these challenging situations in our training. The trouble is the op tempo. It's a hard thing to do." He asked rhetorically, "Are we getting to the next level?" in the Army schoolhouse or "Are we doing a 30-minute class?"

For certain aspects of soldiering, "You need the rote repetition" to master a skill such as marksmanship, but quick thinking and understanding of a situation if a certain course of action is taken is valuable in its own right. "Are we giving them the scenarios they are going to face?"

Brown then asked whether senior leaders are providing their soldiers with proper examples of ethical behavior or being unfaithful to their spouses and fraternizing with the soldiers they command. "That tears at the profession of arms."

For a former brigade commander, "the most important piece of kit that we needed in this fight ... is our moral compass."

Col. Walter Piatt, the former brigade commander and Army fellow at Georgetown University, told attendees at the institute of Land Warfare Contemporary Military Forum on the profession of arms about how a soldier reacted when a grenade was thrown toward him by an 11-year-old Iraqi boy. When the soldier realized that a child had thrown the grenade, he did not fire because there were too many children around.

"We found the child's parents, their tribe and their village are forever grateful because this soldier knew right from wrong, and it's hard to train soldiers to do that," he said.

Likewise, he described another soldier who was finding it increasingly difficult to work with any Iraqis. "His values were eroding because of the environment we put him in" where he saw comrades and himself attacked, wounded or killed. "I did not train him enough."

President to receive Afghan strategy review.

President Barack Obama should receive a report on a review of his Afghanistan policy in December, a senior administration official said. Speaking to reporters on background, the official, who is involved in the review, said the review will help to determine how well the strategy is working and aid in planning the start of transitioning to Afghan control of security. “By now, patterns develop, which is quite helpful,” he said.

The annual review is the first since Obama announced the policy change in a December speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., the official said, but he added that Obama has monitored the situation from the beginning. “The president made clear he would carefully watch for progress over time, and he’s done that in the course of the last year,” he said.

Obama receives weekly written input from Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and their subordinates in the field, the official said.

Obama also takes part in a monthly video conference with his national security team and leaders in field, and he receives a comprehensive set of metrics quarterly to measure progress in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and in the counterterrorism effort at large, the official added.

The purpose of the annual review, he explained, is to assess trends not obvious at the more frequent intervals.

The review will account for adjustments and revisions that have taken place during the year, such as the initiative to better hire and train Afghan local police, efforts to reintegrate insurgents into civilian society, Pakistan military initiatives, and devastating floods that Pakistan has been dealing with since summer, he said.

The report also will include results of NATO’s Nov. 19-20 summit in Lisbon, Portugal, where officials are expected to discuss transitioning Afghan forces to take the lead on their country’s security, and putting a transition in place to implement over several years, he said.

Also, the official said, he expects a theme to come out of Lisbon that “the Afghans will not have to stand alone.” “I think NATO will look to establish and define their enduring commitments and partnerships,” he said.

In the NATO talks, 2014 is being considered as the year to shift the security responsibility from the alliance to the Afghans as originally suggested by President Hamid Karzai.

The review is designed to provide an assessment, but not recommendations, the official said. “This is a diagnostic look at the strategy. It is not prescriptive,” he said. “We are not in the business of formulating policy alternatives or different courses of action.”

Army completes report on Fort Hood shooting. In releasing its report on the shooting at Fort Hood in November 2009, Army Secretary John McHugh said. “This tragedy caused us to take a hard look at ourselves over the last year.”

Adding, “We are committed to ensuring the men and women and their families, who step forward and serve in these very challenging times, can rely upon us to take care of them in every way possible.”

To date, the Army has implemented or is taking definitive action on 66 of the 79 DoD Independent Review Panel recommendations. (DoD is the lead agency for the remaining 13 recommendations and the Army is working with DoD to determine specific future actions.)

“While we know we can never eliminate every potential threat, we’ve learned from the events at Fort Hood,” said Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr.

Adding, “We have made significant progress, particularly in threat awareness and reporting, coordination in intelligence sharing, and training for our security forces, but our work is not done.”

To date, the Army has instituted several major changes as a result of the Internal Review, to include:

- Developed and implemented the Threat Awareness and Reporting Program. Centered on identifying and reporting ‘insider threats’ and emphasizing Soldier awareness and reporting, this new program created the Counterintelligence Fusion Cell and developed systems to improve information sharing within the Army and with other agencies.
- Developed and implemented the iWatch and iSalute programs. The iWatch program is a 21st century version of the neighborhood watch program and integrates terrorism prevention and suspicious activity reporting.

The iSalute program is an online counterintelligence reporting system through the Army’s main intranet and primary web portal, Army Knowledge Online. Soldiers, family members and Department of the Army employees can now electronically file reports that will initiate an interview with Army counterintelligence personnel.

- Provided Army security force personnel access to the National Crime Information Center for screening of personnel at installation visitor centers. This has enabled the Army to quickly verify personnel records and screen for past criminal records.

The full 122-page report is found on www.army.mil.

(Editor’s note: This article is based upon an Army News Service report.)

Association's legislative agenda focuses on people as 'the heart and soul of the Army.'

The Association of the United States Army is urging Congress "to authorize and fund a force of at least 700,000 soldiers on active duty status, drawn from the active Army, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve" as a key piece of its legislative agenda for 2011.

In the preamble to its resolutions approved by 122 AUSA chapters, the Association noted, "The demand for our forces exceeds the sustainable supply." The preamble added that legislative and regulatory policy changes are needed to "allow the reserve component to execute its role" as an operational reserve to meet the requirement for 700,000 soldiers to be serving in the active force.

To pay for this, the Association is seeking congressional approval to increase "non-supplemental defense spending to at least 5 percent of gross domestic product," increase the Army's share of the defense budget from 24 to 28 percent and provide a consistent funding stream.

As in the past, the resolutions "focus on people, readiness and Army modernization." Adding, "People are the heart and soul of the Army—soldiers, civilians, family members and retired soldiers."

The resolutions also call for closing the pay gap between soldiers and Army civilians and the private sector; revising and enhancing the compensation package for the reserve components; and warn against an "erosion of benefits, especially in health care ... to ensure the continued success of the all-volunteer force."

They also recognize Army's efforts in "refining understanding of Full Spectrum Operations through training and professional dialogue [and] reducing the backlog in professional military education."

The resolutions recognize the stress of continued conflict on soldiers and their families and acknowledge the efforts to build resilience through programs such as comprehensive soldier fitness and health promotion, risk reduction and suicide prevention.

On modernization, the resolutions state, funding must be available to execute the revised strategy "for developing the interoperable network and a new ground combat vehicle." The resolutions also address the Army's need for funds for research, development and testing for future forces.

Money to repair and replace equipment lost during nine years of war will need to continue for several years after hostilities. At the same time, "Funds associated with base realignment and closure, global posture reviews and the Quadrennial Defense Review must be provided" to all the Army "to remain the premier landpower force.

Cadet Command unfurls colors at Fort Knox.

The command responsible for producing 60 percent of the Army's new officers each year unfurled its flag and officially staked the colors Nov. 23 at its new home—Fort Knox, Ky.

The event at Brooks Field marked the culmination of a transition from Fort Monroe, Va., set in motion five years ago by the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission that also directed the latest round of military asset shuffling, including the move of Accessions Command to Fort Knox and the Armor Center from Knox to Fort Benning, Ga.

Calling Cadet Command a pivotal piece in the development of the Army's future leaders, Lt. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, commander of Accessions Command and Fort Knox, described the organization's arrival as historic.

"For over 70 years, the world's finest armor and cavalry leaders were trained here," he told a crowd of about 150 people. "Today marks the arrival of Cadet Command and the finest officer training in the world. ... Cadet Command develops and shapes tomorrow's leaders. It is a critical, distinct and strategic command in our Army."

Elements of Cadet Command, which oversees Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and the Junior ROTC program nationwide, have operated at Fort Knox even before the agency's 1986 inception.

The command's 1st Brigade, which includes senior and military junior colleges across the country and operates the Leader's Training Course each summer for prospective cadets, and the 7th Brigade that oversees programs in Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, have been based on the post.

Headquarters staff began relocating to Kentucky nearly two years ago. Only a few dozen of the headquarters' nearly 360 total employees remain in Virginia. Cadet Command held a departure ceremony Oct. 1 at Fort Monroe, which is slated to close next fall.

Until the unfurling, the colors had been wound tight around a wooden staff, encased in a plain, olive green cloth sheath. The flag—emblazoned with the command's patch on a silky yellow-orange background—had been sealed by then-commander Maj. Gen. Arthur Bartell and Command Sgt. Maj. Herschel Turner, Cadet Command's top enlisted soldier.

The Nov. 23 official arrival of Cadet Command also heralded the arrival of a new commander, Maj. Gen. Mark McDonald. The two general officers swapped positions, with Bartell replacing McDonald as the director, J-3, for U.S. forces in Iraq.

McDonald looked on from reviewing stand as Turner and the interim commander, Col. (P) Barrye Price, uncased the flag as the commanders and sergeants major from each of Cadet Command's eight brigades stood in formation.