



# WASHINGTON UPDATE

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**Army hopes to field new heavy combat vehicles in 5 to 7 years.** The Army hopes to field a new fleet of combat vehicles in the next five to seven years, the secretary of the Army and chief of staff of the Army told the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee May 12.

The vehicles would replace the manned ground vehicle portion of the Future Combat Systems (FCS). Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced in early April that he was canceling the \$87 billion manned vehicle program.

The Army plan for combat vehicles would largely keep to the schedule of fielding the FCS manned vehicles. Preliminary designs are to go to the Office of the Secretary of Defense by Labor Day for review.

In a plan announced in mid-May, the Army said it now will outfit all 73 brigade combat teams with the equipment originally being developed for the 15 FCS brigades. At the hearing, the secretary and the chief did not have estimates of the new program's cost.

Gates said he wants to focus defense spending on equipment toward current and future combat, which will likely include fights against insurgencies in places like Afghanistan rather than the more conventional wars the military has long planned for.

At the April 6 press conference, the secretary said a major reason he decided to cancel the Future Combat Systems' vehicles is because they didn't adequately protect against the road side bombs used by insurgents in Afghanistan and Iraq.

At the hearing Gen. George W. Casey Jr. said the new vehicles would include "lessons learned from the current fight."

As reported by Congressional Quarterly, "I ultimately could not convince him [Gates] that we had taken enough of the lessons that we learned from the current fight and incorporate it into the vehicle program," Casey said after testifying.

Casey said he saw the cancellation of the FCS vehicles as "an opportunity, because we can go forward with a clean slate, build a vehicle that has the support of the department and Congress."

Army Secretary Pete Geren told reporters the service is "working through all the legalities" of canceling the original vehicles planned for FCS.

**Army foresees delays in FCS spinout technologies.** The military deputy for acquisition, logistics and technology told the House Armed Services Committee Air/Land Subcommittee that delays are likely in spinning out technologies to existing units from the Future Combat Systems program.

Testifying May 21, Lt. Gen. Ross Thompson said, "We think we put the appropriate money" toward the spinouts of sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles and unmanned ground vehicles in the Fiscal Yearly 2010 budget request. But "it could be in FY 11, very, very late" before the spinouts are delivered.

Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii and panel chairman said, the delivery time is "going to be changed" and "I think we're being more realistic in time and money."

Looking at the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle program as a model for the future in acquisition because of its flexibility, Thompson said following it would likely mean "we don't have to wait 10 years for manned ground vehicles" to replace existing tanks, personnel carriers and propelled artillery.

David Ahern, director of portfolio systems acquisition in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, said, "The first thing is [to ensure] we have the right mix, heavy and Stryker" and "then we need to assess what we need going forward" in restructuring FCS.

He added that the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle program to replace Humvees was proceeding on schedule.

Thompson said the Army expects to begin "harvesting technologies" from parts of the canceled manned vehicle program, such as the Non Line of Sight Cannon, as early as the fall. "I can't imagine not including the new howitzer because there is a need for precision fire, all-weather, line of sight and beyond."

With the full committee scheduled to begin marking up the defense authorization bill in mid-June, Abercrombie said that he needed detailed information on the cost of restructuring and terminating part of the contract between Boeing and SAIC and the Army in the wake of the cancellation.

The contracts involve more than 20 subcontractors for the manned ground vehicle program, primarily General Dynamics and BAE.

**Army budget likely to decline in future.** The Army budget peaked at \$252 billion in 2008, but Lt. Gen. Robert E. Durbin cautioned installation officials that the size of future budgets will decline.

“We’re not going to have the same resources in years to come,” said Durbin, special assistant to the Army chief of staff for enterprise management, at the Association of the United States Army’s Installations Symposium and Exposition in Kansas City, Mo.

As the Army transforms under the Army Force Generation model, it will be up to installation managers to “provide essential ingredients” to support soldiers and their families.

**Panel concerned about weight of soldiers’ gear in Afghanistan.** The 150 pounds of gear and equipment soldiers carry on three-day missions in Afghanistan remained a serious concern among members of the House Armed Services Air/Land Subcommittee.

Testifying May 21, Lt. Gen. Stephen M. Speakes, the Army’s G-8 said, “The soldiers will be equipped differently than in Iraq” because in this fight they are engaged in long-range mission and are dismounted. “We are always looking to lighten the load,” Lt. Gen. Ross Thompson, the military deputy for acquisition, logistics and technology, said, “not just in body armor, the optics, the clothes a soldier wears.”

Thompson said that the Army expects to field by the fall an All-Terrain Vehicle variant of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle to Afghanistan. The ATV variant will correct roll-over problems in existing vehicles.

**Manpower chief looks to Army families’ needs.** During his confirmation hearing, the new assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs told the Senate Armed Services Committee that with his 25 years in the Illinois Army National Guard he was very watchful of family programs.

Army families “are confronted with many of the same concerns—housing and education or financial issues that mirror society but yet it’s exacerbated with the loss of a loved one,” Thomas Lamont said.

“I think it behooves us to do everything in our power to ensure the strength of our family support program because if we are to sustain the volunteer Army we need to sustain the family support group.”

The Illinois lawyer praised the Army Family Covenant Program; and, as part of that program, he said that he would also be looking after the welfare of the 700,000 children in active-duty Army families. “I do think there’s a lot to be done in that regard. Have we done enough? I don’t know that.”

**Army continues to explore energy initiatives.** While the new administration appears to be embracing “green” technologies and alternative energy resources, the Army has been exploring energy initiatives with a program that began in 2005 that targets milestones set for 2015.

About two-thirds of the Army’s energy consumption goes to facilities, and officials set a standard in 2005 of reducing energy intensity at a rate of 3 percent a year for 10 years, or 30 percent overall by 2015.

And, the Army is already well ahead of that goal—energy consumption was reduced by 10.4 percent last year, Craig E. College, the Army’s deputy assistant chief of staff for installation management, said.

“This is no longer an ‘if,’ it’s a ‘how,’” College told attendees at an Association of the United States Army symposium and exhibition in Kansas City, Mo. The Army, however, has not reached its goals in renewable energy and advanced metering, and College said “there’s a lot of catching up to do.”

With advanced metering, buildings 29,000 square feet and over would have meters installed to identify, in real time, large increases in energy consumption, and installation commanders would be able to address the issues, College said.

Metering would also provide information to Army Installation Management Command headquarters to see what is and isn’t working in the Army energy program.

While metering and starting programs for solar and wind energy are complex, College identified 15 areas that installation officials could take home and implement at no cost or very minimal cost.

These are fairly common sense items to “change soldier and civilian behavior” when it comes to saving energy. It includes simple things like turning off computers and other electronic items if they are not being used, replacing incandescent lights with energy saving lights, and turning off vehicles to avoid idling.

“Sometimes the low-tech solutions are the most logical,” L. Jerry Hansen, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for strategic infrastructure, said.

James P. Miller, a mechanical engineer with the Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC), said teams are visiting 12 to 15 installations every year to outline funding and propose energy projects from “no cost or low cost” to projects larger in scope. In the past, they have identified inadequate maintenance that increases kilowatt hours and BTUs. Renovation projects have also been noted for being undertaken solely “for appearance sake” and failure to account for energy conservation.

## **Task group to review new civilian personnel.**

Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn III and Director of the Office of Personnel Management John Berry asked the Defense Business Board yesterday to establish a task group to conduct a review of the National Security Personnel System.

“The task group should deliver recommendations aimed at helping the Department determine (1) if the underlying design principles and methodology for implementation are reflected in the program objectives; (2) whether the program objectives are being met; and (3) whether NSPS is operating in a fair, transparent, and effective manner,” Lynn wrote in his instructions to the Defense Business Board.

The task group will seek public input over a series of opportunities to be announced at a later date, and present its findings and draft recommendations to the Defense Business Board during a public meeting later this summer. The board will provide its final report to the secretary of defense and to the director, Office of Personnel Management, shortly thereafter.

The task group will be chaired by Rudy deLeon, the senior vice president of national security and international policy at the Center for American Progress in Washington.

The other members of the group will be Michael Bayer, chairman of the Defense Business Board, and Robert Tobias, a professor at American University and director for the Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation.

The Defense Business Board, an independent advisory body that operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972, was established to provide the secretary of defense independent advice and recommendations on effective management of the Department of Defense.

On March 16, the Department of Defense and the Office of Personnel Management had announced that they will undertake a review of the National Security Personnel System, including policies, regulations and practices.

In the joint statement from DoD and the Office of Management and Budget said the planned conversion of 2,000 positions planned for the spring was on hold.

More than 200,000 civilians in the department have been brought into the new system over the past three years. The system is designed to replace the 50-year-old general schedule system of ranking and paying white-collar workers. It used a pay-for-performance method to determine an employee's compensation.

Two-hundred and forty-five thousand DoD white collar workers are not in the system nor are the 180,000 wage grade employees.

## **McLain Medal honoree tapped to head Army National Guard.**

The adjutant general of New York has been nominated to be the next director of the Army National Guard and promoted to lieutenant general.

The Senate would have to approve the nomination and promotion of Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto.

The 2006 recipient of the Association of the United States Army's Lt. Gen. Raymond S. McLain Medal for his “outstanding contributions to AUSA's goal of a seamless and component-integrated Army,” Taluto was cited for being the first National Guardsman to command in combat guard and active component soldiers since World War II and conducting successful combat, security and stability operations on north-central Iraq.

“It is with a heavy heart that I leave New York State, but I am looking forward to taking on this challenging new assignment for the great soldiers I serve. Leading America's sons and daughters is one of an officer's greatest responsibilities and one of my greatest joys,” he said in a statement after the nomination was announced in early May.

Taluto was appointed adjutant general on Jan. 23, 2006.

Prior to this assignment, he commanded the 2nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard. He commanded the division and Task Force Liberty during its historic deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III from 2004 to 2005.

He served as the Joint Task Force Commander during the 42nd Infantry Division's initial emergency response mission to assist the city of New York in its security and recovery operations following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center.

He directed a force of some 2,000 soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines to assist the city's Office of Emergency Management.

In an interview with AUSA NEWS that appeared in the November 2004 issue, he reflected on the “Never Forget” mantra, the division adopted before its Iraq deployment. “We needed to do something about the attacks and the sacrifices of people who went before” in World War I and World War II. The saying also refers to the understanding that “America has an enemy.”

Taluto enlisted in the New York Army National Guard in 1965. The director of the Army National Guard guides the formulation, development and implementation of programs and policies affecting the 370,000 National Guard soldiers in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

**NCOs serve as congressional fellows on Capitol Hill.** The chief of Legislative Liaison credits Army Secretary Pete Geren with having the idea to take senior noncommissioned officers into his office and a 90-day orientation program and year-long fellowship program.

“Serving 10 years in Congress, he understood the value of the fellows program” that already was open to officers and civilians, Maj. Gen. Bernie Champoux said. “He saw it as part of the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer,” the program that Geren announced at the opening ceremony of the Association of the United States Army’s Annual Meeting in October.

“What [the NCOs] bring to Capitol Hill is the ability to fully understand the issue from the unique experience of a soldier.” Expecting the programs to continue, he said that the first candidates were identified by Human Relations Command, vetted by the sergeant major of the Army and interviewed by him before final selections were made.

“This really acknowledges the value of the NCO and demonstrated to our Army that we value the contributions they make every day. They really are the heart and soul of our Army.”

Adding, “We want people across the United States and the Congress to feel and see the contributions NCOs are making. They can express what it is like to experience combat, getting ready for combat and explain what all this means to them and Army families.”

Champoux said that another benefit of having NCOs in these programs and positions is the understanding they will take back to their units when they return. “We also want soldiers and other NCOs to understand the strategic partnership the Army has with Congress.”

Having NCOs serving on Capitol Hill is also an “expression of the trust and confidence that the Army has in them. We’re asking that they come to learn and not be afraid to tell what they are learning.”

Champoux said a beneficial side effect for the NCO is the understanding “I can keep up with these people.”

In increasing frequency, NCOs from the sergeant major of the Army down are testifying before congressional committees. “There’s a sense [among staffers and representatives and senators] when soldiers speak from their experiences that it’s usually very compelling and usually resonates strongly. It’s powerful.”

Having NCOs in congressional offices also helps the representative’s and senator’s staff. Many do not have any military experience. “You can just imagine the number of constituents with veterans’ issues. It can be a priceless education for both.”

For more information, go to: <http://www.hqda.army.mil/ocll/>

**Wounded warriors, families tell Hill their stories.** “Dealing with severe trauma is not easy,” Lt. Col. Gregory Gadson, a double amputee, told the Senate Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee, and those injuries affect the service member and family for years.

“We don’t want to put families in a hardship situation.”

Kimberly Noss, whose husband, Sgt. 1st Class Scott Noss, was severely injured in Afghanistan and remains minimally conscious at the VA’s polytrauma center in Tampa, Fla., said, “We [as a nation] were not prepared to take care of severely wounded warriors” for the likely remaining decades of their lives.

In cases similar to her husband’s, she asked, “What will the future entail? They are non-employable, and their average age is 22.” They are probably married with a wife in her late teens “who is foregoing her education” to care for her husband. “A nursing home is not an option” for many including herself to care for their spouses, Noss added. “I do it because I love him.”

What the panel was looking for were specific recommendations in how to better care for the wounded warriors and their families in the short term and long term.

Gadson, who was wounded two years ago, said that while he was at Walter Reed Army Medical Center but assigned to Fort Riley, Kan., his wife received \$30 a day to help him bathe and dress himself and drive him to appointments.

When the family officially was assigned to Walter Reed, the payments stopped because the care giver was now living in Washington. Yet, “she had to quit her job” as a teacher in Kansas, losing years of continuing contributions to her own retirement.

Even though the family was able to live off his pay because of his rank, “we lost about a third of our income.”

Adding, “If I was at Fort Belvoir, she would never have gotten paid because she is here. . . . That person is no longer productive in society. It’s kind of a double whammy.”

Colleen Rivas, whose husband suffers from Traumatic Brain Injury, told the panel until the hearing she was not aware of any program that re-imbursed families for caring for their wounded warriors. “We lived off his retirement pay and savings.”

That may change. Maj. Gen Keith W. Meurlin, USAF, acting director of transition policy and care in the Defense Department, said at the hearing the Pentagon will be sending Congress a proposal to have care givers, such as Gadson’s wife, be compensated at the rate home health care aides are in a locality.