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DoD proposes raises up to 9.9 percent and restoration of 50 percent retirement formula.

The Defense Department is proposing raises of up to 9.9 percent for mid-career officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers and fixing the military retirement system in an effort to improve retention.

The administration earlier proposed a pay increase of 4.4 percent for Fiscal Year 2000.

Also under the new proposal, pay increases through FY 2005 would be 3.9 percent. The administration signaled its support of the revision in the pay tables Dec. 21.

The Defense Department also is proposing restoring a 50 percent formula to the military retirement system and ending the "Redux" 40 percent formula for 20 years of service.

If approved by Congress, these would be the largest increases in military compensation since 1982.

Defense Department officials said although Congress has not seen the details of the compensation reform package they expect "pay reform will be treated positively. ... The retirement reform will also be treated fairly and positively."

But where the money to pay for the \$30 billion increases in basic pay and retirement over the next six years will come from is unclear.

As the News Desk section of the AUSA Home Page (www.ausa.org) reports, the top leadership of the Defense Department estimates that \$112 billion would be needed to fix a host of near-term and long-term readiness questions, including military compensation.

Defense Department spokesmen on Dec. 21 would only say the changes in basic pay, extra pay and retirement would be fully funded in the budget to be submitted to Congress in February.

Uncertainty over funding concerns AUSA. This uncertainty over where the money for the pay raise and fixes in retirement will come from deeply concerned the president of the Association of the United States Army.

Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, USA, Ret., said, "These raises in basic military pay are long overdue, and the ending of the insidious three-track retirement system is also welcome news. We have seen the damage the pay gap and erosion of retirement benefits have had in recruiting and retaining the quality men and women all the services need. These are readiness issues. At the same time, we cannot afford to rob training and modernization accounts to fund these necessary quality-of-life improvements.

"This cannot come out of the services' hide. The Congress and the administration must have the courage to raise defense spending to pay the troops, train the troops and equip the troops. We estimate to do all this the Defense Department budget would need to rise by \$30 billion annually."

In its Torchbearer Campaign AUSA has called for closing the 14 percent pay gap between military and civilian pay, restoring the 50 percent retirement formula and providing the necessary money for training, infrastructure and modernization.

Cohen: 'We want the best we can attract.'

Defense Secretary William Cohen said at a press conference Dec. 22, "These significant changes (in pay raises and retirement formula) come into a broader context of a continuing effort to achieve adequate military compensation and benefits. That effort includes improved housing allowances, food allowances, cost of living, as well as targeted bonuses and special incentive pay to recruit and retain skilled men and women."

Cohen added, "We want the best that we can attract."

Three pieces to the pay raise package:

- Payraise of 4.4 percent for all military personnel in Fiscal Year 2000 — 3.9 percent after that through FY 2005. The across the board raises also apply to all Defense Department civilians.
- Increases of .5 to 5.5 percent for selected military personnel (mid-career officers, warrants and NCOs in particular). These targeted raises would take effect in July 1, 2000.
- Restoring retirement formula to 50 percent of best three years of basic pay. This affects the two-thirds of the force that came on active duty after August 1986. (None of these changes affect specialty pay.)

Key reason for the change in the pay table:

Making sure that promotion is rewarded over length of service while providing uniform and meaningful longevity increases. The focus was on rewarding members for acquiring skills, for training and for experience.

Hall to continue as sergeant major of the Army.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Robert E. Hall will continue in his present position for another 18 months.

Army Secretary Louis Caldera and Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, chief of staff, announced the decision in mid-December. Both men hailed Hall's service since taking over the position in October 1997. He succeeded Sgt. Maj. of the Army Gene McKinney, who was facing court-martial on a number of sexual misconduct and obstruction of justice charges.

The usual practice is to have the sergeant major of the Army depart at the same time as the chief of staff's retirement. Reimer will retire in 1999.

Cohen, Shelton explain strikes against Iraq.

Defense Secretary William Cohen and Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called the strikes against military and chemical and biological production targets in Iraq necessary.

Speaking Dec. 16 at a Pentagon briefing, Cohen said, "We want to degrade Saddam Hussein's ability to make and to use weapons of mass destruction. ... And we want to demonstrate the consequences of flouting international obligations."

To transform armed forces: challenge careers and platforms. The senior military leader in charge of transforming the nation's armed forces for future combat said, "We're going to challenge two things we love — careers and platforms."

Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr., Commander in Chief United States Atlantic Command, said, "Joint requirements will now compete with service requirements" in developing new weapons. A measure of success would be to see how Congress reacts in funding joint programs versus service programs, he said.

This means that the Commander in Chief responsible for military operations in areas such as the Persian Gulf and Korea, to mention two, will play an increasingly important role in determining the requirements and concepts that will lead to not only new weapons but new ways of fighting.

"This is more than interoperability. ... It comes from combining the capabilities from the different services so that sum is greater than the sum of its parts."

The key areas that Gehman identified for joint experimentation and integration include intelligence, combat identification, command and control. "Theater missile defense is an example."

Adding, "Jointness is an intellectual activity." By moving to truly joint forces, Gehman said there are new questions about military organization and doctrine. Saying, divisions, brigades, wings and battle groups — traditional ways of organizing military forces — "may be less relevant in the future."

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Sullivan presses for higher defense spending.

The president of the Association of the United States Army said the pressing and sometimes competing demands of modernizing forces and providing adequate pay for soldiers, sailors and marines "all comes together in the defense budget."

Speaking at the 7th annual AUSA symposium on space and missiles here, Sullivan told the more than 300 attendees that AUSA was actively engaged in fighting for more defense spending to replace obsolete equipment and to take care of servicemen and servicewomen and their families.

"In the 1998 AUSA Resolutions, you see what we're going to do — support the troops and work the modernizing issue. They're both intertwined," he said at the meeting held in cooperation with the Army Space and Missile Defense Command. "None of this (success on the battlefield with new equipment) is possible without the young people making the systems work," Sullivan said.

Operating tempo is not 'in and of itself' a readiness detractor. The high operating tempo, "in and of itself is not a readiness or retention detractor," one of the nation's most senior military officer said.

Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr., Commander in Chief of the United States Atlantic Command, said at an AUSA symposium "The biggest detractor is the frustration back here fixing things and having to work overtime (on obsolete equipment). ... Don't get me wrong. We're pleased to do our jobs. We just want to have the tools to do the job."

Hale will face 17 charges of improper conduct.

Retired Maj. Gen. David Hale was charged Dec. 9 with obstructing justice, lying to investigators and Defense Department officials and having improper relationships with the wives of three subordinates and one senior officer.

Lt. Gen. G. A. Crocker of Fort Lewis, Wash., ordered an Article 32 investigation. Crocker will use that investigation to decide whether to proceed to court-martial.

Hale retired in February shortly after the Army Criminal Investigation Command began looking into possible sexual misconduct.

Not ready to lock in on high altitude missile defense system. "We've got to start hitting something," the nation's senior officer charged with integrating the armed forces for the future said in defining the major space issues for industry and the military.

Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr., Commander in Chief of the United States Atlantic Command, said in answer to a question at an AUSA symposium on space and missile defense.

He was referring to a series of test shots in which the Army's theater missile defense systems failed to intercept an incoming missile.

Adding, "It's too early to lock in (on one system) in missile defense."

In a dinner address, Rep. Roscoe G. Bartlett, R-Md., and a member of the House National Security Committee, gave the Army's Theater High Altitude Air Defense Missile a vote of confidence. "THAAD is further ahead than most" other systems, he said. Adding, "every test is a successful test because you're learning." Lt. Gen. Lester L. Lyles, USAF, director of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, said "the Navy is not starting its own THAAD program. ... It's a backup capability being qualified in case THAAD does not work."

Military, industry should work more closely together on space issues. The need for industry and the armed forces to work more closely in a variety of space issues was echoed by Lt. Gen. John Costello, Commanding General of the Army's Space and Missile Defense Command. This includes steps to increase a warfighter's ability to take directly from the satellite needed information, downlink information and disseminate it. It also includes increasing industry's awareness for the Army's strategy in space and theater missile defense.

Philip S. Anselmo, with Northrup Grumman Corp., said in some respects warfighters already have that access. "But the real problem is how do you horizontally integrate all that data (coming from satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles and forces on the ground.)"

Information systems vulnerable to attack. Top military and industry thinkers about the future of space and information operations in combat believe the nation is vulnerable to attack.

“We must never again talk space without talking about information” was a theme that emerged at a two-day AUSA symposium on space and missile defense. Three-hundred defense and industry leaders attended the event arranged by the industry affairs directorate of the Association of the United States Army. Adm. Harold W. Gehman Jr., Commander in Chief of Atlantic Command, said, “We know we’re vulnerable, but we’re 50 percent there” in defending against attack.

Speakers repeatedly expressed concern over the vulnerability of commercial communications and global positioning systems satellites. Brig. Gen. Michael A. Hamel, Vice Commander, Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, “We have to be able to deny our adversaries access to (our global positioning system satellites).

Gen. Richard B. Myers, USAF, Commander in Chief of United States Space Command, said, “We do OK on surveillance,” but not very well on predicting and protecting. Citing the recent meteor shower that many forecasters predicted would disrupt global position satellite data, broadcast, internet and telephone service, Myers said, “We hoped everything would work out, but we didn’t know for sure.”

As the event passed, it turned out there were no major disruptions. “But we will have another meteor storm next year. It’s expected to be smaller than this year. But we really don’t know.”

Air defenders feeling some stress in retention.

The air defense community is feeling some stress in keeping qualified noncommissioned officers. Maj. Gen. Dennis D. Cavin, Commanding General of the Air Defense Artillery Center and Fort Bliss, said at a news conference the stress is showing up in the mid-term NCO ranks, soldiers who may be going on their seventh deployment.

He added, “Our biggest challenge in keeping warrant officers is industry, particularly at the W-3 level” because of their technical skills. Those skills in junior officers are also attractive to industry.

Army to cut 5,000 positions and reorganize some armor, mech, field artillery units.

The Army will cut about 5,000 positions over the next year and begin reorganizing some armor, mechanized infantry and field artillery units, officials said, in the final phase of an active-component drawdown.

The goal is to reach an authorized strength of 480,000 soldiers by the end of fiscal year 1999, Army officials said, to meet the requirement of the Quadrennial Defense Review. Current strength, they said, is under 485,000. At the beginning of FY 1997, QDR recommended 15,000 spaces be cut from the Army.

More than 10,000 of the 15,000 spaces have already been eliminated, Army operations officers said, primarily by unit deactivations. In the final phase, they said approximately 5,000 spaces will be eliminated to complete the reduction program.

A key element of the plan is that necessary force structure reductions will be achieved by accelerating planned unit reorganizations, not by eliminating units from the force, officials said. They explained that this final piece moves the Army toward the Division XXI design structure with minimal risks, while improving deployability and strategic mobility.

“This restructure is the right thing to do,” said Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, Army Chief of Staff. “The Army has taken a hard look at possible options for meeting our QDR reduction target. We believe that the combination of steps we are undertaking will help achieve required reductions while positioning the Army to transition into the Force XXI design with minimum risk. Ultimately, this program will improve Army readiness capabilities.”

Cuts, reorganization will continue through June 2001.

The reduction and reorganization plan of the Army began this October and continues through June 2001. There are three major parts of this reorganization plan: a limited conversion of selected heavy divisions to the recently announced Division XXI design; standardization of field artillery units into a three-battery, six-firing platform configuration; and increased efforts to improve active component / Reserve component integration.