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Shinseki stresses 'The Army' in arrival ceremony address

The new chief of staff said he wants the Army's heavy forces to be more mobile and its lighter forces to be more lethal. Those were themes that he carried from a three-page statement of intent to his arrival ceremony remarks to a meeting with defense reporters June 23.

At the same time, Gen. Eric Shinseki, the 34th chief of staff, stressed "The Army" - totally integrated with a unity of purpose - no longer the Total Army, no longer the One Army. We are The Army, and we will march into the 21st century as The Army. We acknowledge our components and their unique strengths. But we are The Army, and we will work to structure ourselves accordingly."

He said that in his arrival ceremony at the Pentagon June 22, stressing to the active Army, the Army National Guard and the United States Army Reserve that the nation and the Army benefit by recognizing the strengths of "what each brings to the fight."

As he assumed his new duties, the reserve components were looking at cuts of 25,000 soldiers. These cuts were called for in the Quadrennial Defense Review.

But Shinseki in his meeting with reporters said the Army's own review may show a need to keep those soldiers. Defense Secretary William Cohen testified before the Senate in May that without additional manpower the services would have difficulty carrying out the variety of missions it has been undertaking since the end of the Cold War.

Shinseki, who served two years as the top Army general in Europe and commander of the NATO peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, understands the impact that long-term peacekeeping operations have on the Army. He told the reporters that the Army "may not be enough" for the missions of the future.

He acknowledged the logistical difficulties in deploying 24 Apache gunships and artillery in Albania. Instead of modern ports and airfields, such as those now in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Tirana, the Albanian capital, has poor rail connections, a shallow port and a limited airfield.

Adding to the difficulties was the need to move relief supplies to hundreds of thousands of Kosovars fleeing the fighting across the border and to hundreds of thousands of other Kosovars who had been burned out of their homes.

"When we're asked to go to a place like Tirana, we accept a certain amount of challenge. But we're looking at using that as a case study to say, 'OK, how would we do that better in the next Tirana or in the next Kosovo?'"

He said readiness is "Job One," and manning the force is an urgent priority. We will work to connect to America in such a way that the youth of this country find service in the Army meaningful and rewarding."

The Army may miss its recruiting goal for the active force by 6,000 and for the Army Reserve by 9,000.

In his intent, Shinseki wrote he would pay particular attention to:

- Increasing strategic responsiveness.
- Developing a clear long-term strategy to improve operational jointness and to implement the goals of Joint Vision 2010.
- Developing leaders for joint warfighting as well as change.
- Completing the full integration of the active and reserve components.
- Manning our warfighting units.
- Providing for the well-being of soldiers, civilians and family members.

National Guardsmen head to Balkans for Kosovo duty. Forty Army National Guardsmen from Arizona and Utah were heading to the Balkans June 27. Defense Department spokesmen said these soldiers had special skills in civil administration, language, engineering and public affairs.

The United States will provide 7,000 soldiers to the initial peacekeeping force in Kosovo, a province of Serbia. Most of those soldiers will come from the active force already stationed in Europe. They will replace the 2,000 marines who first entered the province that is about the size of metropolitan Los Angeles.

House panel want to keep home loan incentive for guard, reserve. The House Veterans' Affairs Committee sent to the floor a bill that would extend to reservists home loan eligibility past 2003.

The program extending eligibility to reservists who complete their six-year obligation was created in 1993, in the wake of Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

Because it is due to expire in less than six years, recruiters no longer offer this as an incentive to join the armed forces. The Army Reserve may miss its recruiting goal by 9,000 this year.

The House called for such a change last year, but it died in conference. The Senate did not include the extension in this year's bill.

The House bill calls for reservists to pay fees that are 0.75 percentage points higher than other home loan recipients.

Lackey to become USAR command sergeant major. Command Sgt. Maj. Alex R. Lackey, now the command sergeant major of the 100th Division (Institutional Training), will become the new Army Reserve command sergeant major.

He will replace Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Rucynski, who is retiring in October after 34 years of military service.

Lackey, who has 28 years of military service, will be the eighth command sergeant major of the Army Reserve. In his active duty tours, he served in the 82nd Airborne Division and 2nd Infantry Division.

AUSA president addresses House Army Caucus; members challenge AUSA to speak out.

AUSA's president told members of the House of Representatives' Army Caucus and their key staff members that the Army is overcommitted, under-resourced and underpaid. Rep. Chet Edwards, D-Texas and cochair of the caucus, said members were hearing that message, but it was critical for AUSA to build a grassroots network to get that word out to other congressmen. adding, that he and other caucus members would be willing to cosign a letter in support of improving the quality of life of soldiers, their families and retirees.

Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, USA, Ret., said he welcomed that help and said AUSA has been telling its chapter and regional leadership, as well as its 100,000 members that LegisLink on the AUSA web site - www.ausa.org - provides an effective means of communicating with Congress on a variety of issues.

He also explained to the caucus how AUSA's Torchbearer Campaign will help the new chief of staff build an Army that "is strategically responsive and can go anywhere." Speaking at the breakfast meeting June 23 on Capitol Hill, he said, "three percent of the Gross Domestic Product for defense is not enough." He stressed "that's an ecumenical message," meaning that all the services - both active and reserve components - have critical manpower and modernization needs.

Adding, the most difficult challenge facing Gen. Eric Shinseki, recently installed chief, is manning the force. "Recruiting is a big problem." For soldiers, "the number one issue is pay." Sullivan said the 106th Congress has taken a very important step in addressing the 14 percent pay gap between civilians and members of the armed forces, but the gap is real and it remains.

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GI Bill overhaul in danger. The Senate proposal to allow the transferring of Montgomery GI Bill benefits to family members, boosting monthly stipends and eliminating the \$1,200 enrollment fee may be doomed by the budget caps.

The Congressional Budget Office said these three benefits if approved would account for \$12 billion in unfunded benefits. To pay for those benefits, cuts of that amount would have to be made in other programs or money set aside for the Social Security trust fund would have to be diverted.

The caps were agreed to by Congress and the administration as part of the 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement. Under the agreement, the defense budget for Fiscal Year 2000 would be \$288.8 billion (and this includes strategic programs in the Department of Energy).

AUSA, in its resolutions, and testimony before this Congress, called for an increase in Montgomery GI Bill benefits to assist recruiting.

Other proposals that are endangered by the budget caps requirement to find offsetting cuts for each add: are allowing 225,000 servicemembers another chance to enroll in the Montgomery GI Bill, ending the drop in Survivor Benefits payments when the recipient turns 62 and repealing dual compensation limits.

Estimating costs of Kosovo. Congress asked this spring when it was debating a supplemental appropriation to cover military operations against Yugoslavia for estimates from the Defense Department and other budget officials as to how much it would cost to send a peacekeeping force in Kosovo for a year.

While those numbers have not yet surfaced, DoD did have figures on the peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. The first three years' total bill was \$6.7 billion. The bill for Fiscal Year 2000 is \$1.8 billion. The biggest part of that bill comes from the army. Army personnel costs for Bosnia for FY 2000 is more than \$292 million; its operations and maintenance spending is more than \$1.04 billion. The size of the Army forces in Bosnia is about the size of the projected Kosovo Force - 7,000 soldiers.

24th Infantry Division reactivated. The 24th Infantry Division was reactivated June 5 at ceremonies held on Fort Riley, Kan. The new "integrated division" and the 7th Infantry Division will lead three enhanced National Guard brigades each.

Leading those brigades means overseeing their training and readiness.

The enhanced brigades are trained and ready to deploy within 90 days after being called up. They are organized and equipped to be compatible with any army corps or division.

Advisory panel wants Army to provide data on women's upward mobility in senior ranks. A key defense advisory committee is asking the Army to provide more information by this fall "on their plans to compensate for the lack of upward mobility for women to the senior officer and enlisted grades; and also to describe the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) XXI."

Ms. Mary Wamsley, chair of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, said the panel also asked each of the services to provide information on attrition by race, gender and ethnicity for its fall meeting.

Army attrition rates for first-termers are running between 35 and 40 percent. The Navy's attrition rates in boot camp have started to rise to almost 20 percent.

As it has in the past, the committee has asked the Army to open Multiple Launch Rocket Systems positions to women and special operations aviation positions to women. The Colorado police official added, "We are also beginning to examine the issue of Navy berthing, specifically the restrictions on the assignment of women to submarines and have requested additional information on this topic."

For the past two years, gender-integrated training has been a hot congressional topic. The committee has strongly recommended that the services be allowed to continue training recruits as they see fit. This spring, a specially-created congressional commission reported to the House Armed Services Committee its split findings on continuing gender-integrated training.

Army budget chief sees Hill giving, Hill taking away. The Army, like the other services, is waiting to see what effect the Congress' passing of an emergency spending bill to pay for operations in Yugoslavia will have on next year's budget. Maj. Gen. Clair Gill, the Army's top budget official said, "Congress gave us a pile of money (in the supplemental appropriation that also included money for a 4.8 percent military pay raise and overhauling the pay tables) ...but they may take some of that back."

In answer to a question, he said, "We haven't sorted out who gets what money yet."

He said at the Association of the United States Army Institute of Land Warfare Breakfast June 10 in suburban Washington, "It could be a long, hot summer" as differences between the two authorization bills are ironed out and the impact of the supplemental becomes clearer.

Speaking to 150 defense industry leaders, Gill said unlike Fiscal Year 1998 when he began the Army's top budget official, he has a "generally positive feeling three-quarters of the way through 1999."

The president's budget calls for the Army budget to grow by \$2.4 billion, but Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, then Army chief of staff, testified the Army needed about \$5 billion more to fix both near and long-term readiness problems. Modernization of equipment is long-term readiness.

Gill said that in the Future Years Defense Program the Army will be receiving about \$28 billion of \$84 billion in additional money planned for the department. "We can feel a little bit better about the future...but it's not enough."

What he and his counterparts in the other services do not know is "what it's going to cost" for continuing operations in the Balkans now and exactly how much each service will receive in the \$15 plus billion supplemental that is also paying for disaster relief in the United States, Central America - including Nicaragua — and the Caribbean and repairing flood damaged U.S. facilities in Korea.

Gill was hopeful that the money from the supplemental appropriation would reach commands soon enough, "so there is no glitch in training."

Recruiting as viewed from Capitol Hill. The House of Representatives in its report on the Fiscal Year 2000 Defense Authorization Bill found recruiting trends alarming.

With the active Army possibly missing its recruiting goal by up to 6,000 soldiers and the Army Reserve missing its goal by 9,000, the House wants to add \$75.8 million for advertising and \$36.5 million for computer hardware and software for recruiters in the field. The administration and the Senate calls for \$682.9 million for all services' recruiting efforts.

The Army's share of that request is \$255.4 million.

The Senate report on the authorization bill said barring recruiters from schools produces results that are "contrary to the best interest of the individuals and the nations."

The House said recruiters should have the same access as other employers to high school students.

The Senate wants to tighten a law that would block federal funds from any institution that barred military recruiters from a college and university campus. The change would apply to institutions that still received federal funds if only one or two schools within the university barred recruiters. The House wants to raise the monthly stipend from \$150 to \$200 monthly for full-scholarship ROTC students. The cost is put at \$24 million.

The Senate and House propose increases in JROTC programs. The programs teach personal discipline, pride and ethics and are regarded by personnel officials as an excellent entry point to the armed forces. To improve the Army's program, the Senate wants the inspector general to review all offerings and compare the resources available to JROTC instructors in each service. The differences in the two versions of the bill will be resolved this summer.

(Editor's note: For the latest developments on Capitol Hill, check out the What's Hot and News Desk sections of the AUSA Web Site. Bookmark, www.ausea.org. For AUSA's electronic legislative newsletter, E-mail John Molino at jmolino@ausea.org.)