

and the heavy reliance on National Guard and Reserve forces.

This report clearly shows the range of support programs for families has expanded since the start of the War on Terror. However, multiple deployments and a high operations tempo mean different types of support are needed for families' continued success before, during, and after deployment. The survey results provide the Department of Defense a detailed roadmap for making sure families are taken care of during this important time.

Key findings from this study about the impact of deployment includes:

Almost half of respondents reported they have used or would use counseling services such as anger management classes and family counseling. Three quarters of those who stated they were better able to deal with subsequent deployments found counseling services to be helpful.

Two-thirds of military families surveyed did not have contact with their unit or unit network volunteer during the critical pre-deployment stage.

Less than one-half reported a consistent level of family support through the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases. Seventeen percent reported no support was available.

Many respondents are concerned that volunteers who help families adjust to life during deployment and what to expect after the reunion are becoming fatigued and subject to "burn-out." They stated that the leaders of unit family groups should be paid or have paid professional support personnel assigned.

Military family members with civilian jobs face pressure to avoid taking time off before, during, or after deployment. Sixty percent of military spouses are employed outside the home and many have either quit their jobs or are considering it.

Military families are worried about how the reunion will go with their deployed family member even as they are worrying about their servicemember's safety in the field. Unfortunately, many families are not taking advantage of specific return and reunion briefings and activities.

Many respondents expressed that when entering a second or third deployment, they carry unresolved anxieties and expectations from the last deployment(s). While they may have gained knowledge of resources available to them, respondents whose servicemember deployed multiple times reported being more fatigued and increasingly concerned about their family relationships.

Although challenged by the demands of deployment, families noted they are proud of their servicemember and their service to our country. They understand that family support is primarily their personal responsibility, but they expect "The Military" to provide support as well.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEAL WITH STRESS OF MULTIPLE DEPLOYMENTS

The National Military Families Association has developed a series of recommendations for how the Department of Defense (DoD) can better train and support military staff and civilian volunteers to assist military families, including:

Expand program and information outreach. Create formats for families to access support services and maintain touch with their commands and unit family group that live too far

from either the unit or from other military families.

Assist families in developing in realistic expectations and then meet them. Educate military families about what to expect before, during, and after deployments.

Direct more resources to support family volunteers. Increase the level of resources and paid professionals both counselors and administrative, to support the logistics of family support and conducting family readiness activities.

Address return and reunion challenges throughout the deployment cycle. Help with the reintegration of a servicemember with the family after deployment.

Recognize that family time is important. Encourage service leaders to give family time a higher priority when planning operational activities, especially for servicemembers who have only been back from deployment for a few months.

Continue deployment briefings throughout the year. Never assume families have all the information they need. Ongoing deployment briefings can especially help new spouses or the parents of new recruits. Experienced family members also may find new challenges during a subsequent deployment or find the accumulated stress from multiple deployments creates the need for re-engagement with the family readiness/support group or for accessing different support personnel.

VII. IMPACT OF DEPLOYMENT OF NATIONAL GUARD

In addition, Madam Speaker, the large and extended deployment of National Guard units overseas has undermined the ability of the United States to deal with terrorist attacks or natural disasters. For example, State officials in Louisiana and Mississippi struggle to overcome the absence of National Guard members from their States in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. In Louisiana, about 100 of the National Guard's high-water vehicles remain abroad—even as the State continues to rebuild from Hurricane Katrina. Coastal North Carolina is missing nearly half its Humvee fleet, and Guard officials there say shortages have forced the State to pool equipment from different units into one pot of hurricane supplies.

In addition, the equipment the Guard needs to help in the aftermath of natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina is in shorter supply because the gear is in use in combat zones, is battle-damaged, or has been loaned to cover gaps in other units.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, our troops in Iraq have never faltered and they have never failed. They were never defeated in battle. They won the war they were sent to fight. They completed their mission. They performed magnificently.

They have earned the right to return home and be reunited with their families and loved ones. Now is not the time for us in Congress to falter or fail. Now is the time to embrace a plan for our troops in Iraq that offers a chance of success. We need a plan that will work. There is only one such plan. It is the Murtha Plan I support.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for joining us again and again pointing out that she, like so many of us, has said good-bye to troops, mainly to Reservists and members of the National Guard who have been deployed and re-

deployed, and our hearts go out to their families and, as we have at the outset at the end of every one of these Iraq Watches, spoke about the difference between the warriors and the war, and we continue to salute them. And I thank the gentlewoman from Texas.

We only have a few more minutes, and I want the gentleman from Massachusetts and the gentlewoman from California to have the opportunity to close. But I do want to thank the Members for coming down here from New York and Maryland, Texas, California, and Massachusetts and say to the American people that we come here out of love of country. It is because of love of country and because we are more often than not denied a voice on this floor, not only denied a voice on this floor but in the committees, where oversight and review is so important.

Why is that so, you might ask? It is so, unfortunately, because this is a one-party town where our erstwhile colleagues on the other side are in control of the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the executive branch of government. And they are able to shut off debate and stifle this side of the aisle even from coming forward with alternative resolutions on matters so important.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 42. An act to ensure that the right of an individual to display the flag of the United States on residential property not be abridged.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 5441. An act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 5441) "An Act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.", requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. GREGG, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BYRD, Mr. INOUE, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.