

Trans. Ass. Prog.

STATEMENT OF THE
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(PERSONNEL SUPPORT, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION)
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND
EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
U.S. HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES
APRIL 18, 1996

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**Prepared Statement of The Honorable Carolyn H. Becraft
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Personnel Support, Families and Education)
Before the Education, Training, Employment Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
April 18, 1996**

Mr. Chairman AND members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY AND discuss the scope and effectiveness of our Transition Assistance Program (TAP), for military service members and their families. At the outset, I wish to thank you for your continued support of our efforts on behalf of the patriotic men and women who serve in our country's Armed Forces.

since the enactment of public-law 101-510, the department of defense implemented "operation TRANSITION," as we sometimes call it -- an extensive ARRAY of services and benefits designed to equip separating service members with the basic job-hunting skills and tools necessary to secure SUCCESSFUL employment in america's work force. we are committed to preparing and assisting separating SERVICE MEMBERS and their families with the challenge of starting new careers as civilians. we must provide these services to our departing military personnel because it is the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. I am pleased to tell you, that with your help, we are meeting the challenge.

operation transition is an overwhelming success. we are especially appreciative of the extremely positive cooperation and support that we have received from the departments of labor and veterans affairs, state employment agencies, and our own military services. everyone associated with this program has gone and continues to go the extra mile to make it successful.

I would like to summarize where we are today in providing transition services to our separating personnel and then address specific elements of our transition program. We provide transition services at over 258 military installations world-wide. each of the military services, in conjunction with dod, the DEPARTMENTS of labor and veterans affairs, and state employment service agencies, have effective transition programs in place to fit the needs of separating military members and their families. transition Services provided by the department of defense, department of labor and the veteran's administration include preseparation counseling, transition assistance seminars, automated employment assistance, job fairs, and veterans and disabled veterans BENEFITS COUNSELING. with the committee's help, we have been able to provide our separating service members with adequate separation pay and useful transition services.

I would like to update you on several aspects of our program.

Preseparation counseling. In 1994, we fielded a standard preseparation counseling checklist, dd form 2648 covering the items identified in section 1142 of title 10, united states code. the checklist is provided to all separating service members and retained in THEIR permanent personnel file.

this past year, we also developed a new preseparation video. this video provides a broad overview of the preseparation counseling process the VIDEO will help us reach those individuals serving aboard ships and in isolated areas.

Transition assistance SEMINARS. DOD HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT AND JOB TRAINING ASSISTANCE, RESUME WRITING, BENEFIT INFORMATION AND FINANCIAL COUNSELING THROUGH TRANSITION ASSISTANCE (tap) SEMINARS. THESE SEMINARS ARE

NORMALLY GIVEN OVER A THREE-DAY PERIOD AND COMPRISE BUT ONE SEGMENT OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH OPERATION TRANSITION. EACH MILITARY INSTALLATION WORKS WITH LOCAL DOL (EMPLOYMENT SERVICE) REPRESENTATIVES TO MANAGE THE TAP SEMINARS. FOR FISCAL YEAR 1995, DOL PROVIDED A TOTAL OF 3,800 TAP SEMINARS AT 204 MILITARY INSTALLATIONS. through THE SUPERB COOPERATION OF DOL AND THE AMERICA'S JOB BANK (AJB), TRANSITION SITES WERE ABLE TO START ACCESSING THE AJB VIA INTERNET THIS PAST SUMMER. THIS NEW CAPABILITY ELIMINATED THE WEEKLY MAILING OF DISKETTES CONTAINING JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

AUTOMATED employment assistance. The Department's investment in automated employment assistance programs has been extremely successful. THE DEFENSE OUTPLACEMENT REFERRAL SYSTEM (DORS) IS THE AUTOMATED REGISTRY AND REFERRAL SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES potential employers with MINI-RESUMES From MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL AND THEIR SPOUSES. DORS IS A VITAL PART OF OPERATION TRANSITION. THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS registered IN DORS has risen FROM 7,980 IN FY 1994 TO 13,431 IN FY 1995, AN INCREASE OF 68 PERCENT.

EMPLOYER REQUESTS FOR RESUMES have gone FROM 10,533 IN FY 1994 TO 26,578 IN FY 1995, A 152 PERCENT INCREASE. we have sent 881,448 RESUMES TO EMPLOYERS IN FY 1995, WHILE 430,981 WERE SENT DURING FY 1994, AN INCREASE OF 105 PERCENT. As of the end of march 1996, employers now have the capability to access dors resumes via internet. additionally, our dors resumes will be converted to run in a microsoft windows environment by july 1996. THE second component of our automated system, a

TRANSITION BULLETIN BOARD (TBB), ALLOWS EMPLOYERS TO LIST JOB OPENINGS THAT ARE then ELECTRONICALLY TRANSMITTED TO MILITARY INSTALLATIONS. IN FY 1994, 16,827 JOB OPPORTUNITIES WERE LISTED AND 44,163 WERE LISTED IN FY 1995, AN INCREASE OF 163 PERCENT. by the end of august 1996, employers and departing service members will also have access to the tbb via internet.

OVERSEAS JOB FAIRS. Our separating service members, who are stationed overseas face a unique employment challenge. THEIR ability to actively pursue Job Opportunities is often limited by time, DISTANCE, and availability to potential employers. SINCE WE CAN NOT GET THE SERVICE MEMBERS TO EMPLOYERS, DOD TAKES THE EMPLOYERS TO THE SERVICE MEMBER. WITH THE STRONG SUPPORT OF THE MILITARY SERVICES OVERSEAS, DOD SPONSORS JOB FAIRS IN EUROPE AND THE FAR EAST. THE JOB FAIRS ARE TREMENDOUS MORALE BOOSTERS FOR OUR PEOPLE OVERSEAS AND GIVE EMPLOYERS ACCESS TO A GROUP OF OUTSTANDING POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES.

FROM 1992 THROUGH 1995, DOD SPONSORED 15 JOB FAIRS FOR OUR SERVICE MEMBERS OVERSEAS. ALMOST 21,000 SERVICE MEMBERS have ATTENDED THESE FAIRS. Overall, 3,566 OR 17 PERCENT OF ALL ATTENDEES RECEIVED FIRM JOB OFFERS AS A RESULT OF CONTACTS MADE AT THE JOB FAIRS.

VETERANS COUNSELORS OVERSEAS. the department, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, PROVIDES VETERANS SERVICES AND COUNSELING IN EUROPE and the far east ON ESSENTIAL VETERANS BENEFITS INFORMATION for THOSE SERVICE MEMBERS NEARING SEPARATION. veterans' counselors are funded jointly by va and dod.

the va counselors also provide Disabled transition assistance program (dtap) briefings for those service members that are separated for medical reasons. OUR TRANSITION MANAGERS AND SERVICE MEMBERS OVERSEAS ARE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR VOCAL SUPPORT FOR THIS INITIATIVE.

Unfortunately, as a result of the continuing resolution, overseas counselors were required to return to the united states in september 1995.

COST EFFECTIVENESS. WE BELIEVE THE TRANSITION PROGRAM MORE THAN PAYS FOR ITSELF THROUGH REDUCED UNEMPLOYMENT COSTS TO THE DEPARTMENT. RECENT DOL AND UNITED STATES ARMY STUDIES SHOW THAT THE PROGRAM HELPS SERVICE MEMBERS FIND JOBS MORE QUICKLY. The transition program combined with other economic factors including availability of jobs and the prevailing conditions of the economy have accounted FOR A COST AVOIDANCE OF \$152 MILLION ANNUALLY of UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION. IN 1992, THE DEPARTMENT SPENT AN AVERAGE OF \$491 MILLION ON UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION COMPARED TO \$336 MILLION IN 1995, with roughly the same number of departees.

The Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1996 directed the Department to report on phasing out our transition assistance program and provide, what, if any, residual funding is required. the conferees expressed concern that the Transition Assistance Program has become a permanent entity, even though it was INITIATED as a result of the drawdown. the report language was based on the assumption that the Transition Assistance Program was initiated to assist service members only during the drawdown period. under public law 101-510, three permanent TRANSITION services were established: preseparation counseling, employment assistance, and relocation assistance. congressman montgomery, who

was instrumental in the design and the enactment of public law 101-510, wrote to SECRETARY perry in october of last year, reaffirming the congressional expectation and the intent that the services provided by the transition assistance program would be PERMANENTLY available to all service members leaving the military. in our report to the Appropriations Committee, We inform the Committee that we do not view the transition assistance program as a temporary program and we do not intend to phase the program out. Our transition program is a vital component of our Quality of Life (QOL) initiative. We are working closely with the Military departments to review and evaluate various strategies for delivering the program in the most cost effective manner possible without degrading the quality of services provided.

OUR ENTIRE SOCIETY, NOT JUST DOD, FACES THE DIFFICULT QUESTION OF HOW TO "TRANSITION" FROM THE COLD WAR ERA TO THE POST-COLD WAR WORLD. THERE ARE NO EASY, QUICK ANSWERS. THE PROCESS CAN BE FRUSTRATING AND AT TIMES PAINFUL. WE HAVE WORKED DILIGENTLY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT TO develop REASONABLE, PRUDENT, AND EFFECTIVE strategies for PROVIDING TRANSITION SERVICES FOR OUR SEPARATING PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES. TRANSITION SERVICES ARE VITAL TO ENSURING THAT THE QUALITY OF LIFE REMAINS HIGH FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL, EVEN AS THEY PREPARE TO LEAVE THE MILITARY SERVICE AND EMBARK UPON NEW CIVILIAN CAREERS. TO QUOTE UNDER SECRETARY DORN, "I THINK WE'RE BEING A SMART EMPLOYER BY MAINTAINING TRANSITION PROGRAMS, SUCH JOB COUNSELING AND SOME OF THE COMPUTERIZED JOB BULLETIN BOARDS. I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR US TO do THAT - EVERY

EMPLOYER OUGHT TO PROVIDE TRANSITION PROGRAMS LIKE THAT,
AND DOD HAPPENS TO BE A LEADER IN TRANSITION, AND WE'LL
KEEP THESE programs IN PLACE."

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED INTEREST AND COMMITMENT TO THE MEN
AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO HAVE SERVED THEIR
COUNTRY HONORABLY AND WELL.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am prepared and
WILL BE HAPPY TO answer any questions you may have.