

STATEMENT

OF

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Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Flake, thank you for inviting me today to discuss the progress the Department of Defense has made in recent years on sexual assault. Ms. McGinn has provided you an overview of the Department-wide efforts. I would like to focus on the efforts of my office, the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) working in partnership with the Military Services. As a team, we are making great headway to institutionalize, standardize and professionalize our programs. Once we achieve all three, we hope to realize our vision: A culture free of sexual assault.

Background: What Guides Us

Before I go into detail regarding our programs, I want to be clear on the reasons why we are so passionate about stopping sexual assault in the military. These reasons serve as the basis for many of our programs. First, sexual assault levies a tremendous human toll. It can disrupt lives and destroy the human spirit. Although many victims will recover, some will never be the same. The lives of these soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines will be forever altered. The bottom line is sexual assault is a crime that undermines the core values of our Armed Forces.

When we turn to the battlefield, we know that sexual assault degrades mission readiness and combat effectiveness. A sexual assault reverberates throughout a unit and beyond, degrading readiness by reducing the Service members' ability to work effectively as a team. In addition, unit leadership attention shifts from the normal duties of maintaining readiness to addressing an alleged perpetrator's misconduct or witness and victim needs and restoring the unit's cohesion and trust.

Finally, taking a global view, sexual assault can subvert strategic goodwill. The impact of one sexual assault may last for years. The strained relations due to sexual assault reports in Iraq, Japan, and other countries illustrate the negative global impact of a single Service member's criminal actions.

There is no doubt in my mind that addressing the human toll is what motivates us. Past that, the reasons laid out above show the many different ways a sexual

assault can impact the Department. Recognizing these various “touch points” has been key in the development and implementation of our prevention and response strategies.

Our Approach to Prevention

Recognizing that audiences are motivated by different messages and messengers, we are implementing a multi-tiered prevention strategy. Our *Sexual Assault Prevention Strategy* was developed in FY08 with the assistance of civilian experts including Dr. Pat McGann from Men Can Stop Rape, Dr. Antonia Abbey from Wayne State University, Dr. Paul Schewe from University of Illinois, Chicago, and Gail Stern of Catharsis Consulting. The Strategy continues to be the centerpiece of the Department’s SAPR efforts in FY09 and beyond.

The strategy uses the “Spectrum of Prevention” as the framework for creating our world-wide prevention program. The Spectrum of Prevention describes several populations and levels of influence that are appropriate targets for outreach. Activities range from training for individuals to influencing policy at the highest levels of an organization. By addressing sexual assault at each level of the Spectrum, the Department’s goal is to be at the forefront of prevention nationally and provide a model for others to follow. As we do this, we begin to institutionalize our prevention efforts which we believe will lead to long-term success.

There are many actions we plan to implement with our Prevention Strategy. This year we launched an initiative to change attitudes and expectations within military society. The Spectrum of Prevention tells us with whom we need to be talking. To get to the idea of *what* should we be saying, we again turned to national prevention experts. Their recommendation was to develop a research based program that, at its core, relies on bystander intervention. In addition, our experts advised that we tie all of our current and forthcoming interventions together with a powerful social marketing campaign. To do so, the Department partnered with Men Can Stop Rape, a non-profit organization well known for its excellence in social marketing. After adapting their successful campaign and extensive testing with our internal audiences, we knew our message would resonate well within DoD. The resulting theme, “My Strength Is for Defending:

Preventing Sexual Assault Is Part of My Duty,” is focused on the ability of every Service member to prevent sexual assault by taking an active role in looking out for the welfare of friends and co-workers. It also highlights the linkage of preventing sexual assault to each Service member’s responsibility for mission readiness. SAPRO and the Services have developed training and education materials to reach every level of the DoD community with this bystander intervention message.

The Department is not the first institution to attempt a comprehensive prevention program. Given his history as the president of the sixth largest university in the country, the Secretary of Defense requested the Association of American Universities (AAU) work with my office to identify promising campus SAPR programs. With the help of AAU and the Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), SAPRO identified 10 college programs for further research. SAPRO made contact with these universities to collect and review additional program information, and identified the University of Kentucky and Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, for site visits.

SAPRO staff members completed visits with the University of Kentucky and [Rutgers](#), and took away lessons on several innovative prevention programs. The “Green Dot” program at the University of Kentucky is an innovative violence prevention strategy based on several research areas, including social diffusion theory, bystander intervention, and perpetrator behaviors. At Rutgers, members of Students Challenging Realities and Educating Against Myths or “SCREAM” Theater participate in improvisational theater performances that educate their peers on sexual assault prevention and encourage bystander intervention. Both of these innovative programs are based in research, have data to support their efficacy, and have promise for and applicability to the SAPR program. As the *Sexual Assault Prevention Strategy* is refined during the next year, SAPRO will determine how to incorporate these programs’ best practices into the revised strategy.

While we are spending a lot of effort to get out the message of our prevention programs, we also need to ensure we can determine if those messages are being understood and retained by our various audiences. To that end, this year we are

starting to field a series of surveys which will tell us who we have reached. These results will be reported back to the Department through the Personnel and Readiness strategic plan.

Expanded Response Efforts

While institutionalizing our prevention program, we need to ensure we have robust response programs in place should a sexual assault occur. A recent addition to our response program grew out of a Department of Justice-funded project with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape. Entitled *Strengthening Military-Civilian Community Partnerships to Respond to Sexual Assault*, the project developed an interactive two-day training curriculum that helps civilian agencies assist military victims of sexual assault and their families. This program allowed us to share knowledge on military systems, protocols, and culture to improve services to military sexual assault victims. It also helped build SAPRO's awareness of the perspectives and initiatives of its community partners. We are currently researching the possibility of a second phase of this project.

We know from talking to victims that one of the hardest decisions is how to take the first step to get help. We need to make that as simple and as available as possible. To that end, we have been working with the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) to improve care to military sexual assault victims. RAINN hosts the secure, live, web-based National Sexual Assault Online Hotline, which enables victims of sexual assault to reach out to receive help via an instant-messaging format. RAINN also operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline, which provides victims a toll-free telephone number. SAPRO is now working with RAINN to enhance both its hotlines to provide additional avenues for military members. These will provide victims with crisis support and information about reporting securely and anonymously, and connect victims with a local Sexual Assault Response Coordinator.

SAPR Oversight

Since its establishment, my office has served as the single point of responsibility in the Department for oversight. Our office has conducted a wide range of oversight

activities, including the mandated annual reports to Congress on the Military Services and the Academies, as well as, responding to congressional inquiries and DoD leadership updates. In addition, our Policy Assistance Visits have provided insights to assist us in strengthening our policy.

Based on a recommendation from the GAO, the Department recognized the need for our oversight activities to expand. In 2009, SAPRO and a team of internal and external experts conducted an offsite meeting to discuss the most effective way for the Department to conduct this expanded oversight mission. We documented the current state of our oversight efforts and ended by identifying the future state which reflects a more comprehensive framework. In addition to providing important guidance on those objectives, another major benefit of this process was the more intangible consensus building atmosphere which is key to long-term success.

Given the Department-wide focus of the oversight effort, we sought to keep these objectives as strategic as possible. The following three objectives served as the basis for designing the Oversight Framework, I'll describe shortly:

1. To consistently and effectively gauge how well we are executing against policy;
2. To provide clear and comprehensive oversight of DoD-wide SAPR efforts to improve program effectiveness; and
3. To standardize evaluating and reporting procedures across DoD.

These objectives chartered our path. In reviewing the SAPR program within DoD, we identified eight major areas of oversight activity, ranging from policy review, communications and training, to SAPR data and metrics.

It quickly became clear that the execution of this oversight approach across these eight activity areas—coupled with SAPRO's current duties—would require my office to expand its staffing. In response, during FY09, SAPRO created a plan to reorganize and add additional manpower, bringing the total number of projected SAPRO positions to 21 by the end of FY11. This new workforce structure is funded in the FY 10 and FY

11 budgets. As the reorganization is finalized, the Department will consider recommendations by the Government Accountability Office and the Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military Services, which could affect the final office configuration.

We have begun the implementation of the staffing process needed to support the expanded oversight efforts. For example, we have an Air Force O-6 to serve as the Deputy Director of Programs, as well as, a senior-level civilian to serve as Oversight Program Manager and lead the implementation of our oversight program. The hiring process is underway for the other positions needed for this oversight function. This oversight framework coupled with the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database discussed in Ms. McGinn's testimony will ensure we can track our progress.

The development of the Oversight Framework has truly been a collaborative effort across the Department. While SAPRO takes the lead in the implementation, this is really a process involving all the Services and several other stakeholder groups designed to ensure our SAPR programs are achieving the desired objectives. It is this kind of DoD-wide endeavor that tells me the Department is making great headway in the institutionalization of the SAPR program.

Our Way Ahead

Our task is daunting since we recruit from a society where sexual assault is one of the most underreported violent crimes. We train more than two million Service Members in prevention and we train a cadre of responders, including Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Victim Advocates, Commanders, Trial Counsel, Investigators, Chaplains, and Medical and Mental Health Teams who all work together to provide the best care possible to the victims and hold offenders accountable.

Research suggests that changing attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs takes eight to 10 years. We are seeing those changes occur especially in the support for the program from our senior military leaders. I have engaged with senior commanders in the Pentagon, in the field, and with the Superintendents and Commandants of our Military

Academies. They are committed to this program and they are knowledgeable and involved.

The oversight program, as recommended by the GAO, will ensure we are moving in the right direction. Our by-stander intervention prevention program will have an impact on many generations of Service Members; from the newest recruit to the most senior members of our Department all have a role in stopping sexual assault. And we will continue to do all that we can to reduce the stigma associated with reporting this crime.

Our Service members have dedicated their lives to protecting our country. Together we are working to provide them the protection from sexual assault that they deserve.

In closing, I would like to thank the Committee for their interest and support. And I would like to thank every member of each of the GAO audit teams and every member of the DTF SAMS. The results of their dedicated work has culminated in recommendations that will move our program forward and give us the support and resources we need to make progress. Working with these professionals has truly been a pleasure.

Thank you for your time. I welcome your questions at this time.