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BY THE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY

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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

MILITARY PERSONNEL POLICY

REGARDING

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

BEFORE THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

NOVEMBER 30, 2010

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Wittman and members of this distinguished Committee – on behalf of the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R), I am providing the Department of Defense’s comments on the recommendations and findings of the House Armed Service Committee’s report, “Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades After the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel,” I thank the Committee for the opportunity to speak about this very important subject. Professional Military Education (PME), as you well know, is essential to the growth of professional men and women in today’s military. We take this task very seriously and look at it continuously through the Military Education Coordination Council (MECC) and the accreditation process for Joint Education (PAJE) as is outlined in the Chairman’s Instruction 1800.01D Titled: Officer Professional Military Education Policy - more commonly known as the OPMEP.

In reviewing the recommendations and findings in this study and working with the MECC, I can assure you that some of the recommendations have already found their way into our system. For example, in Fiscal Year 2009, my office asked the Director of the Joint Staff to review the JPME I instructor positions to see if these positions could qualify for Joint Duty Credit. This report has been reviewed by the USD(P&R) and sent to the Chairmen and Ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. In addition, my office drafted a legislative change to the Fiscal Year 2011 NDAA in the

Omnibus Bill to change the language in §621 providing Joint Duty credit to JPME I instructors on a case by case basis, as is suggested by the Report.

Let me say that the Secretary has full faith and confidence in the Chairman and the Services' ability to provide an outstanding PME program to the men and women serving in our military today. In addition, the Department has been working closely with the Joint Staff and the Services in reviewing all the findings and recommendations of this report. As outlined in our September letter to the Chairmen of the HASC and SASC, the USD(P&R), in conjunction with the Joint Staff and the Services, formed a working group to discuss the 39 recommendations outlined in this study. The Department, in conjunction with the Joint Staff, has established a Senior Leader Group to review the recommendations of the MECC working group with regards to the HASC Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations' PME study.

In general, we agree with the report's basic finding that although the PME system is excellent, the Department needs to improve portions of the current PME system to meet the ever changing needs of the modern profession at arms. In fact, that is one of the critical missions of the MECC.

We believe the report has many valid recommendations, but we are not comfortable at this time going into the details of the recommendations in the report until the Senior Leader Group has had the opportunity to review the MECC working group's suggestions. At that time, the Department will prepare a report that will be staffed through the Office of the Secretary of Defense and forwarded to this committee for

review. The report will outline the way forward on how the Department, Joint Staff, and Services will proceed with the recommendations of the study and it will identify the office or Service that will have primary responsibility for addressing the recommendations. We appreciate your understanding that the Department must fully vet the report and review all the consequences and costs that may be involved in implementing the recommendations. As you know, the Secretary is presently looking at a zero-base budgeting process to see how the Department can reduce its costs while continuing to field the most professional military in the world.

The MECC working group has the right people on it and they are looking at the report in depth. We have every confidence that they will appropriately address the report's recommendations and findings, allowing the Department to issue the guidance necessary to forge a cost effective and educationally sound way forward for PME.

Again, I want to thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of the Secretary and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness on this topic, and look forward to your questions.