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DOD RELEASES REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AT SERVICE ACADEMIES

The Department of Defense today released the report of the Defense Task Force on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies.

The report is an assessment of the policies, practices and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment and related misconduct at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. It contains specific findings and recommendations aimed at strengthening education and training, victim support, offender accountability, confidentiality, prevention and case management at both institutions. The Air Force Academy was not included in this effort, as it had undergone a similar review by the Fowler Commission in 2003.

The Task Force was mandated by the Defense Authorization Act of 2004 and consisted of six military and six civilian members. It was co-chaired by Vice Admiral Gerald L. Hoewing, Chief of Naval Personnel, and Ms. Delilah Rumburg, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape.

In introducing the Co-Chairs at a press conference this afternoon, Dr. David S. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, stated: "Sexual harassment and violence are an anathema to honorable service to our nation. Sexual misconduct of any sort is absolutely contrary to the values of our society and our armed forces. All members of the Armed Forces have the right to expect to be treated with professionalism, dignity and respect, on duty and off duty." He also thanked the Co-Chairs and the entire Task Force "...for a job truly well done."

The Task Force gathered information by conducting site visits; communicating with numerous individuals, including victims; reviewing the Department of Defense survey data; reviewing Academy and Service policies, reports, and data; consulting with subject matter experts; and communicating with related committees and task forces. Their report contains over 40 specific findings and attendant recommendations.

The report can be seen on the Task Force website at www.dtic.mil/dtfs.

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INTERNET AVAILABILITY: This document and the Task Force report are available on DefenseLink, a World Wide Web Server on the Internet, at: <http://www.defenselink.mil>.