

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 15, 2001

NATIONAL SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE/NSPD-2

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND
BUDGET
CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT
THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Improving Military Quality of Life

Background: A strong, modern military is the foundation of both the peace we enjoy and the successful implementation of our national security policy. At the core of our military strength is the individual Service Member -- the men and women in uniform who serve our Nation. To be effective, members of the Armed Forces must be highly motivated and well trained.

No aspect of our current defense posture is more worrisome than the decline in the standard of living of our Service members and their families which has taken place in recent years. Reversing this trend and improving their quality of life is a principal priority of my Administration.

Taskings:

I. As an initial step in achieving this goal, the Secretary of Defense shall undertake a review of measures for improving the quality of life for our military personnel and provide recommendations for their implementation. This review should:

- Develop proposals for military pay and benefits to help ensure that we can attract and retain the high quality personnel vital to the success of our Armed Forces.
- Develop options to improve military housing to ensure that our Service members or their families do not live in sub-standard housing.
- Identify innovative approaches to improve health care to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of our personnel and provided efficiently.
- Provide enhanced military training to ensure that our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are properly equipped, trained, and supported to carry out the challenging and often dangerous missions that we assign to them. The review should address the current under-funded requirements that remain in training facilities, equipment, and operations.
- Consider ways to strengthen military family support networks. Members of the Armed Forces prepared to put their lives on the line need to know that their service is assisting their family back home when assistance is needed.
- Review the quality of education provided by the Department of Defense to the children of military service members, both at home and abroad, including an examination of the infrastructure involved in that effort.

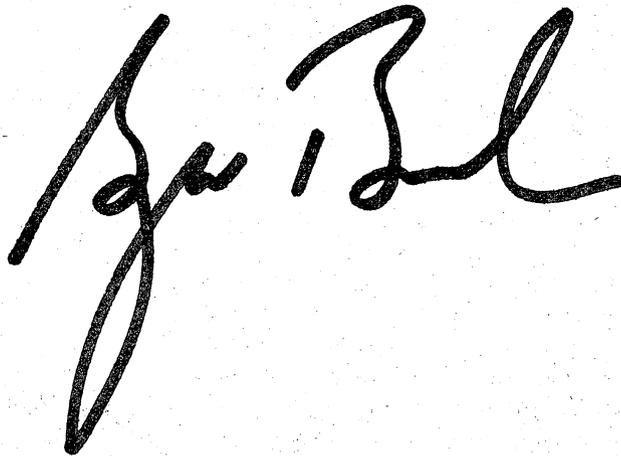
- Voting. Our men and women in uniform and their families must be confident that they are able to exercise a right for which they put their lives on the line -- the right to vote. The Secretary of Defense shall examine the procedures for absentee voting by members of the Department of Defense and their families and shall provide recommendations as to how the Department of Defense, working within its own structure and with the various states, can better assure that every vote cast is counted.

II. Another central component of my Administration's effort to renew the bond between the Commander in Chief and the men and women of the Armed Forces is meeting our commitments to our veterans. Accordingly, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall undertake a review of measures to improve the quality of our assistance to veterans. These measures should include:

- Improving health care for those veterans eligible for treatment in the VA system by enhancing access to timely, high quality care. Specifically, the review should identify the full scope of measures that, together, will define a coordinated health care benefit for these veterans and will assure constantly high quality. To accomplish this task, a Veterans Health Care Task Force comprised of officials and clinicians from the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense, leaders of veterans and military service organizations, and leaders in health care quality should be convened to make recommendations on improvement.
- Ensuring the timely processing of disability compensation claims. The review should explore innovative ways to eliminate the existing backlog of disability compensation claims and to revise the complicated processes that currently delay the timely provision of benefits to veterans. The system for handling veterans' claims must be modernized and claims must be handled fairly.

Both the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should consult with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to ensure that budget implications are appropriately considered in any recommendations they make.

The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs should promptly complete their respective reviews and provide recommendations on the above measures and any additional steps than might be taken to improve the quality of life of our Armed Forces and veterans.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. W. Bush". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "G" and a stylized "W".