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**TOTAL ARMY STRONG PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE**

**Headquarters, Department of the Army  
Office of the Chief of Public Affairs  
Washington, D.C.  
Aug. 20, 2014**

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE FOR TOTAL ARMY STRONG**

**1. REFERENCES**

- a. Chief of Staff of the Army Total Army Strong IPR to CSA (6 May 2014)
- b. Secretary of the Army Total Army Strong Information Paper (24 Jun 2014)
- c. Army Family Covenant, original signed Oct 2007; resigned Oct 2009 and Oct 2011.

**2. PUBLIC AFFAIRS (PA) POSTURE: Active.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

By 2007, Soldiers and Families had endured six years of persistent conflict and were experiencing the cumulative effects of war. The CSA called the Army "out of balance" and created a series of Army-wide initiatives to restore balance across the Force. Army Initiative (AI) #2 was to "Improve support services to equip and empower Families of an Expeditionary Army at War".

Army Initiative #2 focused attention and resources on quality of life (QOL) as defined by Soldier and Family programs, health care, housing, children, employment, and community support. From this initiative emerged the Army Family Covenant (AFC) and the corresponding Soldier Family Action Plan (SFAP). The SFAP supported the AFC as a way ahead to strengthen and standardize Soldier and Family programs. The Army made great strides to improve quality of life through the SFAP, AFC, and related initiatives.

In March 2013, the Army prepared for sequestration and its associated impact on Soldier and Family programs. In July 2013, the CSA tasked OACSIM to, in part, develop a new commitment for what the Army can and cannot do to maintain the current quality of life. CSA said the commitment should reflect the Army profession, our culture of taking care of people, and honoring the sacrifices of Families. On May 6, 2014, the CSA approved "Total Army Strong" as a restatement of Army Senior Leader support to succeed the AFC.

Total Army Strong provides a platform to balance and reshape current programs in a changing environment while maintaining Senior Leader commitment to the Army Family. The Secretary of the Army approved Total Army Strong and recommended the development of a timeline for a soft launch leading up to the AUSA convention in October 2014. The Secretary noted that the

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Army must be prepared to respond to questions on why the focus shifted from the AFC and specific program improvements to Total Army Strong.

#### 4. TOTAL ARMY STRONG LANGUAGE

The Strength of the Nation is built on the readiness and resilience of every member of the premier All-Volunteer Total Army – every Soldier, civilian, and Family member.

We will uphold the Army's responsibility to provide benefits and high-quality services that are components of a professional force dedicated to the Army for the long term.

The Army remains steadfast in its commitment to:

- Maintain the trust between Leaders and their Soldiers, Families, and civilians
- Foster an environment that promotes adaptability and self reliance
- Promote physical, emotional, social, Family, and spiritual strengths
- Honor the service and sacrifices of those who serve our Nation

#### 5. PURPOSE

Provide talking points and questions and answers for Army Senior Leaders, commanders, and PAOs to use prior to, and beyond, the October 2014 Association of the United States Army (AUSA) annual meeting.

#### 6. THEME

The strength of our Nation is our Army; the strength of our Army is our Soldiers; the strength of our Soldiers is our Families. This is what makes us Total Army Strong.

#### 7. KEY MESSAGES

- Total Army Strong maintains trust between leaders, Soldiers, Families, and civilians.
- We remain committed to Soldiers and Families and to sustain a system of programs and services to mitigate the unique demands of military life, foster life skills, strengthen resilience, and promote a strong and ready Army.
- As the nation and Army prepare for the future, we must anticipate the evolving needs of Soldiers and Families. We will find a new balance to support our premier all-volunteer Army through responsible stewardship, program assessment and the promotion of self reliance.
- Total Army Strong gives commanders flexibility to prioritize and adjust programs and services regardless of geographic location.

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#### 8. TALKING POINTS

- Total Army Strong marks the evolution of the fully executed Army Family Covenant. The Army Family Covenant was limited in application because of its connection to specific programs. Total Army Strong provides a broader, tailorable platform from which commanders can deliver essential programs to support a ready and resilient Army.
- Total Army Strong gives commanders flexibility to prioritize and adjust programs and services regardless of geographic location. Further, it underscores our commitment and responsibility to our Total Army Family – Soldiers, Families and civilian employees.
- As the nation and Army prepare for the future, we must anticipate the evolving needs of Soldiers and Families. We will find a new balance to support our premier all-volunteer Army through responsible stewardship, program assessment and the promotion of self reliance.
- Decisions to adjust programs will be made strategically, but executed locally, and will ensure a balance of services to promote long-term Soldier and Family readiness.
- We will continue to refine programs to ensure they efficiently serve the most critical needs of our Soldiers, Families and communities. We will keep our force healthy, ready and self reliant.

***[NOTE: Local commanders are encouraged to discuss, internally and externally, improvements in local Family programs, medical care, housing, Soldier and Family member education, and child, youth, and school services.]***

#### 9. Qs & As

**Q1: What programs and services in support of the Total Army will be reduced, combined, restructured, or eliminated as a result of sequestration or other budgetary considerations?**

A1: The Army has not cut any Family programs as a result of the Budget Control Act (BCA) spending limits. However, we continue to carefully scrutinize programs, in light of BCA spending limits, to achieve both the proper balance of ready and resilient Soldiers and Families and responsible stewardship. If BCA funding levels return in FY16, the Army will face increasingly difficult fiscal decisions. However, we will continue to protect all our Soldier and Family programs to the maximum extent possible.

**Q2: What is Total Army Strong?**

A2: Total Army Strong balances and reshapes current programs in a changing environment and transforming Army. Total Army Strong gives commanders flexibility to prioritize and adjust

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programs and services regardless of geographic location. Further, it underscores our commitment and responsibility to our Total Army Family – Soldiers, Families and civilians.

**Q3: What purpose did the Army Family Covenant serve?**

A3: The Covenant served as a formal declaration of Army Senior Leadership enduring commitment to Soldiers and Families. As a result, the Army improved Family programs, medical care, housing, Soldier and spouse education and employment and child, youth and school services programs.

**Q4: You said Army Family Covenant is fully executed and that, through the Covenant, the Army improved Family programs, medical care, housing, Soldier and spouse education and employment, and child, youth and school services programs. Can you provide specific success stories and the impact they had on the Army?**

A4: From fiscal year 2007 to 2010, the Army doubled its investment in base funding for Soldier and Family Programs. This funded new Family Readiness Support Assistants, new Child Development Centers, Youth Centers, Soldier and Family Assistant Centers for Wounded Warriors just to name a few. These enhancements built an environment where Soldiers, Families, and civilians could thrive. As the nation and Army prepare for the future, we must anticipate the evolving needs of Soldiers and Families. Through responsible stewardship, program assessment and the promotion of self reliance we will find a new balance to support our premier all-volunteer Army.

**Q5: Does Total Army Strong replace the Army Family Covenant?**

A5: Yes, it reflects a changing environment and transforming Army. The Army remains fully committed to providing essential services and programs to our Soldiers, Families and civilians, regardless of Component or geographic location.

**Q6: When did Total Army Strong officially launch?**

A6: There is no need for a formal launch, as Total Army Strong represents the continuation of an enduring commitment to Soldiers, Families, and civilians. However, you will likely hear commanders talk about Total Army Strong-related improvements planned, in progress or completed at their installations.

**Q7: Will there be signing ceremonies at the installations as there were with Army Family Covenant?**

A7: No

**Q8: What are the key differences between Total Army Strong and the Army Family Covenant?**

A8: Both formal pledges express Army Senior Leadership enduring commitment to Soldiers and Families. The Army Family Covenant focused on improving specific programs Army wide. At each installation, however, the needs of Soldiers, Families and civilians, vary. Total Army

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Strong gives installation commanders flexibility to adjust programs and services to meet the needs of their customers.

**Q9: Haven't commanders always had flexibility in how money is spent on their installations?**

A9: Yes, and as the Army transforms, we want to increase that flexibility to ensure programs and services are where and when they are needed most to maximize impact and positive outcomes. Army Senior Leaders set the limits and give commanders the flexibility to operate within those parameters.

**Q10: Will commanders solicit feedback from their respective installation communities concerning how funding is spent?**

A10: Yes, feedback is a vital component of improvement. Commanders employ many feedback mechanisms, including town hall meetings, customer comment cards, interactive comment evaluation (on-line), hotlines and surveys to garner customer input and assess program effectiveness.

**Q11: Who is the focus of Total Army Strong?**

A11: The Total Army is the primary focus – Soldiers, Families and civilian employees.

**Q12: What is the goal of Total Army Strong?**

A12: To reaffirm the Army's commitment to the total Army Family and set the foundation for a system of programs and services to mitigate the unique demands of military life.

**Q13: Will Total Army Strong result in new programs?**

A13: No, it serves as a catalyst to refine programs to ensure they effectively and efficiently serve the most critical needs of our Soldiers, Families and civilians.

**Q14: Who is in charge of Total Army Strong?**

A14: Total Army Strong is a Secretary of the Army, Chief of Staff, and Sergeant Major of the Army commitment executed by commanders Army wide. The Total Army Strong executive agent is the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management.

**Q15: What drives the need for Total Army Strong?**

A15: As the nation and Army prepare for the future, we must anticipate the evolving needs of Soldiers and Families. We will find a new balance to support our premier all-volunteer Army through responsible stewardship, program assessment and the promotion of self reliance.

**Q16: Why is Total Army Strong important to the Army?**

A16: Total Army Strong reaffirms Senior Army Leadership commitment to Soldiers, Families and civilians, and builds trust and faith between the Army and its most precious resource – our people.

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**Q17: Will Total Army Strong incur additional costs?**

A17: No.

**Q18. Does the Total Army Strong commitment pertain to all Soldiers and Families?**

A.18: The Total Army Strong commitment pertains to all Soldiers, regardless of component and extends beyond the member's time in uniformed service. This commitment is embodied in the Army's Soldier For Life initiative. Soldier for Life continues in-service programs that exist under Total Army Strong. The Army wants the best educated, healthy, and strong individuals to join the Army as a profession. The Army helps Soldiers start strong, serve strong, reintegrate strong and remain strong.

**10. POINTS OF CONTACT**

- Crawford, James D III LTC USARMY (US), Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Plans Division, (703) 693-5545, [james.d.crawford16.mil@mail.mil](mailto:james.d.crawford16.mil@mail.mil)
- Deppmeier, David J LTC USARMY (US), Office of the Chief of Chaplains, (703) 693-5775, [david.j.deppmeier.mil@mail.mil](mailto:david.j.deppmeier.mil@mail.mil)
- Elliott, Michael J (Mike) CIV USARMY HQDA OTSG (US), Office of the Surgeon General Public Affairs, (703) 681-1942, [michael.j.elliott5.civ@mail.mil](mailto:michael.j.elliott5.civ@mail.mil)
- Hansgen, Robert CIV USARMY HQDA ACSIM (US), Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, Soldier and Family Readiness, (571) 256-8686, [robert.e.hansgen.civ@mail.mil](mailto:robert.e.hansgen.civ@mail.mil)
- Ortiz-Escobar, Maribel LTC USARMY NG NGB (US), Army National Guard Public Affairs, (703) 604-8677, [maribel.ortizescobar.mil@mail.mil](mailto:maribel.ortizescobar.mil@mail.mil)
- Platt, Stephen J (Justin) LTC USARMY HQDA DCS G-1 (US), G-1 Public Affairs: (703) 692-1281, [stephen.j.platt4.mil@mail.mil](mailto:stephen.j.platt4.mil@mail.mil)
- Prince, Paul D CIV USARMY HQDA DCS G-1 (US), G-1 Public Affairs, (703) 697-2444, [paul.d.prince.civ@mail.mil](mailto:paul.d.prince.civ@mail.mil)
- Sharp, William J CIV USARMY HQDA OCPA (US), Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, Plans Division, (703) 697-3354, [william.j.sharp16.civ@mail.mil](mailto:william.j.sharp16.civ@mail.mil)
- Wriglesworth, Sonia I CIV (US), Army Reserve Family Programs, (910) 570.8204, [Sonia.i.wriglesworth.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Sonia.i.wriglesworth.civ@mail.mil)

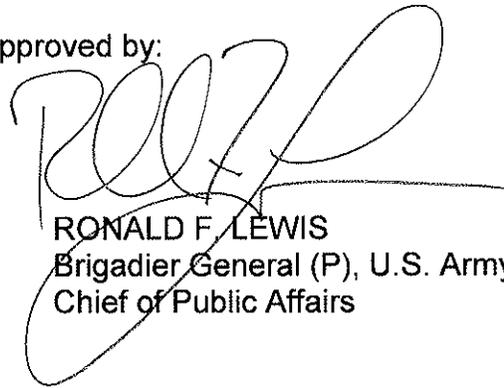
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**11. APPROVAL**

This communication plan has been approved by:



RONALD F. LEWIS  
Brigadier General (P), U.S. Army  
Chief of Public Affairs

**ANNEXES**

None.

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