SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

11 SEP 2003

An Open Letter to America's Employers:

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the Department of Defense has mobilized more than 295,000 Reservists and National Guardsmen in response to the ongoing Global War on Terrorism. These dedicated men and women—citizen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen—have been engaged in and around the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as providing security here at home and in other critical locations around the world.

This would not have been possible without the strong backing of America's employers. I want to express my gratitude to all employers who have demonstrated support for this national crisis by swiftly releasing your valuable employees for military service. It is equally gratifying to see how you are welcoming back these returning warriors and reinstating them in their jobs. During the period of mobilization, many of you did more than was required by law by voluntarily offering continued benefits, pay differentials, and additional, creative forms of family support which made the period of separation so much easier to bear. I know of no other time in our nation's history when so many employers have voluntarily offered this level of support and benefits.

I recognize that these generous actions have not been without sacrifice. Each of you has earned the deepest appreciation of this Department and the United States Government for your unswerving support of our nation's military. Without this continued support, we could not maintain a strong military or sustain the current effort to overcome the international terrorist threat directed at our country, our citizens, and all who love freedom.

You have my deepest thanks. Your direct contributions and support are another illustration of America's greatness as a nation.

Sincerely,