SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

To the Soldiers, Civilians and Families of our Army:

Serving as your Secretary for these past six years has been the honor of my life and–by far–the most fulfilling experience of my professional career.

While many days have certainly been long, the years have been amazingly short because my time here has been so very rich and rewarding. Without question, that is thanks to all of you: the men and women that I have been privileged to call my teammates.

I want you to know that I have an unceasing admiration for your remarkable sense of duty and devotion. The past 14 years of war have been long and painful for our total force, your families and our Nation. But your collective strength, courage and leadership – together with your compassion and commitment – have helped America endure in the face of hardship. You are men and women of character. Trusted professionals. You always do your very best, and have committed your lives to something greater than yourselves.

Gen. Creighton Abrams once said: "There must be, within our Army, a sense of purpose and a dedication to that purpose. There must be a willingness to march a little farther, to carry a heavier load, to step out into the darkness and the unknown for the safety and well-being of others." I could not agree more. Over the past six years – indeed for as long as I been involved with Army matters – you have shown me such sense of purpose and such dedication day in and day out.

Together, you are America's indispensable Army. You are part of the rock – the foundation – that holds our great country together. You have shared uncommon lives and challenges and have done what your country has required of you. You have, quite simply, ensured our way of life. I am proud to have served in your gallant company.

I ask that you continue to accept the trust that America bestows upon you and the challenges which it carries. Continue to be the standard bearers of our noble Profession of Arms. The American people are counting on you and I know that you will not let them down.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for who you are and what you do. All of you.

God bless you, God bless your families, and God bless this great and glorious Army that keeps us free. Army strong!

John M. McHugh