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February 2, 2010

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**HISTORIC ENDORSEMENT OF OPENLY GAY SERVICE BY JOINT CHIEFS CHAIRMAN FRAMES NEW DEBATE**

Palm Center Questions Year-Long Study on Gays in the Military, Pledges Support to Working Group

SANTA BARBARA, CA, FEBRUARY 2, 2010 - Today the Palm Center noted the historic nature of remarks delivered by Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the 'don't ask, don't tell' law and policy. "The personal military adviser to the President of the United States has stated that he supports the inclusion of openly gay troops as a matter of integrity," stated Dr. Aaron Belkin Director of the Palm Center. "This is a game-changer at the Pentagon."

Belkin added, "Yet even with the historic progress today, there remain questions from the hearing." Secretary Gates announced a year-long Working Group on gays in the military. The Secretary stated that the Working Group would survey military personnel and draft implementation guidelines to be enacted following Congressional repeal and that full implementation of the new policy would take at least a year.

Palm Center Senior Research Fellow Nathaniel Frank stated, "It is important to be clear that the government's data from all sides on gays in the military is overwhelming and already conclusive. There have been twenty studies on gays in the U.S. military and RAND is currently updating its 1993 report. We would have hoped that the volumes of very recent data could be used to address implementation questions, but we understand that the Working Group has been announced. In turn, the Palm Center is ready to offer any assistance that General Ham or Jeh Johnson might request."

"Today is a new day for gays in the military," stated Christopher Neff Deputy Executive Director of the Palm Center. "The President's direction on this issue has created room for a new dialogue and Senator Levin's hearing today showed the difference that leadership makes. Moving forward, with continued strong leadership, post repeal implementation should be minimal." The 1993 Rand Corporation report on implementing openly gay service stated that a successful new policy should be 'decided upon and implemented as quickly as possible' with strong leadership from the top.

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The Palm Center is a think tank at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Since 1998, the Center has been a leader in commissioning and disseminating research in the areas of gender, sexuality, and the military. For more



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