

➤ Personnel Tempo Control



DISCUSSION

The Marine Corps has made great strides in controlling personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO), consistent with the intent of Congress as set forth in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2000. Having invested considerable time and effort developing processes and procedures to track, report, control, and reduce the amount of time our members are deployed, the Marine Corps has ensured that it is in compliance with DoD's reporting and tracking requirements.

The current PERSTEMPO policy has adverse effects on our cohesion, capabilities, training, and budget and may potentially have adverse effects on the morale and retention of our Marines. The Marine Corps, along with the other services, has recommended modifications to the existing legislation. For example, the existing management and penalty thresholds are below our norms

and inconsistent with our expeditionary, forward-deployed nature. These thresholds should be increased to levels above the Marine Corps norms to fit the way we operate and deploy.

The Marine Corps recognizes that each of the services has inherent differences in its mission requirements and the expectations of its members regarding what constitutes excessive or frequent deployment. However, the Marine Corps does not support significantly separate thresholds for individual services, believing that service members enduring the same hardships should be compensated equally. Otherwise, morale and retention will be adversely affected.

Management of PERSTEMPO has not yet become a major factor, because Marines only began accruing PERSTEMPO on 1 Oct 2000, and we have not had to transfer significant numbers of Marines with previously



accrued PERSTEMPO to another unit. As Marines with PERSTEMPO become eligible for normal reassignment, however, this will become a more significant factor. Toward the end of FY 2001, we were beginning to see some Marines with sufficient amounts of PERSTEMPO accrual that required consideration in manpower management decisions.

However, as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 2001, DoD invoked the national security waiver authority on 8 October 2001, as permitted by legislation. This allowed the department to suspend the accumulation of deployment days for purposes of determining eligibility for high-deployment per diem and the statutory requirements for general or flag officers to personally manage the deployments of certain members. Hence, the full impact on the Marine Corps of PERSTEMPO legislation has yet to be seen.

MARINE CORPS POSITION

The Marine Corps remains fully committed to the intent of the Congress to reduce the excessive PERSTEMPO of our members, but the needs of our Marines and their families must be carefully and continually balanced against the needs of our service. Paying high-deployment per diem payments equates to paying premiums for conducting our normal operations and deployments. PERSTEMPO management must not cause commanders to make decisions that risk the stability and cohesion of their units.

As a matter of policy, DoD directed the services to continue all aspects of tracking and reporting how often members are away from home. The Marine Corps fully supports these actions. We also support the national security waiver, which provides commanders with greater flexibility and reduces their administrative burden, allowing them to focus on operational requirements and make the best use of their personnel without affecting unit cohesion.