

Verbal Testimony
Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
Regarding FY 2011 Funding for Malaria and Tropical Disease Related Programs
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The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH) is the principal professional membership organization in the United States, and in the world, for Tropical Medicine and Global Health. ASTMH represents physicians, researchers, epidemiologists, and other health professionals dedicated to the prevention and control of tropical diseases. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony to the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and I request that our full testimony be submitted for the record.

Because the military operates in many tropical regions, reducing the risk that tropical diseases present to servicemen and women is often critical to mission success.

Malaria and other insect-transmitted diseases such as leishmaniasis and dengue are particular examples.

Antimalarial Drugs have saved countless lives throughout the world, including troops serving in tropical regions during WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The U.S. military has long taken a primary role in the development of anti-malarial drugs, and nearly all of the most used anti-malarials were developed in part by U.S. military researchers.

Over 350 million people are at risk of leishmaniasis in 88 countries around the world. 12 million people are currently infected and 2 million new infections occur annually. Leishmaniasis was a particular problem for Operation Iraqi Freedom, as a result of which 700 American service personnel became infected [Weina 2004]. Because of leishmaniasis' prevalence in Iraq and in Southwest Asia in general, the DoD has spent significant time and resources on this disease and DoD personnel are the leaders in development of new antileishmanial drugs.

Dengue is a leading cause of illness and death in the tropics and subtropics. As many as 100 million people are infected yearly. Although dengue rarely

occurs in the continental United States, it is endemic in Puerto Rico, and in many popular tourist destinations in Latin America and Southeast Asia; periodic outbreaks occur in Samoa and Guam. The DoD has seen about 28 cases of dengue in soldiers per year

The intersection of militarily-important diseases and Tropical medicine is the reason that 15% of ASTMH members are members of the military.

For this reason, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee expand funding for the Department of Defense's longstanding and successful efforts to develop new drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics designed to protect servicemen and women from malaria and tropical diseases. Specifically, we request that in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, the Subcommittee ensure \$70 million to the Department of Defense (DoD) to support its infectious disease research efforts through the Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases, the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, and the U.S. Naval Medical Research Center. Presently, DoD funding for this important research is at about \$47 million. To keep up with biomedical inflation since 2000, FY 2011 funding must be about \$60 million. In order to fill the gaps that have been created by underfunding, ASTMH urges Congress to fund DoD infectious disease research at \$70 million in FY 2011.

We very much appreciate the Subcommittee's consideration of our views, and we stand ready to work with Subcommittee members and staff on these and other important tropical disease matters.