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## DOD's Personnel and Readiness Chief Offers Latest SGL

Dionne, Patrick

Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey California

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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL



## DOD's Personnel and Readiness Chief Offers Latest SGL

MC2 Patrick Dionne | October 13, 2017



*Retired Rear Adm. Tony Kurta, performing the duties of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, addresses NPS students, faculty and staff during the latest Secretary of Navy Guest Lecture in King Auditorium, Oct. 10, 2017.*

Retired Rear Adm. Tony Kurta, performing the duties of Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, addressed NPS students, faculty and staff on the unique benefits and challenges of maintaining an all-volunteer

force during the latest Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture (SGL) in King Auditorium, Oct. 10, 2017.

“Now more than ever, we need you to return to the fleet and return to the field ready and competent to lead,” said Kurta. “We don’t have jobs in the military, we are a profession; in addition to your academic skills that you learn while you are here, you have time to grow in your profession.

“Our all-volunteer force is one of the major strategic advantages that our military has,” Kurta added. “To make that all-volunteer force work requires trust. Those who recommend service to young Americans must trust us, and our young Service members must have trust in each and every one of you as well.”

As a member of the Senior Executive Service, Kurta is responsible for the recruiting, retention, compensation and human resource management required for the active duty, Reserve, Guard and civilian members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

“One of the biggest challenges facing our all-volunteer force is demographics,” said Kurta. “As we stand today, 71 percent of young Americans are ineligible for military service, and of the 29 percent that are eligible many do not want to serve. Yet, we have to come up with 250,000 people a year to serve in our active guard and reserve components, and though this may be a challenge, it is a challenge we are meeting today.”

Kurta retired from the Navy in 2013 following a 32-year career, which included command of four ships, a destroyer squadron, and the Combined Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa.

In concluding his presentation, Kurta stressed an important task from Secretary of Defense James Mattis – to ensure that every personnel policy increases the readiness and lethality of the force. Meeting this task includes taking a deep look at some of the training and collateral duties throughout the Department of Defense. Ultimately, Kurta added, solutions need to be found in the senior leaders of tomorrow, many of whom are among the 1,500 students in attendance.

“Success of the all-volunteer force is in your hands,” stressed Kurta. “You are here because your service is investing in you, in your ability to think critically

and creatively because the efforts and the leadership of each one of you as you return to the fleet and field is instrumental – not only in preserving the strategic advantage that our all-volunteer force provides us, but in preserving our way of life as a whole as well.”

NPS' Secretary of the Navy Guest Lecture program provides a series of professional lectures by senior leaders throughout defense, government, industry and academia designed to help the university's students and faculty link their studies, teaching and research efforts to the defense needs of the nation.

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