

**STATEMENT OF
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
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CONCERNING
POSTURE**

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I. *OUR ROLE: A READY AND RELEVANT FORCE*

Mr. Chairman, Senator Levin, and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I greatly appreciate this opportunity to report to you on the state of your Marine Corps and its important contributions to the nation.

Let me first offer my sincere thanks to the Committee, the Congress, and the Administration for your help. You sent a clear signal on national defense with your vigorous support for our fiscal year 2000 budget. The resources you provided substantially reduced our modernization backlog and allowed us to reverse the decline in our infrastructure. We have turned an important corner, and we now need your help in sustaining and improving upon our progress. Marines and their families are grateful for your assistance. Among other things, it provided for the largest pay raise in 20 years, strengthened the retirement system, and overhauled pay tables.

Pay and allowance increases are of great importance, but they alone do not suffice to attract young Americans to our ranks, or to retain them in sufficient numbers. Instead, it is the intangible qualities of military service that prompt Marines to join and remain a part of our uniquely demanding profession. These qualities include dedication to country and Corps, great career satisfaction for both a Marine and his or her spouse, and recognition and appreciation from our citizenry of the great value of such a commitment.

Today, over 20,000 Marines are either forward-deployed with the Amphibious Ready Groups of the numbered fleets or forward-based in Japan. Other Marines of the Operating Forces are training at their bases and stations in the United States, in order to remain prepared for immediate deployment. Still others—to include both uniformed Marines and our 15,000 “Civilian Marines”—serve in our supporting establishment, where their efforts to recruit, train, retain, administer, and supply today’s Marine “Total Force” directly contribute to the readiness of our Operating Forces and provide the infrastructure that sustains our Marine families.

This past year, our Marines participated in a wide range of missions. The most prominent of these were the operations in the Balkans, Iraq, and East Timor, and the humanitarian relief efforts in Turkey, Central America, and South America. Our Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) conducted continuous forward presence operations, including participation in exercises and engagement operations, along with their partnered Amphibious Ready Groups. Some Marines conducted training deployments to South America, Africa, and the equatorial Pacific region, and still others participated in counter-narcotics operations in support of Southern Command.

In the United States, Marines performed many important missions. Following a series of hurricanes that struck the Atlantic seaboard, our units conducted relief operations in conjunction with local authorities. Our Chemical-Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF), a unique military organization and a recognized national asset, remains prepared to assist state and federal agencies in responding to the possible use of weapons of mass destruction on American soil. In fact, we have proposed relocating CBIRF in the upcoming months, in order to increase its responsiveness to the national capital region.

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to make an extraordinary contribution, both at home and abroad. As part of our Total Force, Reserve Marines augment and reinforce the regular component, performing a variety of missions. Recently, for example, they provided civil affairs expertise in the Balkans. Reserve Marines and units participated in a variety of exercises, while others trained in locales as distant and varied as Norway, Romania, Egypt, Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Australia. In the U.S., they train to maintain readiness for mobilization, and conduct community service projects in their hometowns, thereby strengthening the link between the military and our society. We are reviewing options for greater reserve integration with active units, to include participation in scheduled overseas deployments. The Marine Corps Reserve is in the midst of the last of its Quadrennial Defense Review-driven structural adjustments, and it should soon stabilize at 39,000 Marines.

Our Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (MCJROTC) Program is yet another way in which we connect to our society. In our high schools in the United States and in Department of Defense schools overseas, we currently have 178 MCJROTC units, with a combined enrollment of 25,127 Cadets. Through this program, retired Marines provide instruction in the fundamentals of leadership and the core values that form the heart of our service culture. School administrators, parents, and communities celebrate the success of our MCJROTC units in instilling within young Americans the virtues of responsible citizenship. As an added bonus, approximately one-third of our graduating MCJROTC Cadets enter military service, to include commissioning programs in colleges and service academies. The Congress has authorized us to expand to 210 units, beginning next year, and we are enthusiastically pursuing that goal.

Your Marine Corps, in partnership with the United States Navy, is prepared to execute its mission as a naval expeditionary force in readiness. With your continued support, we will remain ready for the challenges of today, while preparing to address those of the future.

II. OUR LEGACY: VANGUARD OF THE NEW AMERICAN CENTURY

As the history of the 20th century reflects, the growth of our nation's influence throughout the world was preceded by Americans in uniform. During two World Wars and during the long struggle of the Cold War, the U.S. military stood as a bulwark against global and regional aggression, defending our interests and those of our allies, and facilitating the expansion of our economy, culture, and democratic values. The benefits of this undertaking accrued not only to our own citizens, but also to the people of many distant lands whose lives were transformed through exposure to America and Americans. Historically, this constituted a rare phenomenon: the extension of a nation's influence through ideas, rather than conquest, and for noble, rather than self-serving, purposes. Our military element of national power—and our willingness and ability to use it effectively,

when threatened—provided the security environment that made possible the miracle of the “American century.”

With a legacy of contribution in the 20th century, and the knowledge that an active American presence around the world is both a vital component of our continued prosperity and of remaining a positive global influence in the 21st century, the influence of a strong American military is beyond dispute. What remains a point of debate is the proper level of investment in the “maintenance and development” of this capability.

An examination of our defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the last half of the 20th century is informative. Following the U.S. rise to superpower status during World War II, our investment in defense, nonetheless, reached a low point in 1948, when it was estimated to be 3.6 percent of our GDP. Spending levels rose during the Korean conflict and remained at 5.0 percent or higher through most of the Cold War. Since 1991, however, the defense share of the budget has steadily decreased. Our average level of investment over the past 60 years, as a percentage of GDP, was 8.8 percent. Today’s U.S. global military capability and responsibility is sustained at a cost of about 3 percent of our GDP.

When comparing U.S. defense expenditures to that of other nations, it is clear that the U.S. spends as much on its military as many other leading nations combined, a comparison that makes our annual defense spending appear to be disproportionate. Reality is more complex. As the only nation with global interests, responsibilities, and capabilities, our defense requirements—the underpinnings of our status as a superpower—are correspondingly greater than those of nations whose interests are regional in scope. Interestingly, however, some of these other nations closely match our own commitment to defense. For example, the United Kingdom spends about 2.9 percent of its GDP on defense, France spends about 2.8 percent, Turkey and Greece each spend over 4 percent, and some Persian Gulf countries—like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman— spend about 12 percent. Thus, while none share our global responsibilities, several invest in defense a share of their national treasure that is approximately equal to,

or greater than, ours. The difference is that only we have global responsibilities. The military component of those responsibilities is of vital importance.

A number of factors underscore our requirement for adequate defense investment. First, it is essential that we recapitalize and modernize to maintain our current military strength. Over the next two decades, the cost of sustaining our older equipment will increase steadily. For example, many systems are rapidly nearing the end of their service lives. To simply maintain the status quo, we will soon face the need to replace ever-growing quantities of our materiel. However, prudence dictates that we modernize our military capability to maintain our current advantage over potential adversaries who will also invest in technologically advanced systems, or those who will attempt to confront us with asymmetrical challenges. While technology is costly, we must devote sufficient resources to extend our present military advantage into the future.

Further, the cost of human resources is growing steadily. We spend increasing amounts to recruit and retain an all-volunteer force in a burgeoning economy marked by record-low unemployment. Training costs also continue to increase, as equipment becomes more sophisticated, and potential combat environments become more complex.

A multiplicity of threats to our national security continue to require that we invest consistently and responsibly in the military pillar of national power. In many regions throughout the globe, virulent nationalism, long repressed during the half century of the Cold War, has re-awakened. Religious strife and regional radical fundamentalism overlay an already fractured political geography, giving rise to opportunists who have no compunction against orchestrating mass violence to preserve or expand their power. Similarly, the competition for the world's scarce resources is becoming increasingly intense as the gap between rich and poor nations continues to widen. The possibility of major interstate conflict remains a great concern, and major theater war scenarios in the Arabian Gulf or in Northeast Asia still fill the lion's share of defense planners' time and energy. Terrorism has occupied a prominent place in the history of inter- and intra-state conflict throughout recorded history. Today, the enormously destructive weapons at the

disposal of the terrorist elevate our concerns to a much higher plane. Most ominous, perhaps, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction raises the specter of a growing threat to our homeland.

Clearly, if the U.S. is to maintain the global influence that has proven so beneficial for Americans and for the world, we must maintain the pillar of superpower status that sets and sustains the conditions for that influence to grow and to prosper: *a capable and powerful military*. Over the past decade, efforts to balance the budget and to reduce the federal deficit have resulted in increasing budgetary pressure on defense investment. These constraints have forced the military services to make difficult choices in prioritizing resources between force structure, near-term readiness, and modernization. An ever-increasing operational tempo during this period has complicated the prioritization effort. However, economic forecasts of a continuing budget surplus suggest that resources for increased discretionary spending will be available over the coming years. The armed services require sustained, steady support and growth; periodic “spikes” in resource allocation are not efficient over the long term. The question that you must consider—indeed, the question that our nation should debate—is this: *What is the proper level of investment in defense, as a percentage of our Gross Domestic Product, that will enable the nation to maintain its superpower status in the 21st century?*

III. OUR CULTURE: THE QUALITIES OF A NAVAL EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

The Naval Services are well positioned to confront the national security challenges of the new century. Naval forces can help to defuse a crisis quickly by taking up position offshore or by conducting long-range precision strikes, when required. They can seize critical ports and airfields as part of an assault by a joint task force, or they can deliver critical supplies and services in order to assist with humanitarian or natural disasters. Because all of this can be done from the sea, with or without any host nation support, naval forces will continue to offer multiple options for shaping the national security environment.

In his posture statement, the Secretary of the Navy highlights three characteristics that define the uniqueness of the Naval Services. First, we operate from the sea. Second, we are an expeditionary force: our ships, aircraft, sailors, and Marines are forward deployed. Third, the Navy and Marine Corps are inherently joint at the operational and tactical levels in their structure, training, deployments, operations, equipment, and staffing.

From these characteristics, we can derive six attributes that capture the extraordinary value of naval forces to our geographic Commanders in Chief:

Presence. Whether on a visit to the port of an ally or stationed off a hostile shore, naval forces provide a visible indication of U.S. military power and the commitment to employ it in defense of our interests. There is no substitute for presence if one hopes to shape the outcome of events. The trendy notion of so-called “virtual presence,” in point of fact, amounts to “actual absence.” Forward presence is an understandable and unmistakable marker of American interest in a region. It provides the means for the “on-scene shaping” that is both the primary military mechanism for our strategy of engagement, as well as a tool for the creation and maintenance of stability. The physical presence of a credible and capable force deters aggression and encourages conflict resolution at levels short of war. It also advances American ideals, and presents a bright example of the positive aspects of military engagement in a democracy. It inspires emulation by example. Take it away, and you create a vacuum into which opponents may enter.

Versatility and Scalability of Power. Naval forces operate across the full spectrum of conflict from peacekeeping to major theater war. They can transition quickly from the normal mix of forces in a given theater to a much more powerful force. This can be accomplished without deploying a large command and control system or creating land-based infrastructure. A forward-deployed Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) can serve as the lead element of a larger and more capable Marine

Expeditionary Brigade. Similarly, a brigade can pave the way for the deployment of an even more powerful Marine Expeditionary Force.

Flexibility. Naval forces possess latent combat power, the application of which can range from maritime interdiction through amphibious assault and strike operations, or operations as a part of a large joint or combined force. They can be fully engaged in an operation one day and withdrawn the next, quickly reconstituting their combat capability for follow-on missions. Further, they can conduct operations unilaterally, as part of a joint force, or in concert with allies.

Credibility. Naval forces are particularly well suited to the roles of compelling, deterring, and responding to hostile actions. There is ample historical precedent of the performance of these roles, a factor that potential foes around the world must always consider.

Sustainability. Naval forces are uniquely able to conduct long-term combat or contingency operations without the establishment of large, fixed bases on foreign soil and are free from excessive reliance upon extensive contractor support. Logistics support is part and parcel of the normal structure that is forward-deployed for peacetime operations.

Affordability. Naval forces are funded *to operate*, not simply funded *to be*. This is a defining quality of our expeditionary culture.

While the Naval Services are expeditionary by nature and in culture, interest in such capabilities is growing in the Department of Defense and the military services. Indeed, with the extensive reduction of our overseas presence during the past decade, it is today necessary for each of our services to be able to deploy rapidly and to operate in austere environments. There has been much discussion of new, emerging expeditionary requirements and capabilities. In the Naval Services, however, an expeditionary force is much more than the narrowly defined entity described in the Department of Defense dictionary as “an armed force organized to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country.” We believe that an appropriate definition of a *naval* expeditionary force is:

A flexible and agile force operating from the sea and organized to accomplish a broad range of military objectives in a foreign country or region. This force must be able to deploy rapidly, enter the objective area through forcible means, sustain itself for an extended period of time, withdraw quickly, and reconstitute rapidly to execute follow-on missions.

Service culture directly impacts upon the expeditionary character of a force. The Navy and Marine Corps have developed and sustained an expeditionary mindset and culture for more than two centuries of service. An expeditionary culture requires institutional flexibility and mandates continual preparedness for deployment on short notice. In the case of the Marine Corps, with 68 percent of our enlisted Marines on their first tour of duty, we have flexible ties to fixed geographic bases. Readiness for short-notice deployments is one of the principal articles of faith subscribed to by Marines assigned to our Operating Forces. Thus, Marines understand well the requirement to maintain their personal and family readiness. Despite recent concerns with regard to operational tempo, we find that our Marines who are assigned to regularly deploying squadrons and battalions are also the most likely to reenlist. Young men and women join our ranks expecting to be deployed. They want to respond to the nation's global challenges, and we do not disappoint them.

IV. OUR FOCUS: THE OPERATING FORCES

The readiness of the Operating Forces is our highest priority. It rests upon four pillars: (1) Marines and their families, (2) "legacy" systems, (3) infrastructure, and (4) modernization. Our challenge is to maintain the individual strength of each, while achieving a proper balance in our application of resources among the four.

People will continue to be the most important pillar of our readiness. We continually develop and sustain preparedness for immediate deployment. This requires attention to the physical readiness of Marines and their equipment, as well as "family

readiness.” We accomplish the former through physical means, primarily, rigorous training. The latter is the product of instilling in our Marines unquestionable confidence that their families are adequately supported in terms of pay, health care, housing, and schools—especially during deployments.

The second pillar of readiness—legacy systems—requires continued attention to the maintenance of materiel fielded in the period spanning the last four decades of the 20th century. Much of this equipment is currently beyond its intended service life, resulting in a continually growing maintenance requirement. Still, it is this equipment with which we conduct operations today. It is essential that we support it properly, until it can be replaced.

Our third readiness pillar—infrastructure—is likewise of critical importance to the accomplishment of our mission. Our bases and stations are the launching points for deploying units of the Operating Forces, and they are home to our Marine families. We must ensure that they provide adequate ranges and training facilities, are environmentally sound, and promote the overall health and well being of our Marines, our civilians, and our families.

Finally, our fourth pillar—modernization—will ensure ready and capable Marine Air Ground Task Forces well into the future. We must procure key warfighting systems in a timely manner, and in the proper quantities. As our legacy systems approach the end of their useful lives, they become of increasingly marginal tactical use, and require modernization.

Marine forces are joint, combined, and fully interoperable across the spectrum of potential conflict. *With existing resources*, we are breathing new life into our capabilities. Such measures include:

Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) (approximately 2,200 Marines and Sailors, self-sustaining for 15 days)

- Validated mission profiles as “light weight warfighting capability”
- Prepared to incorporate MV-22 Osprey
- Acquired new light weight Interim Fast Attack Vehicle

Marine Expeditionary Brigades (up to 17,000 Marines and Sailors, self-sustaining for 30 days)

- Embedded brigade command element in each Marine Expeditionary Force
- Validated mission profiles as “medium weight warfighting capability”
- Initiated development of standards of performance
- Re-established brigade link with Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadrons

Marine Expeditionary Forces (approximately 50,000 Marines and Sailors, self-sustaining for 60 days)

- Validated mission profile as “heavy weight warfighting capability”
- Completed requirements to augment organic fire support capability
- Increased reconnaissance capability

Our responsibility to the nation is to be successful in warfighting, and the single best expression of that task is found in our service doctrine. Our capstone warfighting concept for the future—*Operational Maneuver From The Sea (OMFTS)*—reflects our best understanding of the 21st century warfighting environment and how we can succeed in that environment. It is the foundation upon which we will build our doctrine of the future. Marines understand that OMFTS depends upon the Navy’s complete support. To

that end, during January, the Chief of Naval Operations and I co-hosted a Navy-Marine Corps Warfighting Conference at Quantico, Virginia. This exchange of ideas among the senior leaders of our two services will serve us well as we shape the naval warfighting capability of the 21st century.

Navy-Marine Corps teamwork is the strength of the Naval Services. Allow me to cite some examples. First, as you know, a variety of manufacturing, training, and maintenance deficiencies converged on us last summer, resulting in a Corps-wide grounding and complete reassessment of the state of the AV-8B Harrier fleet. By April of this year, we will have returned the great majority of these aircraft to service. We could not have made such great progress in such a short period of time without the support of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Navy. Additionally, despite the constraint of available shipbuilding funds, the Navy has strongly supported the continued modernization of the amphibious force, at the cost of other projects. This clear commitment to the readiness of the overall naval force is an enduring characteristic of the Navy-Marine Corps team, and it bodes well for the future.

In addition to our strong partnership with the Navy, the Marine Corps is a significant force provider and a major participant in joint operations. Our contribution to the nation's combat power is, proportionally, at an historical high. **Marine units constitute about 20 percent of the U.S. military's active ground maneuver battalions, 20 percent of the active fighter/attack squadrons, 17 percent of the attack helicopters, and nearly one third of the ground combat service support in the active forces. When the United States commits significant forces to any military operation—combat or otherwise—Marines will be there...for about six percent of the defense budget.**

V. OUR DIRECTION: NEW CAPABILITIES FOR A NEW CENTURY

We have a well-ordered plan to manage the transition of today's Marine Corps to a 21st century sea-based force. With the continued strong support of the Congress, Marine Air-Ground Task Forces, by the end of this decade, will offer a greater range of flexible and potent military capabilities to U.S. leadership. We have begun to build the doctrinal and educational foundation of the future Marine Corps. We are in need of your support to complete the task.

Recruiting the Force

While we have met or exceeded our recruiting goals for the past 55 months, we do not take this success for granted. With 68 percent of Marines on their first enlistment, we are always the “youngest” of the four services. Although it is not widely known, we must annually recruit more young men and women into our enlisted ranks than does the Air Force. This year, our goal is to recruit 39,343 Marines for the Total Force, while next year this figure will rise to just over 41,000.

Given those factors, we are concerned about the diminishing numbers of young Americans available for military service and their demonstrated low propensity to enlist. Competition from a strong economy exacerbates this trend, as does the higher percentage of youths who are able to attend college with the financial assistance of non-military related programs. The extent of the recruiting challenge can be quantified by recruiting costs. Today, the Marine Corps spends over \$6,000 to complete a single enlistment contract—a “bargain basement” amount—and that figure is rising continually.

The unpredictable demands of modern conflict and the increasingly complicated technology we employ require that the Marine Corps seek out young men and women of character who are physically fit and intellectually prepared. The surest source of such high-caliber recruits is from among the ranks of the graduates of America's high schools

and colleges. Accordingly, our recruiting program relies on our ability to reach the largest possible range of qualified young Americans. Unfortunately, our recruiters are not only experiencing a decline in access to school directory information, but in many cases, schools are denying them permission to conduct campus visits. Some school districts allow their individual administrators to establish and enforce restrictive policies. While these take many forms, it is the denial of directory information that is most damaging to our recruiting efforts. If this trend continues, it will not only have a negative impact on Marine Corps recruiting, but it will also threaten the viability of the All-Volunteer Force. Those who restrict the access of recruiters to their schools would probably be the first to object to a return of the draft. I believe that all services would benefit from assistance in getting our nation's high schools and community colleges to support military recruitment efforts. Therefore, I ask for your support in ensuring that school systems benefiting from federal funding reciprocate with access and directory information for our military recruiters.

Retaining the Force

The Marine Corps is very mindful of retention issues. As one might expect, retaining Marines who are trained in some technical skills presents a great challenge. Although officer retention appears to be experiencing a modest increase over last year, we remain watchful with regard to the retention of our fixed-wing aviators.

Over the past several years, we have discharged about 8,000 first-term Marines per year prior to the end of their first enlistment. In fiscal year 1999, we achieved a 22 percent reduction in such early attrition, and it appears that this positive trend is carrying over this year. If we can sustain this effort, we can ease accession requirements for our recruiters. This is a task that has the attention of Marine leaders of all grades. While only a few can be “recruiters,” we are all “retainers.”

Recent quality of life enhancements have done a great deal to assist us in meeting our retention goals and we thank you for your support. The “compensation triad” of pay raises, Pay Table Reform, and REDUX elimination is having a positive impact in the Operating Forces. We must continue to invest in this area. Secretary Cohen’s recent initiative to further improve Basic Allowance for Housing rates to cover 100 percent of the normal costs of housing by 2005 is exactly the kind of message we need in our retention efforts.

On the list of needed improvements that influence retention, military health care ranks very high. Military families are faced with frequent moves as a condition of the profession. When faced with limited health care availability, poorly informed support staff personnel, and the out-of-pocket expense of today’s TRICARE system, frustration is palpable. The retired military community feels this problem, as well, and their best efforts to settle near large military medical facilities are no guarantee of reliable access to health care. To them, adequate health care is part of a commitment made by the nation for their past service. We have a moral obligation to support our retired and disabled veterans. They, more than any other group in the 20th century, shaped our nation for the bright future we envision. In this time of unprecedented economic surplus, it seems to be both reasonable and fair to suggest that we should seize the moment to take care of them.

Staffing the Force

We are reviewing our practices in order to try to narrow the gap between our Operating Force structure and the manpower available to fill that structure. Through privatization or consolidation of functions, we can redistribute manpower to meet our most pressing needs. To date, we have identified almost 2,100 Marines who, beginning in fiscal 2001, will be returning to billets the Operating Forces. We are actively reviewing more billets for similar consideration. Still, we might not be able to narrow the structure-to-staffing gap sufficiently, and as we review our force structure, we might yet determine a need for more Marines.

Your support in fiscal year 2000 for an increase in the end strength of the Corps by 370 Marines will make possible a significant improvement in the breadth and depth of our support for the Department of State, through the Marine Security Guard program. When this increase comes to fruition, we will be able to better protect our overseas diplomatic posts. While there is more work to be done in this area, the additional manpower allocation is an important step in the right direction.

Among its many great reforms, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 took aim at the size of service headquarters staffs. Legislation in 1991 directed a four percent reduction per year from fiscal year 1991 through fiscal year 1995. The Marine Corps complied with that legislation and follow-on legislation, and as a result we will have achieved a 27 percent reduction in our headquarters staff by 2001. We pride ourselves on being as “lean” as possible in this area, and we continually seek opportunities to transfer force structure from our Supporting Establishment to our Operating Forces. I do not, however, endorse further reductions in our service headquarters staff as mandated by Congress in 2000. The legislated reduction—15 percent between fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2002—will greatly limit the ability of our headquarters to fulfill its Title 10 and operational responsibilities. I respectfully request Congressional review of this mandate, and I ask the Congress to craft legislation that more fully considers the impact of reductions on each service and department.

Amphibious and Naval Surface Fire Support for the Force

The five Tarawa-class Amphibious Assault Ships (LHAs) are scheduled for retirement over the next 15 years and we need to closely examine options for their replacement. An LHD-8 transition ship and follow-on LHA replacement ships will better serve and meet Marine Corps requirements. The LDP-17 program represents a new generation of amphibious ships. In 2008, when the last LPD-17 class ship is scheduled to join the fleet, the amphibious force will consist of 36 ships or 12 three-ship Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs).

We support the achievement of a 3.0 MEB amphibious lift capability. Current plans will bring the United States up to a fiscally constrained 2.5 MEB-lift capability by fiscal year 2008. Dedicated amphibious forces have proven their worth in peace as a deterrent, and in war as a combat force multiplier. Such forces represent an invaluable and irreplaceable capacity to represent sovereign U.S. interests, whether operating independently or as part of a Naval Expeditionary Force. The forcible entry capability of modern amphibious forces simply cannot be replicated.

The recent funding of the acquisition and conversion of the USNS *Soderman* to become part of the Maritime Prepositioning Force will offer Commanders in Chief a substantial increase in capability. The *Soderman*, along with its two predecessors in the Maritime Prepositioning Force Enhancement program, brings a unique set of naval construction and expeditionary airfield options to remote theaters of operation. The next generation of maritime prepositioning ships will further extend our ability to project and sustain U.S. military power in the world's littorals.

A credible naval surface fire support (NSFS) program is a critical component of forcible entry from the sea. Under current plans, the Navy will begin construction in fiscal year 2005 of the DD 21-class ships, each to be equipped with two 155-millimeter naval guns. Additionally, the Navy has committed, in the interim, to installing the 5"/62 caliber naval gun on 27 new DDG 51-class destroyers and retrofitting 22 CG 47-class cruisers with the same system. Firing the Extended Range Gun Munition (ERGM), this gun will measurably improve our near-term NSFS capability. We have been at considerable risk in naval surface fire support since the retirement of the *Iowa*-class battleships. This situation will continue until the DD 21-class destroyers join the fleet in strength. This program must be accorded a high priority of effort.

Sustaining the Force

We must undertake the wisest possible course to conserve our real property and, when necessary, to acquire any additional property that is mission critical. The Blount

Island facility in Jacksonville, Florida is truly a national asset that must be purchased to ensure its availability over the long term. Its peacetime mission of support to the Maritime Prepositioning Force has been of exceptional value to the Marine Corps, while its wartime capability to support massive logistics sustainment from the continental U.S. gives it strategic significance. In 2004, our lease of this facility will expire. In the near term, we request \$35 million to secure the necessary easements in order to prevent further encroachment against the facility, but our long term national strategy should be to purchase this key facility outright. Independent studies—including one completed in 1997 for the J-4 Directorate of the Joint Staff—have confirmed the importance of maintaining complementary Army and Marine Corps prepositioning maintenance sites and have highlighted the strategic value of Blount Island’s throughput and follow-on sustainment capabilities.

Command and Control for the Force

We have entered an era of increasing reliance on high-end intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and their associated communications suites. With new technologies introduced on a daily basis, our systems can quickly become obsolete. Our warfighting Commanders in Chief desire to field forces with the highest capabilities in this regard, but they will come at a significant cost.

Two recent situations illustrate this trend. First, during combat operations in Kosovo in the spring of 1999, the Marine Corps planned to deploy two F/A-18 Hornet squadrons to Hungary to help fulfill the NATO operational plan. Unfortunately, these Hornet squadrons operated the early “A” model of the aircraft, and had not yet been upgraded with the technology provided by the Engineering Change Proposal 583, which would have enabled our F/A-18As to operate more effectively with the NATO air command and control system in theater. As a result, the Marine Corps was forced to substitute two F/A-18D squadrons in place of the two F/A-18A squadrons, and this in turn caused a great deal of extra wear on these already frequently-deployed aircraft and their personnel.

The Kosovo operation further highlighted our dependence on satellites in modern warfare. The conflict there, involving an American force that was approximately 7 percent the size of our Desert Storm force, required nearly double the military satellite communication bandwidth over that of Operation Desert Storm. The benefits of our command and control systems to our warfighters are tremendous, but we are experiencing difficulty in keeping up with growing requirements for fast, secure, and reliable bandwidth. The complexity of these systems and their networks adds to the challenges. Your continued support of highly capable ground, sea, and space-based command and control systems is critical to our success in modern warfare.

Training the Force

The need for the preservation of key training bases and ranges is a major issue involving the rights and responsibilities of our citizenry. Our citizens who live outside the gates of military training facilities generally gain immediate economic benefit from the military's presence. There is no guarantee of such benefit at every facility, however, because some—most notably, those at which live-fire training is conducted—were chosen specifically because of their relative isolation from large population centers. Economics can only be an ancillary part of the relationship. In the main, we rely upon the patriotism of our citizenry to support the training needs of our nation's military.

Our bases are an integral part of community life across the country and overseas. Here at home, they enjoy broad community support. In a profession that can be rootless at times, bases often provide our strongest connection to the society we are sworn to defend. For servicemen and women without families of their own, their involvement in local school, church, and charitable activities are important qualities of their lives.

As befits the actions of good neighbors, we will continue to do everything within our ability to address the legitimate concerns of local communities regarding noise, environmental, and other issues. We must, however, retain our ability to conduct core

training in an efficient and effective manner, and we must conserve our precious maneuver areas against encroachment. Our record of stewardship demonstrates that Marines are responsible resource custodians, and strong supporters of the environment. We must work with civilian leaders to achieve a reasonable balance between our training requirements and our conservation efforts. At stake in this issue are mission accomplishment and the very survival of our servicemen and women in combat, both of which our nation demands.

Modernizing the Force

The Marine Corps' continued success through this century will rest upon our modernization effort. Even if every other concern regarding the preparedness of the Operating Forces is rectified, within a few years, we will be at risk of sending our men and women into combat with outmoded equipment. For this reason, we place great importance on modernization, and we have developed a plan to achieve our goals. It calls for upgrades and replacements for a number of aging legacy systems.

The Advanced Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAAV) is our highest-priority ground modernization program. It will provide extraordinary mobility, high water and land speed, increased firepower, and improved protection to assaulting Marines, thereby enhancing our already robust forcible entry capability, and extending the flexibility of our forces.

A recent internal review of our ground-based fire support systems suggests that our post-Cold War reductions in artillery left us with serious deficiencies in that area. Our ultimate objective is to develop an appropriate mix of cannon and rocket artillery systems, in order to improve our ability to provide timely, accurate, and effective fire support for Marines. Our envisioned family of weapons is a triad of systems: the lightweight 155-millimeter howitzer (LW 155), a very lightweight cannon, and a mobile rocket system. Together, these weapons will provide our forces close and continuous fire support in any environment, across the spectrum of conflict.

The Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) will form the backbone of our ground transportation, providing greater capacity, mobility, and reliability to our forces. Paired with the second-generation High Mobility, Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), the MTVR will fulfill the great majority of transportation requirements for many years.

Aircraft modernization is critical to our overall effort. The MV-22 Osprey program has been a great success by any measure, with 30 aircraft in existence or under construction and 16 requested in the FY01 budget. After a model development and testing program, the Osprey is being delivered at the budgeted cost, within specifications, and with a high degree of customer confidence. Production is currently slated to increase to 28 aircraft per year in 2003, but we believe that a goal of 36 per year is more efficient in the long run because of the increasing cost of maintaining the CH-46E and CH-53D aircraft during the long transition period.

Our aircraft now in development—the Joint Strike Fighter, the AH-1Z, UH-1Y—will join the Osprey to form a Marine aviation combat element of impressive power, capability, and flexibility. The Joint Strike Fighter represents the future of Marine fixed-wing aviation. Its design is so promising that we decided to await the advanced technology it offers. The plan to build 3,500 of these aircraft will make it the workhorse of the joint fighter fleet, and it will serve well into the future at an affordable unit cost. As the first truly joint aircraft, it deserves your enthusiastic support.

The AH-1Z and UH-1Y programs will provide significantly improved performance and reliability for our attack and utility helicopter fleets. By rebuilding existing aircraft, we will deliver to the Operating Forces helicopters that are virtually new, but at a very low cost.

Given our success with the MV-22, the development of a four engine, or “quad” tilt-rotor (QTR) aircraft is of particular interest to the Marine Corps as a component of a

future aviation fleet. The QTR might also have great potential in filling the Joint Common Lift (JCL) requirement in the future.

The future offers remarkable promise and progress to those who can turn vision into reality. Our modernization plan is sound, and the initial steps are already underway. However, due to our projected funding levels, I remain concerned about the pace of our modernization efforts. The additional resources that are required to finish the task will undoubtedly be viewed as a wise investment by our children and grandchildren, many years from now.

VI. *OUR FUTURE: PAST IS PROLOGUE*

The generation that fought and won the Second World War—as Tom Brokaw argues, our country’s “Greatest Generation”—committed the resources necessary to secure our liberty, and as a result, this generation has left us a tremendous inheritance. We begin the new century with the benefit of an economy that has brought relative wealth to an unprecedented portion of our society and an understanding of the best manner in which to extend that wealth to many more persons both at home and abroad. More important, we have gained the benefit of the hard-earned wisdom of that generation about the role of the United States in the world. Some of those great Americans earned that wisdom through experience and later applied it during long and distinguished careers in the United States Congress. Our continued efforts to build on those twin benefits are our best insurance that the 21st century will be the second “American Century.”

I am deeply encouraged by our nation’s prospects for the future. Our citizens appreciate the benefits of our pre-eminent position in the world and are willing and able to sustain that position for future generations. Our young people are bright, talented, and will, if given the opportunity, measure up to the challenges of tomorrow. Your United States Marine Corps stands ready to respond to the nation’s needs today, and we will continue to work closely with the Congress and the American people to preserve our

readiness and relevance in the future, as we “make Marines, win battles, and return responsible citizens to the nation.”

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