NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

ON MARINE CORPS READINESS

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Introduction

Chairman Sullivan, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished members of this subcommittee, thank you for the invitation and opportunity to address what many defense professionals conclude is job one for a service chief – operational readiness. In an era of great-power competition, this requires establishing the appropriate service culture necessary to generate and sustain readiness not only for the demands of the present, but also for the uncertainty of the future. Therefore, generating a ready force, and not simply an available force, remains my priority.

Your invitation clearly articulated five specific items of interest for the subcommittee, and I intend to address each with as much detail and precision as possible. However, before turning to those individual topics, I should acknowledge that my understanding of the term "readiness" may break somewhat with precedent. For the record, I do not think availability is synonymous with readiness. Today's readiness does not assure future readiness or ensure operational advantage. Every dollar consumed by the current force to make existing and in some cases legacy capabilities ready via their availability comes at the expense of future readiness and investments in to the creation of a modern force. Legacy forces with antiquated capabilities can be maintained at high rates of availability, yet that does not mean they are ready. This readiness schema was most famously articulated in Dr. Richard Betts' seminal work – *Military Readiness* in 1995. As the members of this subcommittee know, Dr. Betts' articulated a model to determine readiness based on three simple questions: a) For what, b) For when, and c) Of what. I will address the topics you identified in your invitation letter using this paradigm.

Readiness IAW National Defense Strategy and Force Design 2030

I have commented publicly on numerous occasions over the past year that the Marine Corps is not optimized today to meet the demands of the 2018 National Defense Strategy. The exploitation of maritime gray zone operations by the People's Liberation Army Navy and the Peoples Armed Force Maritime Militia, coupled with their increasingly aggressive pursuit of

conventional and hybrid capabilities, have fundamentally transformed the environment in which the U.S. military will operate for the foreseeable future. Add to this the continuing threat posed by Russia, by rogue regimes such as Iran and DPRK, as well as by non-state actors and we have a complex problem set that answers the first of Dr. Betts' questions – ready for what?

The Marine Corps is prepared to respond rapidly to any crisis or planned contingency related to China or Russia with naval expeditionary forces from Marine Expeditionary Units to Marine Expeditionary Forces, with capabilities such as 4th or 5th GEN aviation squadrons or with any other combined arms formation desired by fleet commanders and Geographic Combatant Commanders, and in accordance with established timelines. This answers Dr. Betts' second question – for when.

Our forward deployed units in the Pacific, whether shore-based or afloat, are prepared to immediately respond to any crisis, and have a demonstrable record of success. However, successful response is not the acme of skill or triumph. We must modernize our force in accordance with our Force Design 2030 report and in the process make our adversaries respond to our competitive capability advantages as well as the advantages achieved through innovative concepts such as the existing *Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations Concept* and soon to be released *Competition Concept*. While this may sound ambitious, it is well within our ability and resources. As with our record of success responding to crises, the Marine Corps and the Naval Service as a whole have a record of success driving change as evidenced by Chinese and Russian modernization efforts focused on overcoming the advantages created by our traditional power projection and forcible entry capabilities. Our adversaries responded to our obvious military advantages, and adapted their operational and strategic approaches as well as their anti-access and area denial capabilities to counter us, and now it is time for us to respond and counter those advantages in order to restore our competitive advantages per the NDS. Making legacy platforms better will not force our near peer adversaries to change course.

As noted in my Force Design 2030 Report, we will transition our ground fires capabilities from a short-range cannon-based force to one oriented on long-range precision rocket fires – to include an anti-ship missile capability. These long-range fires will provide our traditional ground formations and naval expeditionary units with the modern capabilities required for any contingency against Russian Battle Task Groups or Peoples Liberation Army Navy – Marine Corps units, whether in Europe, Asia, or elsewhere globally. Those modernization efforts will further enable the forward deployment of a new capability – the Marine Littoral Regiment. These units, once augmented with anti-ship missiles, a light amphibious warship for mobility and sustainment, air defense capabilities, Group 5 UAS, and fully trained for expeditionary advance based operations will provide our joint force and fleet commanders with forces prepared to deter adversary aggression by denial and by detection, as well as a counter-gray zone competition maritime force. While EABO discussions have increasingly focused on application in the Indo-Pacific, we should not forget their efficacy in the high north in support of larger Navy Anti-Submarine Warfare efforts, or in contested littoral environments elsewhere around the world.

To be clear, our naval expeditionary forces and FMF in general will be uniquely capable of EABO – but not solely defined as an EABO force. Our Marine Expeditionary Units will remain capable of the full range of crisis response functions. In fact, once enhanced with unmanned surface and undersea vehicles, anti-ship missiles, amphibious combat vehicles, long-range unmanned ISR capability, and 5th GEN STOVL aircraft, we will provide our fleet and theater commanders with a distinct all-domain capability for use in traditional conflict as well as day-to-day competition. Since the technologies enabling the anti-access strategies pursued by Russia and China are also steadily proliferating in the arsenals of lesser powers – notably including Iran and some of her non-state proxies – these capabilities will increasingly be needed for the effective execution of naval expeditionary operations in a widening range of crises and contingencies.

Based on lessons learned from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, as well as from the experiences of the Israeli Defense Forces in Gaza and Lebanon, coalition forces in eastern Ukraine, and the experiences of allies and partners in Mali, Libya, and across the East and South China Seas, we are modernizing our infantry battalions and traditional reconnaissance units to create more distributable formations with much greater organic lethality in accordance with units traditionally associated with special forces and commando units. To support such a transition, we will need to fill our ranks with the highest-caliber individuals capable of out-thinking sophisticated enemies. Our current manpower system was designed in the industrial era to produce mass. War still has a physical component, and all Marines need to be screened and ready to fight. However, we have not adapted to the needs of the current battlefield.

With this in mind, I am glad to bring to the committee's attention two initiatives designed to address this evolving manpower landscape. The first is the planning direction I gave to our new Deputy Commandant for Manpower & Reserve Affairs. The essential element of that guidance is to transition the Marine Corps' approach to human resources from an industrial age manpower approach to a modern talent management system. This effort is just beginning. As we learn more, I look forward to updating you and your colleagues across Congress.

The second initiative involves how we approach training and education. Here we face a requirement to reform and re-invigorate our approaches to learning. The Marine Corps has always prided itself on producing innovative and adaptable thinkers, planners, and warfighters. This does not occur automatically or by chance, however. Rather, it results from regular re-evaluation and reform of training and education institutions, personnel, and curricula to ensure they remain at the cutting edge of military thought and learning technique. We have recently published our first top-level doctrinal publication since 1995, and not coincidentally, it is about Learning. Based on the thinking contained in this document we are taking a hard look at the selection and standards governing entry into our professional military education schools, the quality and qualifications of the faculty who teach there, the curriculum they teach, and the

learning approaches they use. A major emphasis of this review focuses on the expansion of active adult learning techniques and the provision of as many opportunities as possible for students to make tactical and operational decisions in environments that realistically approximate those they may face in today's rapidly changing world. Among other elements, this approach implies a greatly increased focused on the use of wargames and other decision-forcing tools in the classroom. In our service-level training events, a similar focus on requiring Marines at all levels to make decisions in the face of thinking enemies in conditions as close to those of combat as we can safely manage. We have been running these large force-on-force exercises for over a year now with great success, and are considering options for broadening them further, to include integration with existing Joint exercise and training programs.

These major initiatives merely scratch the surface of the changes we will need to make in our training programs – all of these changes will generally point in the direction of producing more highly qualified individual Marines with a range of more diverse skillsets. From the skills our infantrymen will need to ensure their lethality and survivability on a more distributed battlefield, through the expanded capabilities for information operations our force design demands at a number of levels, to the entirely new (for us) skillsets associated with the employment of anti-ship missiles and other forces in seamless integration with the ships and aircraft of the Navy, our training institutions will need to branch out and step up in a number of very critical and consequential areas. My recent decision to elevate our Training and Education Command to three-star level, making its commanding general a full peer to my Deputy Commandants overseeing other critical functions within the Service headquarters, is by no means a full solution to the challenges of change in training and education, but it does symbolize my determination to effect that change and place the immediate authority and responsibility for it in the hands of an officer I know will rise to the challenge.

Finally, let me address Dr. Betts' third question – of what. While I have already commented on the current and future readiness of our naval expeditionary forces, we must not

forget the total force – specifically the readiness of our reserve component forces. Discussions on the readiness of the Marine Corps are incomplete without a conversation about our reserves – a force we utilize as both an operational and strategic reserve. As with the rest of our force, we are in the process of reconceiving and redesigning the reserve portion of our total force. This process is ongoing, and has not yet matured to a point where I could provide significant detail to the subcommittee; however, I remain committed to doing so once the latest force design planning is complete.

Logistics, Infrastructure, and Training Range Readiness

As has been documented via a series of war games over the last few years, the operational logistics system, both ground and aviation is insufficient to meet the challenges posed by peer/near-peer conflict especially in the Indo-Pacific where significant distances complicate sustainment of a deployed force.

While we are making some gains in maintaining legacy equipment and aircraft readiness, it is clear to me that this will lead us on a road to irrelevancy against peer/near peer threats. Readiness is not about availability of equipment; rather, it is about our ability to persist and prevail against peer/near peer threats. The readiness assessments of today are more about our ability to source forces against Combatant Commander requirements. This is an argument about what we can do vice what we should do. Vice the linear path of today, we must develop new readiness metrics that incorporate numerous additional factors to facilitate assessing the service's readiness glide slope into the future. To those who say we must focus on our ability to fight tonight vice an uncertain future, I say you are presenting a false dichotomy. We must focus on and assess our ability to fight tonight, every night, in perpetuity.

Many across the joint force are working to overcome these challenges; however, there is much to be done and time is not on our side. While that is ongoing, my focus is on how to most effectively connect the Fleet Marine Force with my partners in the Navy to the evolving Joint Logistics Enterprise. The distributed battlefields of today strain our systems to the limits. This

will only get worse considering the dynamic, evolving threats that could be arrayed against us unless we take action. I can assure you this has my highest priority.

At present our installations are more of an indication of where we have been as a service than where we are headed. Just as the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) is evolving, we must challenge our assumptions concerning how we deliver installation management and support. We execute these critical tasks as part of a complex network of local, state and national governments not to mention our partners in the Navy and the remainder of the Joint Force. The more we understand our place in that system and how we can influence the important players, the better our regions, bases and stations will be positioned to facilitate the readiness of the FMF both now and into the future. As there is no one size fits all option, we will have to be comfortable adapting enterprise solutions to local conditions. As a result of the rising peer and near peer threats that have several of our bases and stations inside the Weapons Engagement Zone, the service's efforts to protect the force will be far more significant than they have been in the past, requiring greater partnerships with the Navy and the Joint Force.

Based on anticipated funding levels and the additional budget uncertainty introduced by the COVID-19 response, there will be no risk free options. Our force design efforts for the future provide the necessary context to make the difficult choices about the present for our installations as well as help us to prioritize installation related funding for the future. We can no longer accept the inefficiencies inherent in antiquated legacy bureaucratic processes nor accept incremental improvements in our regions, bases and stations. In order for our installations to change effectively, we must more fully understand the implications that Force Design 2030 will have on the FMF across multiple time horizons so our future installations can be resourced to meet those objectives. In coordination with partners both inside and outside the service, we will evolve our regions, bases and stations to meet the readiness requirements in the air, on land and at sea of the future force while continuing to provide world-class support to the force today.

Posture

While some use the word posture simply to describe geographic location, it is more helpful if understood in the broader context of forces, footprints, and agreements. At present, we are in operationally suitable locations across the Indo-Pacific. Okinawa, Guam, Hawaii and Australia provide our forward deployed forces with a competitive advantage, and our forces afloat are capable of global response. However, the success of our future force will be measured in part by its ability to remain mobile in the face of contested operating spaces. While this capability is certainly relevant across multiple scenarios, it assumes a particular sense of urgency in the littoral regions of the Indo-Pacific and in an era of precision-strike missiles, sensing technology, counter reconnaissance capabilities, and the proliferation of unmanned systems. This makes it imperative that we redouble our engagement with capable allies such as the Japan Self-Defense Force and the Australian Defence Force, to refine how and where we work together to confront the shared security threats posed by China, Russia, DPRK, and others. Similarly, we remain committed to a rotational presence in places like Alaska even as we continue to explore opportunities to establish a more permanent forward presence such as with a potential active or reserve component Group 5 UAS DET. Meanwhile, extensive training and exercises will continue in Norway and with other European partners.

Resources and Resource Shortfalls

As I have previously discussed with each of you and stated publicly in my Force Design 2030 Report, I think I have sufficient resources available to generate the ready forces required by the NDS, the Fleet Commanders, the Combatant Commanders, and as expected by our partners and allies. This will require continued Congressional support and ultimately Congressional authorization to re-scope existing programs-of-record in accordance with our new force structure. I choose the word “think” vice “know” simply because our infrastructure, training, and education requirements may require additional funding, but I am not prepared to speak with precision regarding those resource needs at this time. Additional funding for

experimentation would accelerate the development of our future force, and allow for accelerated wargaming, experimentation, and learning. The future Marine Corps requires heavy-lift helicopters, protected mobility, and 5th generation aircraft – but we need the flexibility to adjust programs of record to match the design of our future force. As two of these programs fall within the category of "blue dollars," savings reaped from those could potentially be applied to existing and anticipated shortfalls within the SCN account to fund the procurement of new light amphibious warships and unmanned systems or to fund MQ-9B maritime Group 5 capabilities – all of which have the Secretary's and CNO's support.

Technology and Innovation

We face tremendous challenges in fielding new capabilities quickly and at scale; I would like to partner with Congress to identify the resources necessary to make serious investments to rapidly close the military-technological gap. To be clear, it is not just a matter of a straight budget plus up. It is about creating the multi-dimensional structures, the cross-functional partnerships, and the innovative culture that can leverage the new technologies to transform how the Marines operate. We just need to be smarter about how we invest the money we have. We need to be able to procure an adequate number of new systems to enable robust field experimentation, which supports further concept development, and allows for further refinement of requirements before moving to full-scale production/employment. Our existing institutions dedicated to these functions, to include the wargaming and analysis capacity that precedes and guides any effective experimentation, may not be adequate to the demands of rapid and thoroughgoing change that we now face. They are an essential contributor to readiness as I have defined it here, and increasing their capability and capacity will not be without cost.

We risk readiness when we follow antiquated processes that do not keep pace with the compressed timeframe of the operating space created by today's technology. To be most effective, the MLR must be built around human-machine teaming, leveraging AI and unmanned systems to the maximum extent possible. We have prioritized the related concept development

and wargaming to stay on track to deploy three MLR by 2027. That being said, far more analysis and experimentation at scale will be required so that this new, novel operational concept can be analyzed and tested in realistic scenarios. We will need the support of Congress to make adjustments to the MLR in stride as we incorporate lessons learned, to include from the perspective of how the MLR supports the Joint Force as well as its integration with allies and partners, such as Japan's Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade.

So, how do we balance innovation and readiness? Precisely by developing a clear sight picture, by collapsing the operating space between them and by creating continuous on-ramp opportunities. To be competitive we must be opportunistic, and to be opportunistic we must be agile enough to course correct with speed and agility.

Conclusion

While Force Design 2030 will continue to inform our divestment and investment decisions going forward, we should view it as the first step in a longer journey to address the evolving threats posed by near-peer competitors, rogue regimes, and non-state actors. Risk is inherent when you employ strategic shaping to implement priorities as described by the NDS. Yet, through continued collaboration with your committee and with Congress as a whole, as well as with the other services and with stakeholders from industry to academia, the Marines are well positioned to carry out a generational transformation. Over the next two years, I intend to focus on Phase III of Force Design 2030 – Experimentation. Specifically, I will prioritize efforts to analyze, test, and stress the systems, structures, and platforms required for Force Design 2030 implementation; to reform training and education to support the 21st century warfighter; and to overhaul our outdated personnel and retention model to ensure we attract – and keep – the best Marines our nation has to offer.

In conclusion, the members of this subcommittee should remain confident that their Marine Corps and Fleet Marine Forces remain ready to respond to crisis globally or deploy in accordance with pre-planned contingency timelines – today, and in response to any threat

whether from China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, or any other state or non-state actor. In order to counter adversary maritime gray zone activities and deter aggression by denial and detection, the Marine Corps must modernize. This will require no additional top-line increase, but will require authorization to modify current requirements and established programs-of-record. I understand that this is not a small ask, and that any such change could be perceived as “a loss” or signal a potential decrease in funds or jobs in some of the states you represent. I understand that I am asking you to potentially support a position contrary to self-interest, and am prepared to do everything possible to minimize the impacts of those required changes. While I have testified specifically to Marine Corps readiness, we should not forget that your Fleet Marine Forces remain part of a larger joint force; thus, any discussion of readiness must be understood as a subset of that larger readiness discussion. The Marine Corps and Navy are a team – and one cannot be completely ready without the other.