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MARINE CORPS CYBER MISSION FORCE READINESS STATEMENT OF

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COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES CYBERSPACE COMMAND

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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CYBER SECURITY

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Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Rounds, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for providing me the opportunity to discuss the readiness posture of Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command and to represent the men and women of the command before you today. As you all know, the Marine Corps remains steadfast in the modernization efforts laid out in Force Design 2030 to which the readiness of the cyber mission force is integral. In order for the Service to maintain the current momentum, changes to how we man, train and equip our forces must also continue and we could not do this without your support.

Establishing the Cyber Mission Force

Marine Forces Cyberspace Command Headquarters was established in 2009 and by mid-2013, the first two cyber mission force teams were fielded. Today, MARFORCYBER presents cyber mission forces by way of eight Cyber Protection Teams (CPTs), one Cyber Support Team (CST), three Combat Mission Teams (CMTs) and one National Mission Team (NMT).

Maturing the Cyber Mission Force

The readiness and training of our cyberspace force is an integral part to the Marine Corps' overall ability to serve as the Nation's stand-in-force. Within Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command, we are placing a heavy emphasis on the Commandant's Talent Management 2030, which will directly enable us to fight and win. This requires specified revisions to our personnel system that supports recruiting, developing, and retaining a more intelligent, cognitively mature, and experienced cyber Marine who is comfortable in an environment characterized by rapidly changing technology, great power competition and asymmetric threats.

In November 2018, MARFORCYBER's new headquarters was officially opened on Fort Meade. With the support from Congress the facility today, along with the continued development of Joint Cyber Warfighting Architecture, serves as a platform from which we project power.

The Marine Corps has focused in on academic institutions for recruiting cyber officer. In FY '20 the Marine Corps accessed six cyber officers commissioned through the United States Naval Academy. In FY '22 we are projected to commission 21 cyber officers, seven from the Naval Academy, 4 from MECEP and 4 from NROTC and the rest through other sources such as Officer Candidate School.

In 2021 ten percent of the Marines in our cyber mission force were conducting a second tour/assignment at MARFORCYBER, in 2022 we are at 29 percent; a significant increase that directly impacts the experience and continued maturity of the force.

These are presented as exemplars to our continued development and maturity and are again critical components to Force Design and Talent Management 2030.

MARFORCYBER Current Readiness

With Congress' continued support, along with the investment and prioritization by the Commandant of the Marine Corps and Commander, USCYBERCOM, we are able to maintain a high level of readiness and remain postured to accomplish our assigned mission. There are, however, areas in which we can improve and significant work remains in order to sustain this readiness and effectively meet the projected challenges of the future operating environment.

As of March 2021, the Marine Corps has met and maintained the required combat readiness for the Cyber Mission Force. This is a reflection not only of the support from Congress and prioritization by the Commandant but it also reflects the significant cooperation and investments in personnel and infrastructure by my fellow Service Component Commanders and USCYBERCOM. Continuing to invest in the cyber mission force remains critical to enabling the Commandant's Force Design efforts and to ensuring we continue to meet the requirements of the Joint Force.

The Marines and Civilians that make up the cyber mission force are unequivocally our center of gravity. The challenges we see to readiness remain relatively unchanged: competition from the private sector, the ability to recruit qualified individuals and a long training pipeline – all of which are being addressed collectively with the Service and USCYBERCOM. I would argue what keeps the Marines and Civilians is the mission and the culture – we are an operational command, in contact with our adversaries; we set conditions and make a difference to the warfighter forward. In order to sustain this support in an increasingly high tech and complex environment, we need to recruit, train and retain highly skilled, mature, and mentally tough Marines and Civilians.

Thanks to programs such as the Cyber Excepted Service (CES), we have been able to positively affect our ability to recruit and retain the most qualified Civilian personnel for the cyber mission force. MARFORCYBER converted to the program in 2019 and the use of CES authorities such as Direct Hiring Authority, increased, flexible use of incentives, and the Total Local Market Supplement pay tables are having a meaningful impact on the cyber mission force's civilian workforce.

On the uniformed side, we are constantly working to improve Primary Military Occupational Specialty levels with the means that are available to us - primarily through accession and retention bonuses, as well as by adjusting accession, retention, and promotion targets. We have also developed strategic partnerships with the Naval Academy and Naval Reserve Training Officer Programs to identify midshipman who meet the eligibility criteria for the cyber community and bring them on as interns for their summer training. In addition, we are in our first year of an apprentice program. This summer we will bring on 13 individuals, who are actively pursuing degrees within the cyber field, to work alongside a Marine for approximately three months; the intent is to offer the individuals a position at the conclusion of their degree program.

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In an effort to more effectively balance a lengthy training pipeline with the length of a Marine's enlistment, a Marine who is selected for the 17xx (cyber MOS) signs a five year contract vice the typical four year contract. Additionally, initiatives within the command, such as creating additional instructors and preparatory courses are intended to increase the passing rate for the Marines while simultaneously maximizing their time with the command.

Conclusion

In closing, Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command is committed to providing the best trained and equipped force to support this Nation and we continue to do so with your support. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in front of this committee and I look forward to answering your questions here today.