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ON READINESS, HOUSE ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

OF THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ON

INSTALLATION RESILIENCY: LESSONS LEARNED

FROM WINTER STORM URI AND BEYOND

MARCH 26, 2021

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Chairman Garamendi, Ranking Member Lamborn, and distinguished members of this subcommittee, thank you for the invitation and opportunity to address what I consider among my most important tasks – installation resiliency. I also wanted to thank Congress for the support to Marine Corps Installations, specifically Hurricane Florence recovery efforts and our focus to improve the resiliency of our bases and stations. When we think of resiliency, we consider our installations ability to anticipate, prepare for, adapt to and recover from a wide spectrum of threats to our operational readiness, to include the effects of climate change.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this important issue which is critical to our ability to enable the readiness and warfighting capability of our Fleet Marine Forces (FMF) and the Joint Force. Thanks to the strong support we have received from Congress, the Marine Corps has made significant improvements in our installations, and we have initiated resiliency initiatives across our force. Of course, we still have much further to go in order to meet the evolving requirements of the future force as articulated in the Marine Corps Force Design effort. While experimentation is underway and many installation of the future requirements, specifically maintenance facilities, are not fully understood at present, we are joined at the hip with all elements across the Department of the Navy involved with developing the new capabilities and equipment for the future force.

We face emerging threats on many fronts, with myriad challenges in the current environment, and all signs indicate that those challenges will compound and grow. The most recent National Defense Strategy asserts the homeland is no longer a sanctuary. Our installations are vulnerable targets for a growing host of sophisticated threats and nowhere more so than those posed by identified pacing threats. In addition to ensuring our installations enable FMF readiness, we must modernize our installations and improve their resiliency to a wide spectrum of threats, including extreme weather events and the effects of climate change.

Installation Resiliency

Mr. Chairman, as you have stated, climate change presents myriad readiness challenges both at home and abroad. It is not only a future threat. The effects of climate change, sea level rise, and major weather events directly impact the resiliency of our installations and operations today. Our bases and facilities must recover quickly from extreme weather events and energy disruptions that could affect mission capabilities. Installation resiliency is foundational to enabling the operational readiness and warfighting capability of the FMF and our Joint Partners. Everything we do starts with that goal in mind, but we have a long way to go to reach that objective.

To quote my Commandant's testimony from last December, "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."

Climate Change as a Threat to Operations

The Marine Corps has grappled with climate change and energy efficiency matters since the Obama Administration made climate change a policy priority. We recognize there are interdependencies between our installations and their surrounding communities, and many of those communities share our climate-related vulnerabilities. As service level design, experimentation, and development actions progress in response to the direction from current strategic guidance, both near- and long-term planning for our installations must include efforts to address the effects of climate change. As the installation arm for the "Soldiers of the Sea," we have a unique opportunity to support the DOD in mitigating the threats from weather related events and sea level rise.

Climate Change and its Impact on Institutional Planning

As most of our twenty-five installations are coastal by the very nature of our service, their long-term viability hinges upon robust protection of their shoreline as well as from other extreme environmental events. The significant backlog in maintenance and aging footprint is an example of where our trajectory of the last few decades must be altered. For example, our older assets and infrastructure were not prepared for the threats of even a moderate hurricane. As Hurricane Florence demonstrated in Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST), our new assets and infrastructure built with updated construction standards were significantly more resilient to the storm's effects than our older facilities. In rebuilding we've complied with policies and procedures to build outside of the 100 year floodplain and use current design standards that reflect updated building codes to make facilities more resilient to significant weather events. While we are incorporating vulnerability assessments and evaluations into our master planning process, we recognize we still have work to do across all installations. This includes preparing installations in Marine Corps Installations West (MCIWEST) threatened by droughts, wildfires and earthquakes, and Marine Corps Installations Pacific's (MCIPAC) exposure to typhoons, flooding and earthquakes. Looking ahead, we must prioritize and plan our efforts with special emphasis on facilities and infrastructure critical to support of the Fleet Marine Force and our Joint Partners. Central to this is focusing our constrained resources to ensure we are more resilient.

We also recognize the interdependencies between our installations and the surrounding and supporting communities. In short, we must look beyond the fence line and plan with our local partners. The current and future effects of climate change reinforce our firm commitment to address these issues in coordination with our surrounding communities. Based on our lessons learned, projections of future potential impacts, and current administrations' policy, we anticipate increased opportunities to address similar issues in coordination with federal, state, and local partners at all installations. In concert with Executive Order 14008 and the newly-established Secretary of Defense Climate Working Group, the Marine Corps will continue to incorporate climate risk analysis into installation planning and deploy

new solutions to strengthen the resilience of crucial capabilities at installations and with our surrounding communities.

Initiatives to Increase Installation Resiliency

We understand the criticality of improving the resiliency of our installation's critical functions, such as the power grid, water distribution, and communications capabilities, as we develop installation master plans ensuring we prepare for severe weather and climate change. Ultimately, our objective is to incorporate climate change impacts, severe weather, and lessons learned into every aspect of our institutional planning process. An example of this is Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) Albany, which will become the first United States Marine Corps Net Zero Installation in April 2021. This significant energy achievement will produce as much electricity from renewable "green" energy sources as it consumes from the surrounding community utility providers. By doing so we improve the resiliency of the base while reducing our reliance on traditional energy sources and cutting back on greenhouse gas emissions.

Building on the operational energy success in MCLB Albany, the Marine Corps is adjusting its investment profile to meet the vision of the Commandant's Planning Guidance and Force Design 2030 by investing in new technologies that improve our resiliency. For example, the two smart grids in place at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar enable us to maintain critical installation functions in the event of a local or regional power outage. Building on our experience here we continue to expand our understanding and plan for this emerging technology. Enhancing financing mechanisms for energy efficiency infrastructure projects will be critical to developing our plans for the installations of the future. Continued investments in these projects will place us on a trajectory to meet the future's challenging requirements and posture our installations to meet events like Winter Storm Uri or other extreme weather events.

Broadly, current recapitalization projects directly contribute to increase installations' resiliency to threats both environmental (climate change) and operational. Other tools such as Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program, originally designed to protect against encroachment on training areas, could be reimagined to consider expanding protected areas as a mitigation effort to combat the effects of climate change.

Installation Planning in support of Force Design

To develop the installation of the future, we will prioritize the requirements of future tenants' needs over those of the present. To achieve our goals, we will have to develop a more effective organization that can balance the tension between current force requirements, mid-range force requirements, and those of the future. As broadly defined by our Commandant, the Future Force will have many new capabilities whose installation requirements are difficult to fully determine at present. As the service's experimentation effort continues, I expect these new requirements will come into greater focus. Ultimately, our force design efforts will provide the context necessary to make the difficult choices about our installations' present state and prioritize installation-related investments to meet the FMFs' evolving requirements. As we approach our future resiliency challenges, we will also leverage the authorities granted to us by Congress to execute Intergovernmental Support Agreements, Other Transaction Authority, Utility Privatization, Energy Savings Performance Contracts, Utility Energy Service Contracts, Enhanced Use Leases, and the Military Installation Resilience and Defense Community Infrastructure Program. Specifically, the Military Installation Resiliency Review (MIR) Program, sponsored by the DoD Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) has funded a grant partnering MCRD Parris Island and MCAS Beaufort and local community partners - the Lowcountry Council of Governments, City of Beaufort and Town of Port Royal to further develop climate change resiliency plans supporting both the base and local communities. In coordination with

partners both inside and outside the service, we will evolve our regions, bases, and stations to meet the readiness requirements in all domains of the future force while providing world-class support to the force today.

Installation Support to the readiness of the Future Force

As articulated in the Tri-Service Maritime Strategy, we will prioritize investments that most directly support fleet operations and readiness and support basing and maintenance for current and future platforms. In addition to the guidance contained in the Commandant's Planning Guidance and Force Design 2030 report, Transforming Naval Logistics for Great Power Competition provides an aim point for our installation efforts as part of the much broader Naval Logistics Enterprise. The dynamic challenges faced by the naval expeditionary forces in the face of increasing climate and operational threats across all domains provide an opportunity to reevaluate old assumptions and develop adaptable, sustainable solutions for the ever-evolving operational environment. The demonstration of our capability to persist against all threats and sustain that effort is the critical capability for the success of the naval expeditionary force and the joint force. By persisting in the face of climate change or our near-peer adversaries' kinetic capabilities, we demonstrate we can weather the best of punches and remain resilient.

Conclusion

I appreciate this subcommittee's unwavering support as the Marine Corps confronts these resiliency challenges. As outlined in the National Defense Strategy, our installations must prove resilient in the face of the threats we face. We must continue to modernize our installations to protect our contact and blunt layer forces and reassure our partners and allies. Our operational capabilities are adapting to meet these changes, and we need to invest in next-generation installation infrastructure to match the growing Marine Expeditionary Forces. Your support is crucial as we continue to develop installation

infrastructure to support our Naval Expeditionary Forces at home and abroad to stand against the array of challenges we face, to include the effects of climate change. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

I look forward to working with you to sustain the warfighting capability, the readiness of our warfighting platforms, and our installations' resiliency.