STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

EMERGING THREATS & CAPABILITIES

ON

"Information Technology Investments and Programs: Supporting Current

Operations and Planning for the Future Threat Environment"

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Director C4, DDoN CIO Marine Corps Congressional Testimony

Chairman Wilson and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your support to your Marine Corps and the opportunity to appear before you today along with our counterparts and teammates.

The Marine Corps is the Nation's expeditionary force-in-readiness and is forward-stationed, forward-deployed and forward-engaged. We have this posture to be ready to fight tonight in any clime or place and partner with the Navy to come from the sea and operate ashore, alleviating dependence on fixed bases or facilities. As our Commandant has identified in his planning guidance, it is imperative on the battlefield that we assume the enemy will seek to compromise or degrade our ability to command and control and we should seek to reduce the dissimilarity between how we conduct ourselves in combat and garrison. Our readiness to fight is based on Five Pillars of Readiness, which consist of operational and foundational readiness across Force Structure, Unit Readiness, Capability to Meet Combatant Commanders Requirements, Facility Investments and Equipment Modernization. The common key enabler across these Pillars of Readiness is their requirement to exchange data, information and knowledge leveraging Information Technology (IT). Our warfighters require access to the right data at the right place at the right time. The demand for information will not tolerate a break in access. With the speed in which technology evolves today, we must continue to grow our IT capabilities throughout the entirety of the Marine Corps enterprise. Information must be available seamlessly through multiple mediums, from flag pole to fighting hole. Our end state is to enable command and control in a single information enterprise that supports the way the Marine Corps operates, which includes a range of missions from today's crisis response to supporting our Expeditionary Force 21 concept.

Unifying Our Network

Our single Marine Corps Enterprise Network (MCEN) will be our instantiation of the Joint Information Environment (JIE), and the MCEN Unification Plan (MCUP) is our plan to achieve it. This plan relies on leveraging Next Generation Enterprise Network, Secure Operational Network Infrastructure Capability, Marine Corps Enterprise Information Technology Services and Base Telecommunication Infrastructure programs of record to continue as currently proposed in the Fiscal Year 2016 Presidential Budget. Our main focus today is unifying our networks to securely and seamlessly connect deployed and engaged forces to Joint data, information and knowledge at the time they need it. Sustained investment will allow the Marine Corps to reduce legacy systems, maintain the momentum achieved to date in the MCUP and gain efficiencies.

As JIE continues to develop, the Marine Corps will analyze future capability, programming and resourcing implications and refine the plan as necessary. We are reviewing our MCEN defensive boundaries for instance, to determine what capabilities deployed Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) will require that the Joint Regional Security Stacks (JRSS) may not provide. The Marine Corps completely supports the JRSS effort and is preparing to evolve to JRSS 2.0 in Fiscal Year 2018 by beginning optical core upgrades and transitioning to Multiprotocol Label Switching in Fiscal Year 2016.

The Marine Corps' Fiscal Year 2016 Information Technology Budget of approximately $1.6 billion is focused on completing the modernization of the Government Owned and Operated Next Generation Enterprise Network taken back from Hewlett Packard in 2013, improvements to the Secure Internet Protocol Routed Network, modernization and sustainment of Common Aviation Command and Control System Increment 1 and consolidating key Marine Corps

applications into Marine Corps Enterprise Information Technology Services. The overarching theme of these initiatives is to ensure reliable access to persistently used information for our Marines at the point of need, ranging the entire operational spectrum. These key actions directly support the Marine Corps' Five Pillars of Readiness.

We also continue to innovate and look for further efficiencies through cloud and mobility efforts within the Marine Corps. Our Cloud Strategy supports the Commandant's priorities and focus areas, such as fiscal responsibility, expeditionary energy and green IT. The Marine Corps Cloud Strategy will reduce cost and save energy by consolidating and centralizing resources, including hardware, software, and licenses. This strategy also supports the Marine Corps Information Enterprise (MCIENT) by implementing seamless, mobile communications and knowledge/information management across the enterprise. The benefits of the Cloud Strategy include the realization of a single enterprise for the supporting establishment and forward deployed forces in a manner that is effective and efficient with respect to fiscal restraints, manpower sourcing and operational tempo.

The Marine Corps Cloud Strategy is rooted in the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Definition of Cloud Computing and the Federal Cloud Computing Strategy. The foundational enabler for the Marine Corps strategy is the Marine Corps Enterprise Information Technology Services (MCEITS), which establishes the Marine Corps' guidance for synchronizing current Marine Corps IT programs. The Cloud Strategy will ensure the Marine Corps complies with and aligns to federal requirements and guidelines by ensuring that IT services are distributed across the enterprise in fiscally and operationally efficient and effective manners.

The currently constrained budget environment requires us to balance fiscal responsibility with mission accomplishment. To align to DOD strategies and initiatives and in accordance with the MCIENT, the Marine Corps has begun consolidating data centers and executing our Cloud Strategy. With increasing mobile device capabilities, the Marine Corps recognizes the trend of evolving information needs across our operating environments and the need to provide an agile method of meeting those needs. The user requirement to access and share information from non-traditional workspaces will enable more efficient mission accomplishment. The ability to access, share and manipulate data and information from non-traditional workspaces will afford users with additional freedom of movement across an expanding information environment. The flexibility and ubiquitous ability to share information effectively will reduce the orientation and decision-making timelines, thereby affecting more rapid mission accomplishment.

IT Acquisition Process

The acquisition process continues to be deliberately procedure heavy and risk averse to ensure appropriate delivery of IT solutions.   Statutory and regulatory changes will be required in order to enable responsiveness to emerging cyber threats and missions. Current IT acquisition processes do not adequately support the delivery tempo required for emerging IT and cyber solutions. The tempo at which IT solutions must be acquired to meet cyberspace operational mandates is occurring at a much greater pace, which creates tension within the acquisition process. We must strike a balance between rapid acquisition to meet emerging threats and changing operational demands and maintaining disciplined engineering rigor of enterprise networks.

Strengthening the IT Acquisition Workforce

The Marine Corps faces challenges with developing, hiring and retaining its cadre of experienced IT professionals. The surge in demand for experienced IT professionals has made it difficult for the Marine Corps to viably compete with the salary and benefit packages provided by private industry. This demand, coupled with downsizing of the acquisition workforce across the Department of Defense has led to increased attrition rates and significant increases in the quantity of vacancies in critical IT acquisition positions. The pace of IT innovation and the constantly evolving cyber threats has further compounded the challenge of accurately defining requirements, rapidly acquiring, and adequately sustaining secure, state-of-the-art IT systems that work seamlessly in joint and coalition environments.

Given the challenges identified, the Marine Corps has taken several steps to strengthen and augment its organic IT workforce. Specifically, the Marine Corps:

- Continues to seek and maintain professional certifications for employees operating within specific IT domains, such as information assurance management, in accordance with Department of Defense Directive 8570.

- Continues to provide resources for IT professionals to obtain advanced technical training courses to improve competencies in IT related fields.

- Improved its planning processes with Naval Warfare Centers and other Government research centers to improve reach-back access to qualified IT professionals to augment its organic IT workforce embedded within acquisition program offices.

- Actively recruits and develops its future cadre of information technology specialist, telecommunications specialists, computer scientists and engineering professionals as part of

various intern programs offered through the Department of Defense, with specific success noted

through the Department of Navy intern program and the Science, Mathematics and Research for

Transformation (SMART) program.

     - Identified critical IT vacancies as a high priority for active job solicitations and hiring

actions as authorized.

     While these efforts have aided in reducing the impacts brought about by attrition losses,

these challenges are likely to persist for the foreseeable future and may impact the Marine Corps'

IT acquisition workforce.

Investment Review and Management Processes

     To mitigate IT risk, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations, the Marine Corps

Information Environment supports the Marine Corps goals and objectives, the CIO has input and

authorities related to: (1) force development; (2) the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and

Execution (PPBE) process; and (3) acquisition processes. Additionally, the Marine Corps

currently conducts investment reviews using an Information Technology Steering Group, which

evaluates current and future IT investments across the Marine Corps to ensure their alignment

and performance to Marine Corps strategic priorities. The Marine Corps Information

Technology Steering Group further reviews and assesses IT investments providing qualitative

and quantitative input that influences acquisition and sustainment decisions.

     Currently, efforts are underway to review the Marine Corps Chief Information Officer (CIO)

role. Through strengthened authorities and process input, the CIO can deliver IT investment

plans that generate cost savings/avoidance and provide assured capabilities with:

     - Repeatable processes and enforcement mechanisms that eliminate duplicative and

     unnecessary IT capabilities.

- Enterprise IT services that align to strategic goals and objectives.

- Standardization of IT capabilities and governance across the Marine Corps Information Enterprise.

This effort increases involvement in IT investment decisions, to include providing the CIO additional authorities and responsibilities over contracts for IT capabilities and the certification of the accuracy of the risks associated with IT investments across the Marine Corps. In addition, the Marine Corps has realigned its requirements management process to take a more holistic view of force development activities.   This realignment gives greater visibility to all aspects of Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel and Facilities that are required in delivering fully supported capabilities aligned to the Marine Corps strategic priorities.

Conclusion

The future operating environment will continue to stretch the employment capacity of the United States and require a force-in-readiness with global response capabilities. Declining budgets may result in further stretching of the force; however, the President's Budget supports the best balance of resources in support of achieving the Commandant of the Marine Corps' planning guidance. The Marine Corps will continue to be our Nation's force-in-readiness, ready to answer the call and fight tonight. We will ensure our IT investments and workforces are capable and trained to meet today's unpredictable and dynamic operating environment. Thank you for your support of our Marines and for the opportunity to represent our Corps today on these important topics.