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Subcommittee on Defense

STATEMENT OF

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COMMANDANT

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

BEFORE THE

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

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Introduction

The Marine Corps is *the* Nation's expeditionary force-in-readiness. Congress, specifically and uniquely, structured and prescribed the role of the Marine Corps as a "...balanced force-in-readiness, air and ground...to suppress or contain international disturbances short of large scale war." Under this mandate, Marines are forward-deployed, forward-engaged, and postured to shape events, manage instability, project influence, and immediately respond to crises. As an inherently joint combined arms team, Marines assure access and enable heavier contingency forces to deploy from the United States in response to a major contingency.

Also, to meet the intent of the Congress, the Marine Corps must maintain a high state of combat readiness. We look at readiness through the lens of our 5 pillars of readiness – high quality people, unit readiness, capacity to meet the combatant commanders' requirements, infrastructure sustainment, and equipment modernization. These pillars represent the operational and foundational components of readiness across the Marine Corps. Our role as America's 9-1-1 force informs how we man, train, and equip our force, and how we prioritize and allocate resources across the pillars of readiness. While we will always ensure that our forward deployed Marines and Sailors are properly manned, trained and equipped, we seek to maintain balanced investment across the pillars to ensure current and future readiness. We emphasize that all Marines and all Marine units are physically and mentally ready to deploy to any clime and place, at any time.

The Marine Corps is a force of economy. For 6.0% of the defense budget, the Marine Corps provides 21% of the Nation's infantry battalions and 15% of the fighter/attack aircraft. These capabilities, organized as Marine Air Ground Task Forces with an organic logistical element,

provide the Nation with affordable insurance and a strategic hedge in an era of uncertainty and unprecedented complexity.

Strategic Landscape

The challenges of the future operating environment will demand that our Nation maintains a force-in-readiness that is capable of global response. The strategic landscape will be characterized by competition for natural resources, violent extremism, natural disasters, social unrest, cyber-attacks, regional conflict, and proliferation of advanced weaponry and weapons of mass destruction. The expansion of modern conventional and cyber weapons to a broader range of state and non-state entities, along with the erosion of U.S. technological advantages in areas where we have long enjoyed relative superiority, is likely to continue. Further, the actions of transnational criminal organizations and violent extremist groups will continue to contribute to regional unrest and instability that directly threaten U.S. interests through piracy, trafficking and terrorism. The U.S. must expect a security landscape characterized by volatility, instability and complexity, and a growing potential among adversaries to employ weapons of mass destruction.

As Marines, we view global security challenges from a maritime perspective. The majority of these challenges reside in the congested and diverse areas where the sea and land merge—the littorals. Today, more than 80% of the world’s population currently resides within 100 miles of a coastline and this proportion is continuing to rise. Most maritime activities such as commercial shipping, fishing, and oil and gas extraction take place within 200 miles of the shore. It is no accident that the so-called “Arc of Instability” encompasses the littoral areas of South Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa. These geographic and demographic trends indicate a future security environment with a significant maritime element.

We expect that the next 10 years will be largely characterized by small-scale crises and limited contingencies in and around coastal environments. Should major operations and campaigns occur, they are likely to involve a significant maritime and littoral dimension. Ready, responsive, flexible and strategically mobile naval forces are essential to ensuring continued access and security in the global commons. The increased likelihood of operations in the littorals demands the Marine Corps focus on its Title 10 responsibilities to be organized, trained and equipped to come from the sea across the range of military operations.

America's responsibility as a world leader requires an approach to the current and future strategic landscape that leverages the forward presence of our military forces in support of our diplomatic and economic approaches. As stated in the 2012 President's Defense Strategic Guidance, "The United States will continue to lead global efforts with capable allies and partners to assure access to and use of the global commons, both by strengthening international norms of responsible behavior and by maintaining relevant and interoperable military capabilities." The Marine Corps' unique capabilities support this strategic approach.

Your Marines

In 2014, Marines responded to crises around the world and remained forward-deployed and forward-engaged managing instability, building partner capacity, strengthening alliances, and projecting influence. Your Marines demonstrated the relevance of expeditionary naval forces by executing more than 30 amphibious operations, 150 Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) events, and 130 exercises around the globe. While we have drawn down our forces in Afghanistan, our operational tempo remains extraordinarily high. Most Marines in the operating forces are

deploying for 7 months and spending at or below 14 months at home before redeploying. There is a strong demand signal for Marines and tailored Marine Air Ground Task Forces.

OEF-Afghanistan

In 2014, the Marine Corps contributed to the mission in Afghanistan by training, advising and assisting the Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) and supporting the fight against terrorism in Southwest Asia. Our operations focused on ensuring the success of the Afghanistan elections in the summer of 2014 and transitioning security responsibilities to the ANSF. With Marines serving in an advisory capacity, the ANSF retained control of all district centers in Helmand Province. Regional Command (SW) also turned over operational responsibilities to the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command facilitating redeployment of Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan (MEB-A) to home station. Today, a residual Marine presence continues to support the Resolute Support Mission (NATO)/OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (US) in Afghanistan.

In more than 13 years of combat operations, 377 Marines were killed and 4,946 injured in Afghanistan. We remember their selfless service and many sacrifices. Our success in RC-SW is directly related to the high quality men and women in our ranks, the training that prepared them to face the rigors of combat, and the equipment that provided protection and a tactical edge over the enemy. Due to the enduring support of Congress and the American people, the Marines who fought in Afghanistan had the training and equipment necessary to accomplish the mission. The full support of Congress for a variety of initiatives such as Mine Resistant Armor Protected Vehicles (MRAPs) and upgraded individual protective equipment saved lives and enhanced combat effectiveness.

Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) Operations

Our preferred method of deploying our Marines is aboard Navy amphibious ships to form ARG/MEU Teams. These are the Nation's most-ready, forward-postured forces. This capability provides strategic speed, agility, and options to our National Command Authority. They operate in international waters retaining flexibility for the Geographic Combatant Commander (GCC) while respecting the sovereign territory of individual nation states. The ARG/MEU team can respond faster from longer ranges with greater capabilities across the ROMO than any other conventional forces in the Department of Defense and are also capable of enabling Joint, interagency and coalition forces. In 2014, the 11th, 13th, 22d, 24th, and 31st Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU) deployed and contributed to combatant commander requirements by participating in numerous exercises and operations throughout the CENTCOM, PACOM, AFRICOM, and EUCOM areas of responsibility (AORs). When required, the ARG/MEU has the scalability and versatility to respond to simultaneous emergencies. Last summer, the 22d MEU/Bataan ARG was operating in the CENTCOM AOR conducting operations in Yemen. When needed, elements of the ARG/MEU rapidly transited into the Mediterranean Sea to support the suspension of embassy operations in Libya and relocation of its staff. During their return, they launched a force over 1200 miles to contribute to the initial response to counter ISIS. Concurrently, elements of the ARG/MEU continued to support U.S. operations in Yemen. Over the last year, we have also increased collaboration with SOF, significantly improving our complementary capabilities.

Due to their forward presence, flexibility, ability to respond quickly and the decision space they afford our leaders, ARG/MEU's continue to be in high demand. Unfortunately, the Navy and Marine Corps can meet less than half of the GCC ARG/MEU crisis response force demand

based on the ARG shipping available for tasking. Today, available expeditionary Navy/Marine Corps forces stand ready aboard ships to assure allies, deter potential adversaries, and provide persistent U.S. presence. Our Marines are forward deployed, with little to no footprint ashore, to respond and protect U.S. national security interests around the globe.

Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force – Crisis Response (SPMAGTF-CR)

Operations

With the high demand for Marine crisis response capabilities and the shortage of amphibious platforms from which to forward deploy forces, SPMAGTF-CRs were developed. While they don't provide the flexibility and responsiveness of an ARG/MEU, they mitigate a capability gap for the combatant commanders. Our SPMAGTF-CRs are tailored to respond to crisis and also conduct security cooperation activities with partner nations in order to develop interoperability, facilitate access, build partner capacity and security relationships, and gain regional understanding. This past year, SPMAGTF-CR units assigned to AFRICOM positioned forward in Moron, Spain and Sigonella, Italy safeguarded the lives of our diplomatic personnel and conducted military-assisted departures from the U.S. Embassy in South Sudan in January and our embassy in Libya in July. The Marine Corps SPMAGTF-CR unit assigned to CENTCOM (SPMAGTF-CR-CC) became fully operational on 1 November 2014 and deployed to the CENTCOM AOR. Since November, SPMAGTF-CR-CC conducted embassy reinforcement, TSC exercises, and provided critical aviation and ground capabilities in the fight against ISIL. Most recently, Marines from SPMAGTF-CR-CC supported the evacuation of our Embassy in Sana'a, Yemen. A third SPMAGTF deployed in support of Southern Command from June to September aboard USS AMERICA on her transit around the South American continent and

executed partner-nation activities, key leader engagements and security cooperation activities. The placement of these Marine Corps tailored task force capabilities forward, where GCC's need them, provides enhanced diplomatic protection and additional crisis response options.

Marine Corps in the Pacific

The Marine Corps' activities in the Pacific are led by III Marine Expeditionary Force headquartered on Okinawa, Japan. This past year, III MEF conducted 52 operations and exercises. In 2014, III MEF conducted Exercise Ssong Yong – the largest amphibious exercise of the year with our Korean allies further demonstrating the U.S. commitment to South Korea. III MEF plays an important role in maintaining stability in East Asia and significantly contributes to peace and prosperity throughout the region. A number of TSC exercises were conducted using Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS). While these platforms were designed to deliver heavy equipment for a major contingency, adapting them for day-to-day engagement enabled us to better support the combatant commander's theater campaign plan and mitigated the number of amphibious lift in the Pacific.

The Marine Corps continues to rebalance its force lay-down in the Pacific to support the Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG). The Distributed Laydown's planned end state of four geographically distributed, politically sustainable and operationally resilient MAGTFs in the Pacific (Australia, Guam, Japan, and Hawaii) is a long term effort that will span the next 15 years. In 2014, we met the Secretary of Defense's guidance to have 22,500 Marines west of the International Date Line, forward based and operating within the Asia-Pacific Theater. Marine rotational force-Darwin (MRF-D), based at Robertson Barracks, is in its third year of execution, and has rotated 1,263 Marines through Darwin conducting bi-lateral training and exercises. This

rotational force provides MARFORPAC and PACOM with a ready and deployable MAGTF capable of Humanitarian Response/Disaster Relief (HA/DR), TSC, and crisis response operations. MRF-D has strengthened our alliance with our Australian allies and provided the GCC an immediate response option in the wake of an unforeseen crisis.

Black Sea Rotational Force, Embassy Security Forces, and Theater Security Cooperation (TSC)

Marine Corps operational commitments span across all GCCs contributing to stronger alliances, stable international order, and security for our diplomatic stations. In the Republic of Georgia, the Marine Corps prepared three Georgian infantry battalions for their deployment to Afghanistan. There, the Georgian forces provided force protection and executed Quick Reaction Force (QRF) missions as the ISAF mission transitioned to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM). Enabling the deployment of Georgian battalions reduced the requirement for U.S. forces in Afghanistan while providing the Commander with the requisite capabilities.

In support of our strong commitment to the security and stability in Europe, Marines of the Black Sea Rotational Force (BSRF) mission conducted hundreds of TSC activities in EUCOM and provided a significant crisis response option for the EUCOM commander. Additionally, Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Teams (FAST) provided forward-deployed platoons to four Geographic Combatant Commanders in support of dynamic mission tasking such as embassy reinforcement in Baghdad, Iraq and Sana'a, Yemen.

The 2015 President's National Security Strategy emphasizes the security of American citizens. This past year the Marine Corps worked closely with the State Department to increase baseline security at high risk embassies and consulates. Today Marines are routinely serving at

173 embassies and consulates in 141 countries around the globe. In 2014, the Marine Corps Embassy Security Group added 237 Marine Security Guards (MSG) to new and current posts including Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey. These Marines represent our initial installment towards the additional 1,000 MSG requirement from Congress. The Marine Security Augmentation Unit (MSAU) also deployed 29 times at the request of the State Department executing 16 Embassy/Consulate security missions and 13 VIP (POTUS/VPOTUS/SECSTATE) security missions. MSAU Marines deployed to Iraq, Israel, South Korea, Chad, China, Poland, Philippines, France, Bahrain, Romania, Australia, Brazil, United Kingdom, Kenya, Ukraine, South Sudan, Turkey, Mexico, and Thailand.

Fiscal Year 16 Budget Priorities

The President's Budget for FY16 (PB16) allocates \$24 billion to the Marine Corps' baseline budget. To meet our responsibilities as the Nation's 9-1-1 force, we prioritized near-term readiness while assuming risk in our home station readiness, modernization, infrastructure, and quality of life programs. We will attempt to reestablish an acceptable balance across the 5 Pillars of Readiness across the future year's defense plan. The following is a detailed description of the Marine Corps' budget priorities supported by PB16 of Force Structure, ACV, JLTV, JSF, CH-53K, C4 and naval programs of interest.

Force Structure

In 2010, the Marine Corps' internal force structure review concluded that the USMC's optimal size to meet the requirements of the President's National Security Strategy was 186,800. This optimal size gives the Marine Corps the capacity we need to meet current steady state

demand with a deployment-to-dwell (D2D) ratio greater than 1:2. We continue to support this review and conclusion. Today, the Marine Corps continues to execute its end-strength reductions that began during FY12, reducing the Corps from a high of 202,000. The Marine Corps is adjusting its active duty end-strength to 182,000 Marines by 2017, emphasizing the enduring requirement to provide crisis response forces that meet today's demand. We can meet the DSG at this level, but with less than optimal time between deployments to train and allow Marines to be with their families.

Our most significant readiness challenge is the gap in the numbers of unit leaders with the right grade, experience, technical and leadership qualifications associated with their billets. Specifically, our current inventory of Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) and Staff Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs) is not meeting our force structure requirements. This dynamic directly affects our training, maintenance, and discipline resulting in degraded readiness and combat effectiveness. The Marine Corps' PB16 military personnel budget funds a FY16 end-strength of 184,000 in our base and supports right-sizing our NCO corps to provide our Marines the small unit leadership they deserve.

Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV)

The Marine Corps appreciates the support of the Congress in restructuring the ACV program in the FY15 appropriations bill. That action has set us on a path to publishing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to industry in March of this year and enables a truly 'streamlined' acquisition process. Leveraging the stability of the Services' requirements and the mature technologies of non-developmental, modern, wheeled, armored combat vehicles, the combat developers and acquisition professionals have developed a way forward to field a capability for the Marines in as

little as 6 (vice 13 or more) years. Consistent with Marine Corps Ground Combat and Tactical Vehicle Strategy (GCTVS) and Expeditionary Force 21, the Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) will be developed and procured in phases to incrementally field modern replacements for the aging Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV).

The program is based on the most current threat projections and anticipated operational requirements, and is fully informed by the real world challenges that our Marines have faced during 14 years of sustained combat. The ACV will provide our ground maneuver forces the ability to negotiate the challenging urban and cross-country terrain of the littorals while protecting them from ballistic and explosive threats and supporting them with precision heavy machine gun fire.

The President's budget fully funds ACV 1.1 within the FYDP. PB16 will buy 86 vehicles over the FYDP or approximately 42% of the 204 ACV 1.1 vehicles in the Approved Acquisition Objective (AAO). When Full Operational Capability (FOC) is achieved in FY23, we will have modernized two Assault Amphibian (AA) Companies currently equipped with four decades old AAVs with 204 new vehicles. ACV 1.1 plus the 1.2 increment are currently planned to modernize 6 of 10 AA Companies. With PB16 funding, the Marine Corps will achieve Initial Operational Capability (IOC) which consists of an ACV platoon of 21 armored vehicles, providing protected amphibious lift to an infantry company. IOC is achieved when the platoon is fully equipped, the unit is fully trained and judged combat ready for deployment, and the required maintenance and support personnel are in place to sustain the unit.

The need for self-deploying, high-water speed vehicles remains our ultimate objective. The capability to come from the sea and operate in the littorals will be significantly dependent on the speed at which we can maneuver. ACV 1.1 provides a responsible and effective approach to

mitigating the age of our AAV fleet while investing in needed capabilities for tomorrow. We will continue to prioritize our science and technology efforts to field an amphibious combat vehicle that will fully support our operating concepts in the future.

Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV)

Over the past 14 years of combat, we found that the HMMWV utility vehicle was not adequate for the modern battlefield due to its vulnerability to improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In 2006, we began development of a light tactical vehicle that could combine the land mobility performance, transportability profile and payload of the HMMWV with the protection of a combat vehicle within the weight constraints of the expeditionary force. Today, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle Program has three exceptionally strong designs in competition that will realize the initiating concept in production and deployment while increasing the protected mobility of the highest risk portion of the light combat and tactical vehicle fleet.

The JLTV program is in the engineering and manufacturing development (EMD) phase with Milestone C and the low rate initial production contract award scheduled for FY15. The PB16 supports the Marine Corps' strategy to reach IOC for JLTV in the 4th quarter of FY18 and FOC in the 4th quarter of FY21. IOC consists of one infantry battalion fully fielded with the JLTV plus a training element.

Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF), MARSOC, and critical supporting establishment training units will also be allocated a portion of PB16 funded vehicles. Vehicles will be allocated by unit based on the JLTV Fielding Plan, currently in development in support of Milestone C decision in 4th quarter of FY15. PB16 will buy 4,476 vehicles over the FYDP, or

approximately 80% of the increment I – 5,500 vehicles – Approved Acquisition Objective (AAO).

Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)

Our tried and true F/A-18s, AV-8Bs and EA-6B Prowlers have performed magnificently in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, providing our Marine riflemen the fires they needed, in every clime and place from sea bases large and small, and expeditionary bases ashore. With the help of Congress, we have kept these aircraft as modern as possible and extracted every ounce of readiness we can from them; however, the high operational tempo has pushed these aircraft to more rapidly approach the end of their service lives. Due to the uncertainty prevalent in today's global security environment, the Nation requires we maintain a capability to respond quickly in contested regions regardless of weather conditions. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, as part of the MAGTF, meets the Nation's needs.

The Marine Corps remains committed to the recapitalization of our aging TACAIR fleet through the procurement of the F-35. The JSF brings a new capability to the battalion sized forces that sail with our Marine Expeditionary Units. Today, there are a multitude of high risk regions where a crisis response operation would require large Joint strike packages to soften or blind the threat. These packages would have to include cruise missiles, fighter aircraft, electronic warfare platforms, aircraft which specialize in suppression and destruction of enemy air defenses, and strike aircraft - just for U.S. forces to gain access. Such strike packages require coordination across services and combatant commands and take weeks and months to assemble. This same kind of access can be attained with a single detachment of 4 to 8 F-35s - the same sized detachment which will reside with a Marine Expeditionary Unit. For major contingencies,

a surge of F-35Bs to our amphibious carrier decks and forward austere bases enables even greater options and striking power. The F-35 provides a transformational capability to the Marine Corps and the Joint Force. It gives our Nation a day one, full spectrum capability against the most critical and prohibitive threats.

The Marine Corps prioritizes putting our TACAIR as close to our infantry as we can by basing them from Amphibious Carriers or austere Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARPs) ashore. This places the F-35's transformational capabilities in the hands of the infantry Marine. The Marine rifleman is now supported immediately with close air support, electronic warfare capabilities, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support in threat and weather conditions which previously would have denied aviation support. The F-35's ability to develop, process, and display information to the pilot and disseminate it at tactical, operational, and strategic levels is what makes the platform truly unique, "a server in the sky" for the MAGTF. The sensors and communications equipment of our F-35s allow pilots and forward air controllers to see through the clouds to exchange high fidelity pictures in environments we would consider a no go today. Enhancing the C2, strike and intel capabilities of the MAGTF commander, the F-35 transforms the MAGTF into an element capable of penetrating any AOR in the world to set the conditions necessary to enable follow-on forces.

The Marine Corps has maintained the lead in this transformational platform. The F-35B and C models will replace the over 23 year old F/A-18 Hornet, 18 year old AV-8B Harrier and the 27 year old EA-6B Prowler; the same aircraft that have been passed from fathers to sons and daughters now serving. We have stood up our first two squadrons of F-35Bs and will stand up a third in 2016. PB16 supports the Marine Corps' timeline to achieve IOC of its first F-35B

squadron later this year and complete full transition by 2031. With the optempo expected to remain high, we will transition to F-35s as rapidly as possible. Continued Congressional support for this transition is key to increasing our degraded aviation readiness and minimizing our exposure to ever increasing operations and support costs for aged aircraft.

CH-53K

The CH-53E, the Marine Corps' heavy lift helicopter, is the only vertical heavy lift helicopter in the Department of Defense (DoD). Like its predecessors, the CH-53A/D, the CH-53E has continued a proud lineage of worldwide support of the Marine rifleman and Joint Force in various tactical and logistical capacities. Though a workhorse for the Marine Air Ground Task Force since its acquisition, the CH-53E does not have the capacity to support the Marine Expeditionary Brigade of 2024 with the payloads and ranges required to support the ship-to-objective maneuver concepts outlined in Expeditionary Force 21. Our CH-53 recapitalization effort is instrumental in maintaining a true heavy lift capability for the Marine Corps and the Nation for the future. Developmental testing is currently underway and the first flight of the CH-53K is scheduled for 2015 with an Initial Operational Capability in 2019. PB16 is instrumental in providing critical funding for the last test articles in support of a Milestone C decision in 2016.

The CH-53K will meet all of the requirements of the modern Marine Expeditionary Unit and Marine Expeditionary Brigade and remain the only heavy lift rotary wing asset in the DoD inventory. The CH-53K is a state of the art heavy lift vertical connector providing increased reliability, range and lift for the Marine Air Ground Task Force and Joint Force. The mainstay for the CH-53K will remain heavy lift external operations. To this end, its Key Performance Parameter (KPP) is the ability to externally transport a load weighing 27,000 pounds 110

nautical miles, nearly three times the capability of the CH-53E. Additionally the CH-53K will incorporate a triple hook system, facilitating the delivery of three independent loads, to three different locations, in support of three separate units dispersed across the battlefield. The new cabin will support the transportation of the DoD standard 463L pallet enabling more efficient “tail to tail” logistical transitions with C-5s, C-17s and C-130s. The implementation of civil sector logistical advancements will facilitate near real time situational awareness of all cargo and passengers embarked and delivered by the CH-53K. The CH-53K will provide precision and tempo for the Marine rifleman, enabling mission success.

PB16 provides Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) funding for the continued CH-53K System Development Demonstration contract which includes continued design, part qualification, developmental and operational test. Additionally, PB16 provides RDT&E funding for the incremental procurement of System Demonstration Test Articles 5 and 6, which will be used to ensure production readiness, quality system verification, and production planning and validation. We remain committed to our Program of Record of 200 CH-53Ks in order to keep Marine Corps’ heavy lift assets relevant and effective for the Marine on the ground in the future MAGTF.

Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4)

Deployed 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 C4 capabilities down to the operational level.

Information must be available through multiple mediums, from flag pole to fighting hole. Our end state is to enable command and control in an information enterprise that supports the way the

Marine Corps operates, which includes a range of missions from crisis response to supporting our Expeditionary Force 21 concept - all characterized by mission-tailored forces. A single Marine Corps network will support the Marine Corps' component of the Joint Information Environment.

Our main focus today is unifying our networks to seamlessly connect the deployed and engaged forces to Joint information and data. This provides our Marines, Sailors, and supporting personnel the persistent information needed to conduct operations. We continue to increase our cyber capacity with trained personnel and emergent technology to protect this critical data.

The Marine Corps must retain the ability to rapidly support the extension of the Marine Corps' information and data services to enhance our rapid response to crisis, provide contiguous command and control to a disaggregated force, and scale to support theater security and major combat operations. We will continue to invest in C4 down to the Corporals and Sergeants. This will allow our front line Marine rifleman to be more agile, lethal and responsive by directly leveraging the capabilities of the F-35 and communicating better with special operations forces.

Naval Integration and Programs of Interest

As the service with primary DoD Directive and Title 10 responsibility for the development of amphibious doctrine, tactics, techniques, and equipment, our capabilities are reliant on the Nation's investment in our partnered Navy programs. Naval integration will increasingly form an important component of our exercise and experimentation programs. The Marine Corps fully supports the Secretary of the Navy and CNO's efforts to balance amphibious platforms and surface connectors that facilitate operational maneuver from the sea and ship-to-objective maneuver with the other service requirements of the Navy.

The President's Budget investments in LPD-28, LX(R), and ship-to-shore connectors demonstrate our commitment to global maritime presence and the Nation's mandate to sustain an amphibious capability that can respond to deter, deny, and defeat threats on a global scale. We appreciate Congress providing a substantial portion of funding to procure a 12th LPD. The enhanced mission profiles of these new and additional platforms create operational flexibility, extended geographical reach, and surge capabilities to the Geographical Combatant Commands.

Naval investments in alternative seabasing platforms expand access and reduce dependence on land bases, supporting national global strategic objectives and providing operational flexibility in an uncertain world. The naval seabasing investments in the Mobile Landing Platform, the Large Medium-Speed Roll-on/Roll-off Ship (LMSR) strategic sealift ship, and the T-AKE Dry Cargo and Ammunition Ship as part of the Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadrons, coupled with the Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV) and connectors, provide the additional lift, speed, and maneuver necessary to augment Navy and Marine Corps future security capabilities. Although not a substitute for amphibious warships, these alternative lift platforms will complement amphibious ships.

While the President's Budget moves us in the right direction, it will take many years and a sustained effort to address the risk in the current number of amphibious ships and to address the material readiness of our current inventory. The Marine Corps will continue to work closely with the Navy to implement the 30 year ship building plan and to address the current readiness challenges.

Readiness

Proper balance across the 5 Pillars of Institutional Readiness is the most effective means of achieving a force capable of rapidly responding to challenges across the range of military operations while remaining good stewards of the Nation's resources. The 5 Pillars of Institutional Readiness involves operational readiness (i.e. Unit Readiness, and Capacity and Capabilities to Meet Requirements pillars) and foundational readiness (i.e. our investments in High Quality People, Infrastructure Sustainment, and Equipment Modernization pillars). The Marine Corps' ability to remain ready is enabled by the 5 pillars of readiness.

Our current funding level protects near-term readiness; however, it does so at the expense of long term modernization and infrastructure, threatening future readiness. We are funding critical readiness accounts to include: operating forces; depot, intermediate and organizational maintenance; repair and sustainment of training ranges, training and education, exercises, and fuel and repair parts. The Marine Corps is not adequately resourcing our non-deployed units; it will take time and sustained funding to address the deficiencies in personnel, equipment and training. This is a rational choice given the current fiscal situation, but it is not sustainable over time. Imbalance amongst the pillars for long periods will hollow the force and create unacceptable risk for our national defense. During these fiscally constrained times, we must remain ever vigilant in the allocation of resources to ensure the holistic readiness of the institution and ensure every dollar is going where it is needed most. Since 2012 our accounts are auditable. This gives confidence to the American people and commanders that we ask only for the amount of funding required to provide a lean, highly capable, mobile and ready force.

High Quality People

Our Marines and civilians are the foundation of all that we do. We succeed because of our focus on people. They are the primary means by which the Marine Corps meets its defense responsibilities. The resources we dedicate to recruiting, retaining, and developing high quality people directly contribute to the success of our institution. Our commitment to quality must never waver.

Our success in maintaining an elite force begins with recruiting young men and women who possess the character, mental aptitude, physical and psychological fitness, and desire required to earn the title “Marine.” The Marine Corps is committed to recruiting and retaining high-quality people who meet prescribed physical and mental standards, and are ready in mind, body and spirit to execute their duties in the defense of our Nation.

Today, the Marine Corps does not have the proper level of personnel stability or cohesion in our non-deployed units. The practice of moving Marines between units to meet manning goals for deployments creates personnel turbulence, inhibits cohesion, and is not visible in our current readiness assessment tools. This personnel turbulence affects our combat readiness and our ability to take care of Marines. Moving forward, we will improve cohesion by increasing our preparedness across the force and emphasizing consistency of leadership, personnel stability, and sustained readiness across the force. The overhaul of our manpower management and readiness reporting models, systems, policies, and processes will allow us to minimize personnel turbulence, increase unit stability, and develop cohesion. We ask Congress to support these measures through appropriations of the funds we have requested in PB16.

Our civilian workforce continues to be a significant force and readiness enabler to our institution. They reflect the same high quality standard that propels a ready force with many

having previously worn the uniform of our Nation – 68% are veterans. They also remain a lean portion of our organization at a ratio of only 1 appropriated funded civilian to every 10 active duty Marines. Our civilians are contributing where we need them most. With 95% working outside the National Capitol Region, our civilians are directly supporting Marines and the mission at our bases, stations, depots, and installations. Without these civilians, we would be forced to assign uniformed Marines to these tasks taking away leadership and capacity in operational units.

Our civilian workforce grew post-9/11, in large part due to military-to-civilian conversions, which allowed Marines to move from support billets to the operating force. A Department-wide focus on insourcing, new requirements (e.g. cyber), and necessary support for our military surge to 202,000 also played a role in the growth. In 2009, the Marine Corps proactively began reducing civilian structure and personnel, and we are continuing to reduce our workforce by another 10 percent, including 20 percent at headquarters.

A key element in our overall readiness is family readiness. The family members of our Marines are very much a part of the Marine Corps family. Their sacrifices and support are not taken for granted. As we return from 14 years of major combat operations, the Marine Corps is repositioning our capabilities to deliver core programs and services that best meet the needs of today's Marines and families. We are renewing our programs and services consistent with our reduced end strength, changing demographics, mission, and budget environment. We are emphasizing the importance of maintaining a high level of readiness. Our Marine and Family Programs exist to support unit mission readiness, and individual health and wellness goals. In order to maintain the high standard of family support, we will develop a plan with a bias toward decentralizing decision-making and resource allocation. These programs and their impact on our

Marines will continue to be an area we focus on to judge our readiness. We thank the Congress for your continued support of Marine and Family Readiness programs at the PB16 level.

Unit Readiness

Our operational tempo since September 11, 2001 has been high and remains high today. We expect this trend to continue. Your Marines serving today in the operating forces are either deployed, getting ready to deploy, or have recently returned from deployment. Congress directed the Marine Corps to be the Nation's force-in-readiness. The current fiscal environment challenges the Marine Corps' ability to meet this mandate. In these circumstances, the Marine Corps has assumed some risks to fund unit readiness in the near term. The Corps provides units ready to meet core and assigned missions in support of steady state and crisis/contingency requirements. Our ability to sustain assigned mission requirements with units ready to deploy must be carefully managed while we continue end-strength reductions.

Over half of home-station/non-deployed units report unacceptable levels of readiness; nevertheless, the Marine Corps excels at generating ready units to meet operational requirements. Deployed units report high levels of readiness for core and assigned missions. Alternately, the ability of non-deployed units to conduct full spectrum operations continues to degrade as home-station personnel and equipment are sourced to protect the readiness of deployed and next-to-deploy units. We must remain cognizant that our home-stationed units constitute the "bench" that would surge to conduct full spectrum operations required in major contingencies. As the Nation's first responders, the Marine Corps' home stationing units are expected to be in the same high state of readiness as its deployed units.

Our home station units' ability to train is challenged. Time is an essential component required to fix worn equipment and train units to standard. Lower end-strength and unit deployment to dwell (D2D) ratios, shortages in personnel and equipment at the unit level, and the paucity of amphibious and maritime prepositioning ships contribute to degraded full spectrum capability across the Service. For example, a D2D ratio of 1:2 means your Marines are deploying for 7 months and home for 14 months before deploying again. During that 14 month "dwell," units are affected by personnel changes and gaps, ship availability shortfalls, equipment reset requirements, degraded supply storages, training scheduling challenges and more. These challenges factor into every unit's mission to remain consistently ready.

Marine Aviation contains some of our most stressed units. The Marine Corps has 55 Active Component squadrons, three of which (2 VMM, and 1 VMFA) are in transition. Of the remaining 52 squadrons, 33% are deployed and 17% are in workups to deploy. Our minimum readiness goal to deploy is T-2.0. Deployed squadrons / detachments remain well trained and properly resourced, averaging T-2.17. Next-to-deploy units are often achieving the minimum goal of T-2.0 just prior to deployment. Non-deployed squadrons experience significant resource challenges which manifest in training and readiness degradation, averaging T-2.96.

The Marine Corps is applying resources to maintain the readiness of deployed and next-to-deploy units. Our focus is to continue to meet current requirements, while addressing the personnel, equipment, and training challenges across the remainder of the force. We are in the midst of a comprehensive review of our manning and readiness reporting systems. We will develop a detailed plan to enhance our overall readiness during 2015.

Capacity to Meet Combatant Commanders' Requirements

We are committed to meet the expeditionary requirements of our combatant commanders. The Marine Corps' PB16 military personnel budget funds a FY16 end-strength of 184,000 on the way to 182,000 in FY17. The Marine Corps of 182,000 includes the 1,000 additional MSG Marines directed by Congress to protect more of our embassies abroad, the Marine contribution to the special operations component, Marine Cyber forces, and SPMAGTF's assigned to support multiple COCOMs. Marines assigned to Marine Special Operations Command and Marine Forces Cyber Command continue to significantly contribute to the needs of the COCOMs through specialized capability sets and as enablers for the joint force.

In order to meet COCOM requirements, the Marine Corps will sustain a D2D ratio in the active component force of 1:2 vice a more sustainable D2D ratio of 1:3. That is the fundamental difference between an optimal force structure of 186,800 Marines and 182,000. The Marine Corps has some high demand/low density units that maintain a current D2D ratio of less than 1:2. The Marine Corps will continue to provide ready forces to meet COCOM demands, but we are carefully assessing the impact of reduced D2D ratios on our training and quality of life.

Facility Investments

The President's budget for FY16 funds 81% of the OSD facilities sustainment model requirement for the Marine Corps (an increase over the FY15 level). The OSD guideline is to fund 90% of the requirement. We remain aware that underfunding facilities sustainment increases the rate of degradation of Marine Corps infrastructure, which leads to more costly repairs, restoration and new construction in the future.

Our installations are critical to our ability to train forces and be ready. They provide our training ranges and care for Marines and their families. However, we are forced to take risk in sustaining current infrastructure in support of operational readiness. With the help of Congress, the Corps has made significant progress over the last 8 years in replacing old, unsatisfactory buildings. Our MILCON is now focused primarily on new platforms and PACOM force relocation efforts.

The most important mission of our installations is to enable operating force readiness. We do this by being responsible stewards of land, air and water resources, and by being good neighbors in our local communities. These conservation efforts maintain our valuable training ranges and much needed air and sea maneuver corridors. A consistent emphasis on community partnering and engagement creates good-will, enhances family quality of life and reduces encroachment risks to our bases and stations. Congressional support and community partnering have resulted in the addition of training areas at the Townsend Bombing Range in Georgia, the Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range in both Arizona and California, and the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in California. We are also making great strides in reducing energy consumption on our bases and stations. By lowering utility use we are reducing costs, protecting the environment, improving the resiliency of energy-dependent infrastructure and ultimately enabling operational readiness.

Equipment Modernization and Innovation

For the last 14 years, the Marine Corps has focused our resources on providing the Marines what they need for the current fight. Readiness remains our #1 priority to meet our national security responsibilities; however, our focus on the current fight coupled with our declining

budget, has forced the Marine Corps to make difficult choices and reduce investment in modernization to maintain current and near term readiness. In today's fiscal environment, the Marine Corps is investing only in essential modernization, focusing on those areas that underpin our core competencies.

Though emphasis is placed on new or replacement programs such as the ACV, JLTV, CH-53K and JSF, much of our modernization resources are focused on improving the capabilities and extending the life of current systems in order to fill the capabilities gaps that can be exploited by today's threats. These modernization efforts span from our AAV's to our current legacy aviation platforms.

In order to balance modernization across the capabilities of the MAGTF, our top priorities for recapitalization and upgrades are the ACV and the F-35B. Programs like ACV 1.1 with science and technology efforts for high-water speed, AAV survivability upgrades, Network On-The-Move (NOTM), Ground/Air Task Oriented Radar (G/ATOR), JLTV, and aviation platforms such as the MV-22, CH-53K, and F-35B are required to modernize capabilities and provide the technology required to dominate our adversaries.

Modernization consists of three elements: development of new technologies, the procurement of new capabilities, and investment in legacy systems. An over commitment in one element creates missed opportunities in another. The Marine Corps is investing heavily in legacy systems partially due to the time required to recapitalize needed capabilities. This necessary allocation with limited resources in turn results in less investment in areas needed for a rapidly changing world (i.e. live virtual training, digital interoperability, and connectivity across Service components). For example, the subcomponent shortfalls and age of the AAV fleet has led to lower reliability and increased risk in operational mission profiles. The need for recapitalization

of the 42 year old AAV is critical and the Nation cannot afford to gap this capability. The application of fiscal resources that would otherwise be focused on recapitalization and modernization is necessarily directed toward sustainment. Current maintenance for AAVs averages approximately \$575,000 per AAV, per year with future depot maintenance costs growing to \$700,000 per AAV in FY16. This required allocation of precious resources works against our other modernization and recapitalization efforts.

For our legacy aircraft platforms, the focus is on modernization to keep them relevant in today's fight while providing a bridge to our aviation recapitalization efforts. Rapid procurement of these new systems is critical to solving both our serious current and future readiness problems. Reduced modernization investment has also stretched our program timelines to the limit of their acquisition baseline. Any further extension of our program baselines could result in a Nunn-McCurdy breach and reduce industry interest in producing limited production items. We have also delayed the procurement of other major programs like CAC2S so that we now will not reach full operational capability until FY22 vice FY18.

Limited to essential modernization efforts, the Marine Corps forecasts critical issues due to underfunding in several areas including:

- Recapitalization of our 30 year old TRC-170 system needed to provide alternate communications networks in degraded spectrum contested environments.
- The Marine Corps' Composite Tracking Network resulting in the MAGTF's eventual inability to communicate with the Navy's network and participate in their Cooperative Engagement Capability
- Our ability to maintain Joint Interoperability with other Services through the Tactical Communications Modernization (TCM) program.

- Continued underfunding of the Networking On-The-Move (NOTM) program leaving two thirds of our operating forces without the ability to conduct mobile networking in distributed environments. Failure to procure military satellite communications (MILSATCOM) kits for, all fielded NOTM systems, will result in continued reliance on expensive (leased) commercial satellite communications (SATCOM) services.

Modernization and innovation are more than just procurement programs. We must invest in MAGTF experimentation and test new tactics, techniques, procedures, gear and concepts that will allow us to meet future challenges. Inadequate resources toward modernization will further close the technological gap between our capabilities and our adversaries. Our adversaries continue to develop new capabilities seeking any technology overmatch in specific domains and functions. Increasingly capable threats, the proliferation of A2/AD weapons, and the aging of key material capabilities create challenges where we will pursue Science and Technology (S&T) to maintain our decisive technological advantage. We are maintaining our commitment to S&T, and we continue to look for opportunities to expand our efforts in this critical area.

Special Interest Topics

Marine Corps Force Integration Program (MCFIP)

Since January 2013, the Marine Corps has opened 5,998 previously closed positions to women. We now have 94% of our Military Occupational Specialties (MOS's) available to women. Some positions remain closed - mostly within infantry, artillery, tanks, and assault amphibian vehicle specialties. These specialties are the focus of ongoing Marine Corps research to establish occupationally specific, operationally relevant, gender-neutral physical standards.

The Marine Corps continues its deliberate, measured and responsible approach toward integrating female Marines into previously closed occupational fields to the maximum extent possible. As the Marine Corps has studied gender integration, we have remained committed to high standards and combat effectiveness - from recruiting and entry-level training (ELT) to performance in the operating forces.

During this effort, the Marine Corps has evaluated gender integration from ELT to full mission profiles as a complete ground combat arms integrated unit. Since this time last year, the Marine Corps has established the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCEITF). The GCEITF is a gender-integrated, ground combat arms unit designed specifically to support the most in-depth, detailed study of the physical demands associated with ground combat and the associated physical performance standards as well as the physiological predictors of success. The results from the GCEITF research will inform the establishment of occupationally specific, operationally relevant, gender-neutral standards based on the required individual physical contributions to mission-oriented collective tasks.

The GCEITF along with our other research and assessment efforts will inform a recommendation on further integration to the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense. That recommendation will be provided in late 2015.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)

The Marine Corps' Sexual Assault Prevention and Response mission is to develop and manage an evidence-based program that eliminates sexual assault within our ranks and provides world-class care to victims. Since FY12, the Marine Corps has expended more than \$16 million toward SAPR and special victim legal training initiatives.

The Marine Corps continues to see an overall positive trend in closing the gap between the actual number of sexual assaults and those that are reported. While the prevalence of Marines experiencing Unwanted Sexual Contact (USC) dropped from approximately 3,300 in FY12 to approximately 2,300 in FY14, the Marine Corps has seen an 89% increase in reports during that same time period. Closing the reporting gap is essential to both tackling the problem and providing supportive services to victims.

The addendum to the SAPR Campaign Plan launched in 2012 was approved in April 2014 to build upon the positive momentum of the campaign thus far by extending the sustainment phase and incorporating additional tasks that strengthen SAPR capabilities. In July 2014, the Marine Corps released new training called “Step Up” that is designed specifically for junior Marines, our highest at-risk population for sexual assault.

The Marine Corps continues to improve victim services such as the credentialing and up staffing of SAPR victim advocates and the development of the Victims’ Legal Counsel Organization, which has provided dedicated victim legal services to more than 680 clients including 388 victims of sexual assault. On the heels of positive indicators of SAPR progress, Headquarters Marine Corps’ SAPR division is expanding its reach with an increased focus on prevention. Our goal is to eliminate sexual assault from our ranks. We believe that preserving the commanders’ ability to lead in this area is a vital element of our continued improvement in this current issue.

Suicide Prevention

Each tragic loss to suicide has far-reaching impact on families, friends and our entire Marine Corps community. The Marine Corps embraces prevention efforts through a series of actions to

foster hope and connection to those at risk for suicide. Community Counseling Services located on Marine installations worldwide increase access to care and assist Marines, attached Sailors and their families with navigating available support resources. The Marine Corps' Marine Intercept Program (MIP) uses licensed clinical providers in care coordination and outreach services for Marines who are identified as having suicidal ideations or have attempted suicide. The DSTRESS resource also provides phone, chat and Skype support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The Marine Corps continues to support DSTRESS as a critical resource in suicide prevention.

Suicide prevention remains a priority for the Marine Corps, and we will continue to apply the resources necessary to combat this difficult issue.

Wounded Warriors

The Marine Corps' commitment to our wounded Marines and their families is unwavering. Since 2007, the Wounded Warrior Regiment has provided meaningful recovery and transition assistance to wounded, ill and injured (WII) Marines, Sailors in direct support of Marine units, and their families. Additionally, the WWR administers the Marine Corps' federally mandated Recovery Coordination Program, which seeks to integrate Marines' medical and non-medical care.

While the Marine Corps' reduced presence in Afghanistan will result in fewer combat casualties, non-combat injuries and illnesses will likely remain stable. In addition, instances of PTS and TBI will continue to increase due to delayed onset and as Marines often delay seeking help.

Our comprehensive capabilities create the optimal care to meet individual Marine's needs. These capabilities include: Recovery Care Coordinators, District Injured Support Coordinators, WWR Transition Specialists, WWR Liaison Officers and Wounded Warrior Hope and Care Centers. Our costs in personnel are more than just numbers. Ultimately, the cost of 14 years of war is calculated in lives. From March 2003 through 7 January 2015, 1,483 Marines have given their lives and 13,992 have been wounded in the service of our Nation. We remember their service and sacrifice and thank Congress for their continued support of our Wounded Warriors and their families. The Marine Corps will not forget the sacrifices our Marines and Sailors have made for the Nation.

Transition Readiness

The Marine Corps makes Marines, wins battles, and returns responsible citizens following active service. Every year, the Marine Corps returns approximately 35,000 Marines to the civilian sector. The transition from uniformed service to contributing members of America's prosperity as civilians is significant to the economic health of the Nation. The technical expertise that Marines have learned during their service has significant application value to the country in the civilian sector.

Our transition readiness program is designed to prepare Marines for transition to civilian life by preparing and connecting them with resources to successfully meet educational, employment or entrepreneurship goals. Implementation of transition readiness seminars (TRS) and separate "track options" classes that align Marines future personal and professional goals with hands-on application have created an enhanced transition experience for Marines. In FY14 and the first quarter of FY15, TRS attendance exceeded 42,500.

In FY15, Marine Corps Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) was launched. COOL is a credentialing awareness, information and resources capability for all Marines, translating their Military Occupational Specialties into career development credentialing opportunities during and beyond their service. A leading example of the 21st Sailor and Marine initiative, the establishment of Marine Corps COOL with the Navy also established the Department of the Navy (DON) COOL as a platform for the Navy/Marine Corps Team. DON COOL has, in turn, inspired an Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) initiative for a similar department-wide landing page for all the Services.

The Marine Corps also launched the Spouse Transition and Readiness Seminar (STARS) at all USMC installations in September 2014. This seminar addresses the transitional challenges and opportunities specifically for spouses as they prepare to transition with their Marines into the civilian world. STARS has been embraced by OSD as a model for other services to consider emulating.

We have fully funded transition assistance in PB16. Effective 1 October 2014, a new Personal Readiness Seminar (PRS) is being delivered to all incoming active duty Marines upon check-in at their first permanent duty station. PRS provides an overview of the Marine For Life cycle, including personal and professional development programs and services, and introductory personal finance topics.

Conclusion

The unpredictability of the future security environment facing our Nation today reaffirms the wisdom of the 82nd Congress -- the United States must maintain a force-in-readiness. The Marine Corps remains that expeditionary force-in-readiness. We maintain a high state of

readiness and remain postured for immediate crisis response across the globe. With the continued support of Congress, we will maintain balance across our pillars of readiness and deliver ready, relevant, and capable Marines and Marine Air Ground Task Forces to our Nation today – and tomorrow. During this period of budget austerity, we will set the standard for stewardship – every dollar will count. In the end, we will do what Marines have always done – innovate for the future, adapt to overcome, and always win.