

STATEMENT BY
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II MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
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SEA POWER
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CONCERNING
FORCE STRUCTURE IMPACTS ON FLEET OPERATIONS

Madam Chairwoman and distinguished committee members, I am honored to be able to address you today and discuss Force Structure impacts on Fleet Operations. We welcome your interest and concern on this subject, and appreciate this opportunity to address the challenges related to the readiness of our warfighting forces. I am proud to appear before you today along with my fellow military representatives.

Today, thanks to you the Marine Corps is ready to execute our mission as the Nation's "Force in Readiness." Through your unflagging efforts we are a ready force, capable of simultaneous air and ground action, with unimpeded access to potential trouble spots around the world, now and in the future. All of this would not be possible without your direct support and leadership - your Marines thank you. Although we are ready today, that high state of operational readiness comes at a high cost with regard to tomorrow's readiness. Our current readiness is not free, our equipment is aging

and the OPTEMPO is increasing. These conditions translate into higher costs in people, time, and money. Today there are over 33,300 Marines forward deployed throughout the globe. This number represents those Marines permanently assigned to overseas duty stations as well as Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) [MEU(SOC)] embarked aboard the Navy's Amphibious Ready Groups and Marines participating in myriad smaller scale exercises and operations throughout the world. One example is the 26th MEU(SOC) which recently conducted operations in Kosovo and supporting disaster relief efforts in Operation Avid Response in Turkey. As a further example, the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF) has deployed in support of three National Security Special Events in the last 10 months. The most recent deployment provided a tailored response force to assist local state and federal first responders at the NATO 50th Anniversary in Washington, DC.

The Marine Corps is proud of our partnership with the U.S. Navy in sea power. Navy-Marine expeditionary forces play a significant role as powerful instruments of national policy and provide the National Command Authority (NCA) with a set of flexible military options to support foreign policy initiatives. Our operational concept of Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS) and Ship to Objective Maneuver (STOM) will likely make the Navy Marine Corps team the force of choice in many future conflicts. OMFTS allows naval forces to focus on an operational objective using the sea as maneuver space to generate tempo and momentum against critical enemy vulnerabilities. When we move ashore, STOM tactics allow forces to by pass the more traditional establishment of a beachhead and move directly to their tactical objectives – greatly reducing the time to conduct operations as well as reducing risk to our forces. Additionally, these initiatives will enable us to conduct our operations using sea-based logistics with little or no requirement for host nation support and complex support agreements. With the continued attention and support of

the United States Congress, your Marine Corps is poised to continue to meet the needs of the American people now, and in the future.

Today, I would like to present the II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) operational perspective and how it is impacted by force structure and amphibious lift. I will start first with a look at II MEF itself...who we are and what we do, followed by a discussion of force structure versus commitments, and future capabilities required. Finally, I will discuss the requirement for force structure and amphibious shipping as they relate to our readiness.

II MEF

The II Marine Expeditionary Force is one of three such warfighting commands within the U. S. Marine Corps operating forces. II MEF has over 42,000 Marines and Sailors and is comprised of three major subordinate commands (2d Marine Division, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, and 2d Force Service Support Group); three Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs); as well as the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF). II MEF provides or employs forces in support of five Unified Combatant Commanders. We routinely have over 8,000 Marines and Sailors deployed on operational, rotational, and exercise deployments supporting U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Joint Forces Command, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. European Command, and when required U.S. Central Command. As I address you today, I have Marines assigned to Joint Planning and Assistance teams in South America, a detachment providing humanitarian assistance in Haiti, a reinforced infantry company in Panama, a reinforced infantry company supporting UNITAS in South America, a battalion and a squadron in Japan, and a Special Operations Capable MEU with an Amphibious Ready Group in the Mediterranean Sea. These and other II MEF forward deployed forces are executing our National Security Strategy on a daily basis. Over the course of fiscal year 99, II MEF had approximately 47,000 personnel deployed, with only 42,000 people in II MEF to

start with, this represents multiple deployments for the same personnel and units. Deployments increased 35% over fiscal year 1996. Over this same time period the II MEF Table of Organization has slightly decreased. While this may not seem like a significant change, in the environment we are operating in, each Marine or Sailor makes a difference.

FORCE STRUCTURE VS. COMMITMENTS

Since fiscal year 1996, we have seen a steady increase in the number of joint level exercises that require Marine Corps participation. Both USCINCSO and USCINCEUR have significantly increased their exercise program with respect to Marine Corps participation. USCINCSO has increased his exercise program 157% and USCINCEUR has doubled his exercise program. The number of MEU exercises supporting USCINCEUR has also increased 26% since our pre QDR force levels in 1996. When comparing fiscal year 1999 to fiscal year 1996, II MEF's exercise program has increased by approximately 27%. This increase in exercises has come at the same time as the force structure reductions I mentioned earlier.

Our operational commitments have also increased significantly. Between April and September of 1999, the 26th MEU (SOC), participated in Operations Shining Hope, Allied Force, Joint Guardian, and Avid Response. Additionally, my headquarters was fully engaged in operational planning during the Kosovo crisis for possible deployment to that region. In support of real world operations, our VMAQ squadrons had an exceptionally high OPTEMPO during fiscal year 1999, largely due to increased electronic warfare requirements in the European theater as a result of the contingency operations against the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At the peak of these operations, the Marine Corps had three of four VMAQ squadrons forward deployed in support of ongoing contingency operations in Europe (Operations Noble Anvil and Northern Watch) and one squadron on a 96-hour Prepare to Deploy Order (PTDO) status in support of USCINCPAC

requirements in Korea. Throughout this operationally demanding period, the Marine Corps EA-6B community operated at a maximum surge capacity and neared total wartime capability. During fiscal year 1999 the average deployed time for the four VMAQ squadrons was 237 days or 65%. Our high OPTEMPO has caused some of our Marines in critical MOSs to be deployed in excess of 180 days per year.

These operational commitments have in turn, required us to cancel a number of exercises. Some of them in order to maintain our warfighting capability. In fiscal year 1999 alone, of the 47 joint level exercises, 14 were cancelled and one was shortened. The majority of the se cancellations revolved around our Kosovo commitment.

Limitations in strategic lift have also had an impact on our ability to deploy quickly and on time. One training deployment training to Argentina was cancelled for lack of strategic lift. Some of our lower level exercises that rely on strategic lift were modified in duration and scope due to the availability of strategic lift. For example, one CBIRF deployment was cancelled for lack of lift while another required a significant equipment modification when a C-5 aircraft requirement was replaced with B-747 aircraft. For exercise Dynamic Mix 98, of the 40 C-5 lifts required for the deployment, 39 were late due to over tasking in other theaters. In short, we all are being asked to do more with less. If this situation is not corrected, the difficulty in deploying II MEF forces for training will continue, with a resultant loss in efficiency and training value. We continue to maintain our readiness and are prepared to meet demands, but everyone across II MEF has experienced increased demands for people, time, and assets in one way or another.

FUTURE CAPABILITIES REQUIRED

As we operate in this ever more demanding environment, my Marines and Sailors are using equipment that is old and getting older. Aging equipment translates into increased costs - both

operational and fiscal. In order to keep this older gear operational, Marines are putting in more and more hours of maintenance, while parts are increasing in price and decreasing in availability. Time spent conducting training is reduced. Maintenance personnel routinely work long hours on shifts and into the weekends to keep our gear operational. Again, while we are ready now, the long term impact on morale and readiness will be felt in the future. There is a critical need to expand current, and develop future capabilities.

Amphibious forces are the nation's most flexible and adaptive combined arms crisis response capability. The Navy-Marine Corps team provides the NCA its only self-sustainable forcible entry capability. Forcible entry from the sea remains the Marines' forte. We continue to work with our Navy shipmates to ensure we reach our resource constrained, programmatic goal of a 2.5 Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) equivalent in amphibious lift. The requirement, the capability that we strive to provide our nation, remains at 3.0 MEB equivalents. The goal of the naval services is to ensure a credible amphibious capability is ready when the nation says, "land the landing force." Today our active commissioned amphibious fleet force structure can only lift 2.07 MEB equivalent of vehicles. This active lift shortfall is meant to be mitigated by the Amphibious Lift Enhancement Plan (ALEP) which retains 2 LSTs in the Naval Reserve Fleet and 4 LSTs/5 LKAs in mothballs. This ALEP is not a very good solution to sealift requirements due to time constraints of 180 days to prepare mothballed ships to get underway. This fact precludes them from participating in Major Theater of War (MTW) operational plans and, in the unlikely event the ships do become available, their characteristics will be inconsistent with the OMTFS concept.

Key to the procurement plan is your continued support for the San Antonio class ships, the LPD-17. The operational flexibility of our ARGs will be significantly enhanced with the fiscal year 03 delivery of the first two of twelve LPD 17 landing assault ships. The San Antonio class will be the

first ship designed from the keel up to execute our OMFTS and STOM concepts. These ships will augment the versatility of the LHD and LHA helicopter carriers with well deck and flight operations capability. As a class, these ships will overcome amphibious lift shortfalls caused by the decommissioning of the Austin class LPDs, and other aging amphibious ships. Twelve big deck assault ships, LHAs and LHDs, are critical to maintain our 12 ARG capability. Big decks provide 60% of the ARG's troop berthing capacity, 72% of the ARG's cargo carrying capacity, and 93% of the ARG's aircraft carrying capacity, and are the centerpiece of the ARG. The LHA ship class reaches the end of its 35-year service life between 2011 and 2015. Early projections of the cost of an LHA Service Life Extension Program (SLEP) range from \$800 million to \$1.2 billion. For an additional 20 to 40 percent cost, our Nation would get a much more capable LHD that would complement our forward presence forces for 40 years as opposed to the 15 to 20 years gained with a SLEP. In replacing the LHAs, an additional LHD and follow on LHX class ship will better serve and meet the Marine Corps and the Nation's requirements and will be more fiscally prudent than a (SLEP) for the LHA class.

Naval Gunfire and mine counter measures are two other areas that need attention. The 22nd MEU (SOC) deployed without being able to exercise its naval gunfire capability on Vieques, Puerto Rico due to the recent ban on live firing. More important, was the loss of the ability to exercise the entire Combined Arms concept of utilizing Naval Gunfire while simultaneously integrating live air delivered ordnance and ground operations. The opportunities to train in this environment are becoming more limited which results in a significant loss in our ability to train and prepare for combat. We are working with the Navy to solve the issues of counter-mine and counter-obstacle operations from both the high water mark seaward and the high water mark

inland. These efforts include reconnaissance and detection capabilities and improved breaching systems.

With reference to winning on the battlefield and supporting arms, as a warfighter, I am concerned about the mobility, lethality, and range of our current fire support inventory. I believe that a mobile rocket capability along with a highly maneuverable fire support platform like the LAV 120mm mortar variant is critical to the way we fight both today and in the future.

The OMFTS concept involves the marriage between maneuver and naval warfare. Three items of equipment will be key in making this concept a reality, a mobility triad. LCAC was the first component of the mobility triad to enter the fleet in 1986. The LCAC provides lift for 95% of the Marine Corps' vehicles and heavy weapons. It has proven to be a workhorse, carrying equipment from ship to shore at speeds up to 40 knots and proving capable of crossing a wide range of beaches not accessible to other landing craft. Retirement of the first LCAC would be scheduled to occur in 2004 without an LCAC SLEP program. In executing OMFTS, it is absolutely essential for the Navy-Marine Corps team to properly fund this program. The Advanced Assault Amphibian Vehicle (AAAV) will join the LCAC as an integral component of the amphibious mobility triad required to execute OMFTS. The AAAV will allow Navy-Marine expeditionary forces to eliminate the battlefield mobility gap and, for the first time in the history of naval warfare, to maneuver ashore in a single seamless stroke, giving both ship and landing forces sufficient sea space for maneuver, surprise, and protection. The final leg in the mobility triad is the MV-22 Osprey tilt rotor aircraft. MV-22 specific missions include assault support, medium cargo lift, and fleet logistics support. It is capable of carrying 24 combat equipped Marines or a 10,000 pound external load. The MV-22 gives us a 66 percent increase in cruising speed over the aircraft it is replacing. With its refueling capability its maximum range has been extended to 2100 nautical

miles. The MV-22 will be the cornerstone of Marine Corps assault support, possessing the speed, endurance, and survivability needed to fight and win on tomorrow's battlefield.

The Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) concept was initiated in the early 1980s as a Department of Defense Strategic Mobility Enhancement program whose purpose is to provide warfighting CINCs deployment flexibility and increase the national capability to rapidly respond to crises with a credible force. MPF can rapidly reinforce a forward-deployed MAGTF using the efficiencies inherent in prepositioned equipment while capitalizing on the economical sustainability of commercial sealift. This concept has proven to be an indispensable force deployment option in numerous operations across the operational spectrum. A recent example was disaster relief efforts in Turkey. We were prepared to send a task organized Survey Liaison Reconnaissance Party (SLRP)/Off Load Preparation Party (OPP) of 60 personnel, who would utilize the prepositioned equipment aboard the MV BOBO, the SS KOCAK, and the SS OBREGON, to provide the capability of pumping 100,000 gallons of drinking water per day from ship to shore. This capability would have been in place within 48 hours of off load in Turkey. MPF will continue to be viable well into the future.

One of the most alarming of the emerging threats is the potential of asymmetrical attacks against US interests and personnel. Developing capabilities to counter these threats is a very high priority. Efforts in the area of non-lethal weapons and chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological response must be sustained and enhanced. Within II MEF, the training and equipping of the MEUs with non-lethal weapons and enhanced NBC sets is one of our initiatives to counter this threat. Another is the continued development of CBIRF's capabilities, to include the development of a capability to execute a technical rescue in a contaminated environment, a capability that currently does not exist.

CONCLUSION

Since the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar world, political and economic dynamics have changed dramatically. We have witnessed widespread violence associated with the disintegration of the Former Soviet Republics and Yugoslavia, the tragedies in the Horn of Africa and Rwanda, and the conflict in Liberia. I believe this will continue in the future. These crises will not only occur between nations and within nations, but will bring a greater level of instability throughout the world. Sharp turns in economic and political power, fueled by dramatic demographic shifts and new technologies, will spark continuous change and therefore conflict throughout the world. My requirements will increase. In the second quarter of fiscal year 00, all of the nine infantry battalions in the 2nd Marine Division will be committed to an operation, exercise or in a post deployment re-organizational cycle. Not only will we be dealing with crises and conflicts, we will also see an increase in the requirement to support the CINC's theater engagement plans as they try to bring stability to their regions. We also expect to see increased involvement in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. In recent months, I have had forces ranging from elements of the MEU (SOC) in Turkey supporting earthquake victims, to a small special purpose task force assisting flood victims in Burgaw, North Carolina. As I stated earlier, the Marine Corps remains ready to execute our Nation's National Military Strategy. We have complied with the mandate of the 82nd Congress to be most ready when our nation is least ready. We will continue to be ready in the future. This readiness of today has a price. There is now, and there will be an ongoing need in the future, to ensure that naval forces are manned, equipped, and, modernized to meet the demands of today's battlefields as well as tomorrow's. Adequate force structure and strategic lift must be maintained if we are to meet the challenges that lie ahead. I ask for your continued support in making this possible. I want to thank you again for

allowing me the opportunity to discuss these items with you today. I am prepared to answer any questions you may have.