STATEMENT OF

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CONCERNING

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Introduction

Madame Chairwoman, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to share my views on the importance of seapower, the Marine Corps role in expeditionary operations and power projection, and our views on naval shipping requirements. I'll begin by highlighting the criticality of seapower--particularly projection of power ashore by Naval expeditionary forces; I'll then call up some recent examples that demonstrate the utility of a seabased force; and I'll conclude by discussing key programs that will guarantee our continued role as the nation's "force in readiness."

The Importance of Seapower

As a geographically isolated maritime nation our security and prosperity, in fact our very identity, has been tied to the sea. Historically, we've relied upon seapower to sustain our economy, expand our influence, defend our interests, protect our citizens abroad, and provide relief to beleaguered nations across the globe. In short, seapower is the lifeblood of our national security strategy. It is still relevant today – and will remain so in the future – because no other capability provides our nation with the means to impose and maintain a scalable presence and rapid access into virtually any potential crisis area around the globe.

The Marine Corps role in the nation's seapower equation is a long and enduring one, shaped through our expeditionary ethos and inherent naval character. We are a capabilities-based organization with a proven track record for innovation. This tradition of innovation underlies the Marine Corps ability to remain "most ready when the nation is least ready."

As we look ahead it's certain that the role of forward-deployed Naval forces will expand. Such forces will become even more critical as future crises become more frequent, complex, and difficult to resolve. Naval forces can help to defuse a crisis quickly by taking up position

offshore or by conducting long-range precision strikes, when required. They can seize critical ports and airfields as part of an assault by a joint task force, or they can deliver critical supplies and services in order to assist with humanitarian or natural disasters. Because all of this can be done from the sea, with or without any host nation support, naval forces will continue to offer multiple options for shaping the national security environment.

In his posture statement, the Secretary of the Navy highlights three characteristics that define the uniqueness of the Naval Services. First, we operate from the sea. Second, we are an expeditionary force: our ships, aircraft, sailors, and Marines are forward deployed. Third, the Navy and Marine Corps are inherently joint at the operational and tactical levels in their structure, training, deployments, operations, equipment, and staffing. From these characteristics, we derive six attributes that capture the extraordinary value of naval forces to our geographic Commanders in Chief:

Presence. Whether on a visit to the port of an ally or stationed off a hostile shore, naval forces provide a visible indication of U.S. military power and the commitment to employ it in defense of our interests. There is no substitute for presence if one hopes to shape the outcome of events. The physical presence of a credible and capable force enhances stability, deters aggression, and encourages conflict resolution at levels short of war.

Versatility and Scalability of Power. Naval forces operate across the full spectrum of conflict from peacekeeping to major theater war. They can transition quickly from the normal mix of forces in a given theater to a much more powerful force. Specifically, our Marine forces can be deployed and operate as**:**

Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) (approximately 2,200 Marines and Sailors, self-sustaining for 15 days)

- Validated mission profiles as "light weight warfighting capability"

Marine Expeditionary Brigades (up to 17,000 Marines and Sailors, self-sustaining for 30 days)

- Embedded brigade command element in each Marine Expeditionary Force
- Validated mission profiles as "medium weight warfighting capability"
- Link with Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadrons

Marine Expeditionary Forces (approximately 50,000 Marines and Sailors, self-sustaining for 60 days)

- Validated mission profile as "heavy weight warfighting capability"

Flexibility. Naval forces possess latent combat power, the application of which can range from maritime interdiction through amphibious assault and strike operations, or operations as a part of a large joint or combined force. They can be fully engaged in an operation one day and withdrawn the next, quickly reconstituting their combat capability for follow-on missions. Further, they can conduct operations unilaterally, as part of a joint force, or in concert with allies.

Credibility. Naval forces are particularly well suited to the roles of compelling, deterring, and responding to hostile actions. There is ample historical precedent of the performance of these roles, a factor that potential foes around the world must always consider.

Sustainability. Naval forces are uniquely able to conduct long-term combat or contingency operations without the establishment of large, fixed bases on foreign soil and are free from excessive reliance upon extensive contractor support. Logistics support is part and parcel of the normal structure that is forward-deployed for peacetime operations.

Affordability. Naval forces are funded *to operate*, not simply funded *to be*. This is a defining quality of our expeditionary culture. A Naval culture that has developed and sustained an expeditionary mindset for more than two centuries of service.

Recent Operations "...in ev'ry clime and place."

To underscore the importance of seapower and a robust capability to project power from the seabase, I'd like to call your attention to the very recent past. Last year, our Marines participated in a wide range of missions. The most prominent of these was Operation ALLIED FORCE in the Balkans, which I'll cover in more detail shortly; East Timor where the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) or MEU(SOC)--later the 11th MEU(SOC)--provided communications and heavy helicopter lift support to the United Nation's stabilization mission; 26 MEU(SOC) provided humanitarian assistance to earthquake victims in Turkey on the heels of their operations in Kosovo; in Central America Marines to Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala following Hurricane Mitch. Here at home, Marines supported state federal relief efforts in North Carolina in the wake of Hurricane Floyd.

The most closely scrutinized of these operations was Operation ALLIED FORCE. In a very real sense, Operation ALLIED FORCE was a story of unparalleled success for our forward deployed, at-sea Naval forces. From the beginning, Marines and sailors of the Amphibious Ready Group stood ready as an enabling ground force had the need materialized; provided the capability for the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP); provided security for Task Force SHINING HOPE (refugee camp construction in Feir, Albania); and were the lead American element of NATO's peacekeeping forces. Further demonstrating its inherent flexibility, these same Naval Forces provided humanitarian aid to earthquake victims in Turkey

while enroute home from their Kosovo deployment. This additional mission was accomplished in stride without complication, incident or undue hardship.

Future Requirements: Operational Maneuver from the Sea

Before the Subcommitte last March, I testified that the Marine Corps was "on target" to continue as the nation's "force in readiness" into the 21st century. Nothing has changed or altered my opinion. In fact our support to Operation ALLIED FORCE further highlighted America's continued need for flexible, tailorable, expeditionary Naval forces capable of projecting power from the sea. Operation ALLIED FORCE serves to validate that the United States must maintain the capability to project power not only from forward land bases, but increasingly from the relatively unconstrained and unencumbered sanctuary of a seabase.

Our capstone concept, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* (*OMFTS*), remains a valid blueprint for the future. It envisions a future environment characterized by, "crisis in the littorals," and describes a new form of littoral power projection in which Marines will apply the tenets of maneuver warfare within the context of amphibious operations. In *OMFTS*, we focus on an operational objective, using the sea as maneuver space to generate overwhelming tempo and momentum against potential adversaries. *OMFTS* offers us the promise of extraordinary leaps in operational flexibility through significantly enhanced capabilities for seabased logistics, fires and command and control. With the continued support of your committee, the Congress, and the nation we'll build the force needed for the 21st century.

As Marines we understand that realization of OMFTS depends upon the Navy's complete and enthusiastic support. To that end, in January, the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps co-hosted a two day Navy-Marine Corps Warfighting Conference at Quantico, Virginia. This open, frank, and extraordinarily candid exchange of

ideas among the senior leaders of the two services will serve us well as we shape the naval warfighting capabilities of the 21st century. The relationship between the Navy-Marine Corps Team is, by definition close, and by choice, getting closer.

Operational Mobility: Programs and Initiatives

Continuing our historic role as the nation's expeditionary force in readiness requires that we modernize and expand upon our existing operational mobility.

Key capabilities such as the MV-22 tilt rotor aircraft, the Advanced Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAAV), the Landing Craft Air Cushioned (LCAC) Service Life Extension Program (SLEP) and MPF Future, and other important enhancements ensure that our operational mobility will meet the challenges presented by 21st century adversaries. I will briefly address each of these major initiatives, and comment on several other areas of interest in our modernization program.

MV-22

Beginning in the year 2001, upon delivery of the 12th airframe, the Marine Corps will stand up its first Fleet Replacement Squadron of MV-22 Ospreys, VMMT-204. The first operational deployment of the Osprey with an East Coast unit is scheduled for FY03. West Coast deployments will begin in FY06.

Advanced Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAAV)

Simply stated, the Advanced Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAAV) is our highest-priority ground modernization program. It will provide extraordinary mobility, high water and land speed, increased firepower, and improved protection to assaulting Marines, thereby enhancing our already robust forcible entry capability. The range, speed, and ability to function in difficult surf conditions of this vehicle will give commanders additional flexibility in the time and place they can land combat forces.

Landing Craft-Air Cushioned (LCAC)

The third leg of what we call the triad (MV-22, AAAV, LCAC) is that which already exists: the LCAC. Currently nearing the end of its initial service life, the SLEP program will keep these critical assets in the inventory while adding capabilities vital to the rapid movement of forces and supplies in Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS) operations.

Maritime Prepositioning Force(MPF)

A key enabler to OMFTS will be the development of Maritime Prepositioning Force(MPF). Building on the strengths of the current MPF concept, the future MPF will give the joint warfighting commander the ability to deploy, employ, and sustain combat-ready Marines in the absence of host nation support facilities. MPF forces will marry up with at-sea amphibious forces and fly-in contingency forces to form scalable, seamless power projection options for our commanders. The MPF becomes an integral part of the sea-based logistics area from which follow-on sustainment operations and logistics support will be provided to support maneuver forces ashore

Although an operational capability, MPF also has an important logistical orientation. We will develop a capability of seabased operations and logistics in which strategic sealift delivers everything from combat ready forces to follow-on supplies and equipment to support operations ashore. Not necessarily descriptive of a particular ship or platform, the seabasing area will contain a combination of Naval at-sea platforms.

The recent funding of the acquisition and conversion of the USNS *Soderman* to become part of the Maritime Prepositioning Force will offer Commanders in Chief a substantial increase in capability. The *Soderman*, along with its two predecessors in the Maritime Prepositioning Force Enhancement program, brings a unique set of naval construction and expeditionary airfield

options to remote theaters of operation. The next generation of maritime prepositioning ships will further extend our ability to project and sustain U.S. military power in the world's littorals.

During his February testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Jones, asked Congress to "seriously consider" the purchase of Blount Island, Fla., a facility that is key to the preparation and deployment of Maritime Prepositioned Forces (MPF). The Blount Island facility is truly a national asset that must be purchased to ensure its availability over the long term. Its peacetime mission of support to the Maritime Prepositioning Force has been of exceptional value to the Marine Corps, while its wartime capability has been demonstrated under combat conditions during DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM and figures prominently in support of Theater War Plans. In 2004, our lease on Blount Island will expire. Independent studies—including one completed in 1997 for the J-4 Directorate of the Joint Staff—have confirmed the importance of maintaining complementary Army and Marine Corps prepositioning maintenance sites and have highlighted the strategic value of Blount Island's throughput and follow-on sustainment capabilities. Our long term national strategy should be to purchase this key facility outright.

Amphibious Shipping

Dedicated amphibious forces have proven their worth in peace as a deterrent, and in war as a combat force multiplier. Such forces represent an invaluable and irreplaceable capacity to represent sovereign U.S. interests, whether operating independently or as part of a Naval Expeditionary Force. The forcible entry capability of modern amphibious forces simply cannot be replicated. As our Commandant has stated "The Marine Corps supports achievement of a 3.0 MEB amphibious lift capability." Current plans sustain a fiscally constrained 2.5 MEB-lift capability.

Additionally, continued development of the Landing Platform-Dock-17 (LPD 17), the Multi-purpose Amphibious Assault Ship (LHD-8), Amphibious Assault Ship-General Purpose-Replacement (LHA(R)), and Land Attack Destroyer (DD 21) are absolutely vital to our success in future operations.

LPD-17

Key to the amphibious ship procurement plan is your continued support for the San Antonio class ships, the LPD-17s. The operational flexibility and forward presence our Amphibious Ready Groups represent will be significantly enhanced with the FY03 delivery of the first of 12 LPD-17 amphibious assault ships to be procured between FY96 and FY04. As a class, these ships will overcome amphibious lift shortfalls caused by the decommissioning of aging Austin-class LPDs, LSTs, LKAs and LSDs. These ships will augment the versatility of the LHD and LHA helicopter carriers with well deck and flight operations capability. The FY01 budget proposal contains funding to begin construction of two additional ships of the San Antonio class. Maintaining the projected procurement and delivery schedules and attaining operational readiness of this ship class is key to reducing current shortfalls in amphibious lift.

LHD-8

LHD-8 will serve as an effective transition ship to address the replacement of the LHA-1 Tarawa-class ships, which reach the end of their effective service lives between 2011 and 2015. Key to this transition will be the full integration of rotary and fixed wing Short Takeoff and Vertical Landing (STOVL) aircraft on large deck amphibious assault shipping. Advanced funding for LHD 8, to be procured in 2005, is provided in the 1999 and 2000 budgets. LHD 8 and succeeding replacement ships for the aging *Tarawa*-class will be used extensively along with those of the *San Antonio*-class (LPD 17).

LHA(R)

The Amphibious Assault Ship, General Purpose-Replacement, referred to as LHA(R), is planned to replace four of the five ships of the Tarawa class between 2010-2021. LHD-8, will serve as the transition vessel to the new capabilities required in LHA(R). The LHA(R), must allow us to optimize the capabilities of future systems including the ability to conduct simultaneous flight and well-deck operations-- including full support for Short Take-off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) aircraft, address compartment flooding concerns, and ensure enhanced ship stability to accommodate the next generation of aircraft.

We see the LHA Replacement not simply as a "transport and launch" platform, but as a true naval expeditionary vessel. The Marine Corps is actively working with the OPNAV staff to develop viable alternatives to replace the four remaining ships.

DD-21

A credible naval surface fire support (NSFS) program is a critical component of forcible entry from the sea. Under current plans, the Navy will begin construction in fiscal year 2005 of the DD 21-class ships, each to be equipped with two 155-millimeter naval guns. Additionally, the Navy has committed, in the interim, to installing the 5"/62 caliber naval gun on 27 new DDG 51-class destroyers and retrofitting 22 CG 47-class cruisers with the same system. Firing the Extended Range Gun Munition (ERGM), this gun will measurably improve our near-term NSFS capability. We have been at considerable risk in naval surface fire support since the retirement of the *Iowa*-class battleships. This situation will continue until the DD 21-class destroyers join the fleet in strength. This program must be accorded a high priority of effort.

Countermine/Counter-Obstacle (CMCO)

The ability of Naval forces to counter mines and obstacles is vital to all Naval operations (strike, amphibious operations, Sustained Operations Ashore, etc.) conducted in the littoral battlespace. Naval forces require the capability to not only transit 3000 nautical miles to the area of operations but also the ability to maneuver through the littorals to the objective. Significant progress has been and continues to be made. The Marine Corps will continue to work "hand-in-glove" with the Navy towards operationally relevant solutions to protecting the force as it transitions from ship-to-objective when conducting OMFTS.

Conclusion

We are at a crossroads of opportunity. The Marine Corps, partnered with the Navy and through the continued support of this subcommittee, will be ready to meet all challenges, and to fight and win the battles of tomorrow – swiftly and decisively. I thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I am now happy to answer your questions.