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STATEMENT OF

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U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND

BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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I. Introduction.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee:

On behalf of the men and women of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), I thank you for this opportunity to testify about the state of the command and to provide an assessment of security and stability in my Area of Responsibility (AOR), as well as our military strategy and operational requirements.

I would begin by highlighting the selfless service and sacrifice of our Service members and their families. This dedicated work on behalf of our nation merits recognition and credit for the substantial progress that has been achieved in security and stability during these past twelve months.

The CENTCOM AOR is large and diverse. It spans 6.5 million square miles and 27 countries stretching from the Horn of Africa, through the Middle East to the Central and South Asian States. These countries possess vast human and natural resource potential, have rich histories, and sit at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe. The region is home to nearly 700 million people, who speak more than 80 languages, identify with 50 or more ethnic groups, and are adherents of more than a dozen religions. Despite differences in language, culture, and history, we share basic aspirations with the peoples of the Middle East, East Africa, and Central and South Asia. They desire security and prosperity for their families, opportunities to make choices, and governments that respect their rights and respond to their basic needs.

This is the seventh consecutive year of combat operations in the CENTCOM AOR. I am pleased to report significant progress in security in Iraq. Our forces there, in concert with coalition partners and the increasingly competent Iraqi Security Forces

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(ISF), have expanded areas of stability and brought a return to more normal life for the citizens of Iraq. Likewise, in Afghanistan, large areas of the country are generally stable, millions of children are in schools and the Afghan National Army (ANA) is growing in size and demonstrated performance. But challenges remain in both these countries and in other areas of the region. Violent extremism, weak governance, political crisis and lagging economic development are key inhibitors to long-term stability. Given the complexities of the region, two certainties stand out; there are no simple answers to the challenges, and enduring solutions require predominately non-military initiatives.

To advance U.S. security interests and regional stability, CENTCOM works with interagency and international partners to promote development and cooperation among nations, responds to crises, deters and, if necessary, defeats aggression. Success will require patience, thoughtful application of resources and commitment.

The strategy in support of this mission has focused efforts in five main areas: setting conditions for stability in Iraq; expanding governance and security in Afghanistan; degrading violent extremist networks and operations; strengthening relationships and influencing states and organizations to contribute to regional stability and the free flow of commerce; and posturing forces to build and sustain joint and combined war fighting capabilities and readiness.

II. Setting Conditions for Stability in Iraq.

United States and Coalition forces have operated continuously in the region since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and will soon enter the sixth year of combat operations in Iraq. Our objective is a unified, democratic and federal Iraq that can

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govern, defend and sustain itself and is an ally in the war on terror. We are pursuing this objective along political, security, economic, and diplomatic lines of operation. I can say with confidence that we are closer to our objective today than when I last testified.

The most significant development in Iraq over the last year has been a dramatic decrease in violence. By almost every measure, the security situation has improved significantly. This turnabout is the result of many complex and interrelated factors. The application of the “surge” deployment implemented last February, which increased troop levels and shifted our strategy to the priority task of protecting the population, has enhanced local security. The proximity of our troops to the populace and their shared experience in day-to-day life throughout the country has reversed the widespread anti-coalition attitude to a general acceptance and appreciation for our presence. This situation has been facilitated by the larger and more capable Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), which have expanded the scale and effectiveness of operations against al-Qaida in Iraq and criminal Shia militias. The population has welcomed the widespread deployment of the Iraqi Army and is growing more comfortable with the Iraqi Police. Both of these forces are becoming more capable and competent as they assume an increasing share of security duties and boost reconciliation.

Equally important have been the growing rejection of al-Qaida by the Iraqi people and the genesis of the “awakening” movement, which has altered the local balance of power between extremists and security forces. More than 90,000 Iraqi men have volunteered to assume grass root security functions as Concerned Local Citizens, also known now as Sons of Iraq. These men are key partners who supplement uniformed security forces in their communities and provide invaluable intelligence about the violent

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extremists. Although at this point, these groups are comprised primarily of Sunni Muslims, some Shia communities have started similar initiatives as Jaysh al-Mahdi extremists wear out their welcome.

While security in Iraq has improved dramatically and sectarian violence has greatly diminished, these gains are not irreversible. Multiple strains of violent extremism remain a threat to the government and populace, and some of these groups benefit from external support. From the East, Iran pursues a destabilizing political and ideological agenda and is a key source of finance, weapons and training support to lawless militia groups. In the West, foreign fighters continue to enter Iraq from Syria.

To sustain and build on improvements in security, Multi-National Force - Iraq conducts security operations with the ISF while transitioning, where conditions allow, to Iraqi led and conducted operations. More than 530,000 Iraqi soldiers and police officers now secure their country with notable improvement in capability and battlefield performance. With the ISF proving themselves in battle, the next steps in building the ISF will focus on enhancing capabilities in command and control, logistics, combat support functions, and other operational enablers. I believe our efforts to improve Iraq's Army and Police will help set the conditions for sustained security and enable future U.S. troop redeployments.

Meanwhile, the previously announced reduction of Brigade Combat Teams from 20 to 15 is underway, along with several Marine Corps battalions and some enabling forces. General Petraeus is preparing a response to a Planning Order from me to consider scenarios for the post-July 2008 period in Iraq and to provide recommendations on the pace and scope of a further reduction of forces from Iraq. His recommendations will be

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considered by the Chain of Command and our inputs, along with his, will be forwarded to the President for his consideration. Recommendations will consider the existing security situation, progress of the ISF and their readiness to assume responsibility for security.

The conditions on the ground will be a major determinant of future moves.

Progress in governance lags behind security, but there are signs of improvement. To sustain the security gains, a general improvement in government effectiveness and the enactment of legislative guarantees are required. Iraqi political leaders have begun demonstrating the will and skills to move this process forward. The recent passage of the 2008 National Budget, Provincial Powers, Amnesty, and de-Ba'athification laws are significant accomplishments. The Presidency Council returned the Provincial Powers Law to the Council of Representatives but with the assurance that preparations for provincial elections this fall should continue. Meanwhile, the Government of Iraq continues to work toward other important legislation including Hydrocarbon and Election laws and the referendum on Kirkuk.

Economic development is a key component of sustained growth and reconciliation. The Government of Iraq has improved budget execution and increased allocations to provinces and ministries. Iraqi and Coalition initiatives to secure critical infrastructure and a substantial investment in repair and refurbishment have resulted in greater oil production and revenue from oil sales. The international community is playing an increasing and welcome role in Iraq. The Neighbors Conference Ministerial meetings have contributed to stabilization efforts. France is actively reaching out to Iraq while Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait are considering the re-opening of diplomatic offices in Baghdad. The UN designated a new Special Representative to

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Iraq, who has demonstrated strong initiative and a keen understanding of the situation. The UN also dramatically increased its assistance mission, while the Security Council passed a new Chapter 7 mandate for the Coalition to operate in Iraq until 31 December 2008.

Looking to the future and as U.S. forces are withdrawn, we are planning to normalize long-term bilateral relations through a framework agreement that reflects our shared political, economic, cultural and security interests, as well as a Status of Forces Agreement. These agreements will establish authorities and jurisdictions for U.S. and Coalition forces operating in Iraq beyond 2008. The documents will allow us maximum flexibility to assist the Government of Iraq in the fight against al-Qaeda, develop its security forces and combat harmful influences inside Iraq while, at the same time, protecting our own forces. As Iraq increasingly asserts its sovereignty, we want to continue to assist in developing the Iraqi capacity to secure and defend their country.

III. Expand Governance and Security in Afghanistan.

U.S. and Coalition forces support international efforts to assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to provide security, improve stability, and enhance development and governance. Within Afghanistan, the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) commands the security mission while CENTCOM leads the military capacity building and counter-terror efforts. These command structures require close coordination between CENTCOM and NATO.

Despite increased violence in 2007, most visibly in the form of suicide attacks, Afghan and Coalition forces have degraded the ability of the Taliban and other insurgents

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to execute coordinated and effective attacks. The Coalition has maintained relentless pressure on the insurgents, and as a result, the enemy has shifted most of its effort to targeting police and civilians. The recent increase in suicide attacks is a concern and may give the perception that the insurgents have grown stronger. In reality, most of their successful attacks are confined to about 10 percent of total districts, while the vast majority of Afghans deny support to the violent extremists.

The successes in Khowst Province are one example. Long considered ungovernable and one of the most dangerous provinces in Afghanistan, Khowst has been turned around by Afghan and Coalition counterinsurgency operations. Tangible improvement in governance, reconstruction, development and security have been noted and are good examples for application elsewhere in the country.

The increase in U.S. forces planned for this spring will reinforce our momentum while enabling accelerated growth of Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). CENTCOM recently concurred with an initiative to expand the authorized end strength of the ANA from 70,000 to 80,000 soldiers. The Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) is scheduled to complete the fielding of 80,000 ANA personnel by the end of 2010. Meanwhile a Marine Corps Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force will deploy this spring and bolster the ISAF maneuver forces in Regional Command–South.

The ANA has taken the lead in more than 30 significant operations to date and has demonstrated increasing competence, effectiveness and professionalism. Operation MAIWAND executed last summer in the Andar District of Ghazni Province is an example of recent progress. Planned, rehearsed, and executed under the direction of the

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Afghan 203rd Corps Commander, a combined ANA and NATO ISAF task force cleared the entire district and removed a Taliban shadow governor. This well-integrated security operation was quickly exploited with the synchronized application of governance and development efforts consisting of medical treatment for 2,300 citizens, 10 new schools, the delivery of 260 tons of humanitarian aid and one million dollars committed toward additional development. This operation resulted in significant disruption to enemy forces in Ghazni Province and is a manifestation of the growth and maturation of ANSF as well as the spread of governance and development.

The Afghanistan National Police (ANP) are improving, although at a slower pace than the ANA. While police competence has progressed in many areas, corruption, poor leadership, pay issues and equipment shortfalls challenge this organization. A new initiative, led by CSTC-A, called the Focused District Development plan and implemented late last year, shows great promise. This initiative withdraws local police from selected districts, replacing them temporarily with highly trained and effective Afghan National Civil Order Police. The local police then receive two months of immersion in a concentrated program of instruction by carefully selected mentors to upgrade their professional performance, equipment and confidence. Local police units then return to their districts as much more capable forces and better able to serve their communities.

Recruiting for both the Army and Police has shown a positive trend. Despite increased targeting of ANSF personnel and high casualty rates, Afghans continue to enlist in large numbers. This demonstrates confidence in the government and their future (as well as a strong need for employment opportunities). Proper training of these

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dedicated volunteers will take time, and additional U.S. personnel will be needed to fill key shortfalls in training capacity. A battalion of U.S. Marines will deploy to support and mentor the ANP this spring in an effort to boost ANP capability.

Setting the conditions necessary for economic growth is essential to long-term security and stability. Afghanistan has come a long way in seven years. Since 2001, Gross Domestic Product, per capita income and Foreign Direct Investment are all up. There has been considerable growth in Afghanistan's domestic revenues as well as international reserves, which have nearly doubled since 2004. However, Afghanistan still faces formidable economic challenge. The Afghan government remains overly dependent on foreign aid, with official revenues covering only 20% of recurrent costs. Inflation, particularly for food and fuel, is rising. Access to credit is limited, and few Afghans are able to borrow.

Four strategic economic priorities support the counterinsurgency effort. These include embracing free market economic policy, enhancing government resources, addressing inflation and implementing structural reforms. Staying the free market course means resisting costly new subsidies, which serve to reduce resources for other more constructive expenditures in areas like infrastructure, education and health care. U.S. and international community efforts are assisting the Afghan government move toward a sustainable fiscal policy to generate revenue, manage resources and operate without massive foreign financial support. The international community is also trying to boost economic growth by modernizing the infrastructure, particularly in the areas of electrical power, road construction, water management and agricultural development. Our Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) are key elements in these endeavors, and

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they have brought real improvement directly to the populace. Finally, trade is benefiting, albeit slowly, from growing regional integration. On March 3, Afghanistan is scheduled to join the South Asian Free Trade Area, bringing greater access to and integration with six other regional countries.

Narcotics remain a significant challenge for Afghanistan and the international community. Opium production in Afghanistan increased substantially in 2007. The narcotics trade dissuades work and investment in legitimate activities, provides the insurgents with a lucrative source of funding and contributes heavily to heroin addiction in Central Asia, Europe and increasingly in East Africa. We will continue to work with the interagency and international partners to reverse this negative trend. Of note, the ANA is standing up a new Counter-narcotics battalion for the single purpose of poppy eradication. This unit is in training and is expected to deploy this spring to destroy (by plowing under) poppy plants in fields when found.

Our commitment to the Afghan government and people seeks to shape a future of a moderate and stable Afghanistan as a key regional partner. There is a general sense of optimism and determination among the Afghan leaders and people. They regularly voice their appreciation for our assistance. Enduring success will require additional, well coordinated Coalition resources and support.

IV. Degrading Violent Extremist Networks and Operations.

Whether sponsored by Iran, enabled by Syrian acquiescence or motivated by networks such as al-Qaida and its associated movements, violent extremism is a serious danger to regional and global security. We must identify, mobilize against and confront

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this menace as its anachronistic worldview and murderous tactics threaten people and stability worldwide. While our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan continue, we will use all available methods to build regional and international momentum for moderate behavior while eroding support for violent extremist ideology.

The highest priority in our counter-terror efforts is to defeat al-Qaida. Part of this effort, but not an end to itself, is the removal of senior al-Qaida leaders. Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, we and our partners have captured or killed terrorists, diminished safe havens, driven leaders underground and restricted their operating space. Despite these efforts, challenges continue as our enemies work to reconstitute their networks. Critical to countering these violent extremists is the denial of the sanctuaries, nation-state support and lines of communication that sustain them. These militant Islamist terrorists attract recruits from a large, worldwide pool of disaffected young people. Unfortunately, their tactics and radical ideology remain almost unchallenged by voices of moderation. In response, we will enhance our intelligence capabilities, develop partner nation capacities, strengthen information sharing, disrupt illicit lines of communication and work to prevent terrorist organizations from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction. All of these actions will require inter-agency and international coordination and cooperation.

Equally important to defeating al-Qaida and other extremist groups is delegitimizing the underlying social and political movements that support them. To diminish the radical social movements from which our enemies derive their strength, we must maintain operational pressure on their networks while building capacity in governance and security that help at-risk societies address problems that foster internal

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and local grievances. This work requires empowering credible experts to expose the flaws and internal contradictions of the enemy's ideology; provide viable, competing alternative worldviews; and contest the intellectual "safe harbors" where extremist ideas incubate.

Defeating extremists and their ideology would be easier if they did not have state sponsors. Iran and Syria have not cooperated with efforts to combat terrorism and promote reconciliation. Their policies and actions threaten the internal security of their neighbors and the collective stability of the region. The Iranian regime provides Shia militia groups in Iraq with training, funding and weapons including lethal Explosively Formed Penetrators (EFPs), a particularly deadly form of Improvised Explosive Device (IED). Iran continues to employ surrogates in Lebanon and Gaza, providing money and weapons to Hezbollah and Hamas, threatening the stability of Lebanon and undercutting the future of Palestinians, as well as engaging in confrontational activity in the Gulf.

Iran's most destabilizing activity has been the pursuit of nuclear weapons technology in defiance of the international community, International Atomic Energy Agency and United Nations Security Council. A nuclear-armed Iran would further threaten regional stability, potentially trigger an arms race and increase the potential for extremists to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The Syrian government continues to meddle in Lebanon. Its support for Hezbollah is destabilizing the country, and it stonewalls the investigation into the Rafik Hariri assassination.

Over the past five years, terrorists, suicide bombers and foreign fighters have traveled through Syria to attack Iraqi and Coalition forces. The government in Damascus

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has tolerated the presence and operations of Iraqi Sunni extremists who have fueled the fighting in Baghdad and elsewhere in the country.

In Lebanon, the government is confronted by opposition groups and violent protests, but the Lebanese Armed Forces are maintaining a fragile order. Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese have stood up publicly against assassination and terror, and for their elected government and a peaceful, prosperous future. The international community continues to support the popularly elected government in Beirut and its legitimately constituted and disciplined security forces.

V. Strengthening Relationships and Influencing States and Organizations to Contribute to Regional Stability and the Free Flow of Commerce.

To increase prospects for long-term stability and security in the region, we are working to strengthen relationships between and among these nations and the United States. We are also trying to influence states and organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council to contribute to regional stability and work to ensure the free flow of commerce and positive economic growth.

During the course of my numerous trips to the region, I have developed relationships with most of my military counterparts and many of their political leaders. The foundation of these partnership building efforts is our Theater Security Cooperation program, which helps develop the security capabilities of current and prospective coalition partners, builds and supports effective regional security arrangements and interoperability, and synchronizes efforts with other U.S. government agencies. More importantly, these programs forge personal relationships between the U.S. and partners in

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the region, enhancing mutual trust and confidence and facilitating the effective operations of our commands.

The CENTCOM Theater Security Cooperation program is built on a foundation of enduring relationships. The synchronized efforts of all the elements of U.S. and international power are key to success. We are fortunate to have a number of close, reliable partner nations. Five of these countries, **Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain** and **Pakistan**, are Major non-NATO Allies, and of those, **Jordan** and **Bahrain** are Free Trade Agreement partners. Our Theater Security Cooperation Strategy enables regional stability and advances security efforts that protect vital U.S. national interests and helps partners build capacities to combat terror and become self-reliant.

Department of State programs such as Foreign Military Funding (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) are vital to build enduring security relationships. Attendance at U.S. institutions and courses of instruction by foreign military personnel offers exposure to our ideas, principles, standards and most importantly, our people. The resulting personal relationships have proven invaluable in building long-term trust and access. In my experience, withholding IMET funds inhibits the ability to influence the positive transformation of regional military forces.

Additionally, authorities for building global partnership capacity proposed in Title 13 of the draft FY09 National Defense Authorization Act will give me the tools I need to support our partners in the War on Terror more effectively and efficiently than current authorities. Passage of this legislation will allow CENTCOM to use existing authorities to train and equip partner nations' non-military security services in addition to national military forces, and to engage in a wider range of combined exercises, training, and

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personnel and information exchanges. It will also give more field commanders the authority to spend Commander's Emergency Response Program funds, give rewards for valuable information and integrate a wider range of Department of State capabilities with our military ones. However, it will still require advance notification to Congress, thereby maintaining appropriate levels of transparency and oversight.

In order to facilitate multi-lateral engagement between our partners, I hosted the inaugural CENTCOM Chiefs of Defense Conferences in Tampa, bringing together senior military officers from 19 of the 27 nations in our region. These conferences were very well received and bolstered the stature and acceptance of the Iraqi and Afghan Defense Chiefs. Additionally, the unprecedented engagement between participants reduced suspicion and enhanced trust while cementing personal relationships.

Military exercises enable our troops to operate with partner forces and improve interoperability as well as demonstrate capabilities. Our forces have participated in 49 combined exercises throughout the AOR, including multi-lateral exercises in **Qatar**, the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**, **Egypt** and **Kazakhstan**. Qatar hosted an exercise focused on air defense and consequence management called EAGLE RESOLVE for the third consecutive year. This event has strengthened defense cooperation among many of our regional partners. The UAE hosted three air exercises, two of them at the Gulf Air Warfare Center, which focused on multi-lateral cooperation and interoperability among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members. Egypt hosted CENTCOM's longest standing cooperative exercise, BRIGHT STAR, for 13 partner nations. After 25 years, this exercise continues to be relevant and has grown to emphasize strategic level engagement. In Central Asia, Kazakhstan hosted exercise REGIONAL COOPERATION, which

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enhanced interoperability and integration between the various disaster preparedness and consequence management ministries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. By bringing together units from various nations to cooperate in response to realistic and challenging scenarios, these exercises hone the skills of US and partner military forces while enhancing regional stability and security.

Following are highlights of the development of key relationships in the region:

Egypt is a key ally, strongly supporting the Middle East Peace Process and U.S. regional initiatives. Our close relations greatly aid our efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan and the War on Terror by providing expedited Suez Canal transits for U.S. warships, over flights and access to basing. Egypt has maintained a Field Hospital and medical staff in Afghanistan since 2003 that continues to provide medical care and training. Egypt has signaled its intent to help combat smuggling into the Gaza strip through the purchase of technical equipment that could assist Egyptian security forces detect and exploit tunnels, a requirement that has assumed even greater importance in light of recent events. Egypt is one of the largest contributors to the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur with some 1,200 Egyptian soldiers and police officers. FMF significantly contributes to the modernization and interoperability of the Egyptian Armed Forces, which helps provide stability in the Suez Canal area and the Levant.

The prospects for positive change in Egyptian governance are enhanced by our close interaction on regional security matters. These relations also ensure continued Egyptian support for our regional presence and operations and demonstrate that when we make a commitment, we keep it. For these reasons, I urge Congress to continue its support for Egyptian FMF levels.

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Horn of Africa and Yemen. The nations in the Horn of Africa (**Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea** and the **Seychelles**) face border and ethnic tensions, insurgencies, corruption, terrorist infiltrations and poverty. CENTCOM's Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF- HOA) conducts operations, training, and humanitarian missions in the Horn of Africa and Yemen to build partner nation military capability, improve quality of life, expand governance, strengthen bilateral relationships and build partner nations' military capability. Cooperation of these nations with us contributes to building their own capacity to combat terrorism and prepare for other challenges, including natural disasters. CENTCOM is working closely with U.S. Africa Command to ensure our relations continue to strengthen as the new geographic command prepares to assume its responsibilities.

Ethiopia is a key regional strategic ally and close partner in the war on terror. This strong bilateral relationship was readily evident in the wake of Ethiopia's initial military operations in Somalia to support the Transitional Federal Government against radical insurgents. Ethiopia has also demonstrated strategic importance by its considerable contributions to United Nations peacekeeping missions, such as the UN Mission in Liberia and its pledge of 5,000 peacekeepers for the UN African Union Mission in Darfur. Our support for the efforts of the Ethiopian military to modernize and professionalize will be critical to the government's ability to address security threats effectively and in conformity with international norms.

Ethiopia has, however, refused to evacuate disputed territory on its border with **Eritrea**, despite the fact the United Nations Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Commission made its final ruling in favor of Eritrea's claim. Eritrea has denied supplies to the United

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Nations mission there in order to force it to depart. President Isaias Afwerki's government also sponsors violent extremists in Somalia, and there is evidence it does the same in Ethiopia. Eritrea's treatment of its own people is no better, as Isaias has jailed all political opponents and devastated what had been a relatively healthy economy. As long as Eritrea is aggressive toward its neighbors and repressive against its own people, the amount of assistance CENTCOM can provide will be severely limited.

Kenya. The just signed power-sharing agreement between President Kibaki and Orange Democratic Movement leader Raila Odinga is encouraging. While we should remain vigilant for signs of a return to political crisis and ethnic violence, I believe Kenya's strong institutional foundations can be a basis for long-term stability. Kenya provides a traditional locale for the U.S. and the international community to conduct relief and rescue operations in regional trouble spots and is a key contributor to regional conflict resolution and counter-terrorism efforts. Historically, Kenya has been one of our closest and staunchest partners against terrorism. America's interests are to assist Kenya in countering the terrorist threat, support the processes of political and economic reform, help raise the standard of living, combat health crises and protect Kenya's resource base.

Djibouti. This small, peaceful and tolerant Muslim country is an island of stability in a region characterized by tension and violence. Djibouti is a key security partner as it hosts CJTF-HOA and provides refueling facilities for Coalition Naval vessels. Djibouti is also the warehouse location for pre-positioned emergency food relief used by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in times of crisis. As this country undergoes potentially rapid change while developing a new port complex, the continued support for CJTF-HOA in cooperation with other elements of the interagency will be

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critical to ensure the benefits of growth are distributed in a way that promotes stability and democratic development.

Sudan. In 2007, tension between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the southern Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) increased due to the slow implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). These tensions culminated in the SPLM temporarily withdrawing from the Government of National Unity in Khartoum. We anticipate additional tension in 2008 due to expected delays in the CPA-mandated national census. In Darfur, the deployment of the UN-African Union Mission in Darfur will remain behind schedule due to NCP obstructionism. Multiple attempts to unite the Darfur rebels failed to bring about a cohesive group prior to renewed peace talks, exacerbating insecurity and the humanitarian crisis.

Somalia. Military, humanitarian and political conditions deteriorated significantly in Somalia during 2007 and could further deteriorate in 2008. Initially fractured in early 2007, the al-Qaida associated Somali resistance, supported politically by Eritrea, have regained control of much of southern and central Somalia. We will work closely with our regional partners to prevent harm to our broader interests, mitigate the humanitarian challenges and support efforts to achieve a political settlement.

Seychelles. Our relationship with the stable, democratic government of Seychelles focuses on countering coastal security threats and improving disaster preparedness. Through joint exercises with the Seychelles Coast Guard we are working to build their capacity to plan and conduct operations to counter transnational threats.

Lebanon. Since November 2007, Lebanon's already tenuous political situation has worsened. The government and opposition see the stalled Presidential election

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process and the subsequent cabinet formation as crucial to their interests. The country remains politically stymied as the Hezbollah-led opposition, with its Syrian and Iranian allies, attempt to use the vacuum in the presidency as leverage to control future decision-making in the country. Syria will continue to pressure its allies to refuse any compromise knowing that the election of a Western leaning government will likely lead to the rapid implementation of the Special Tribunal to charge the assassins of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Damascus fears this will implicate high-ranking Syrian officials and their Lebanese allies. These political battles have grown violent as evidenced by assassinations of political and security leaders. In addition, bombs have targeted high-ranking members of the security establishment as well as US Embassy employees.

A well-armed and well-trained Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) is a potential unifying force. The multi-confessional LAF, with its members drawn from all of the country's communities, enjoys broad support from the Lebanese people. The LAF demonstrated resolve and courage during its 102 day fight in the Nahr al-Barid refugee camp last year – a victory that would have been far more costly were it not for the support of the United States and key allies like Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. CENTCOM special operations forces enhanced LAF effectiveness by providing training during the months preceding operations at Nahr al-Barid. While addressing the short-term needs of the LAF, we are focusing on its long-term development. The \$220 million FMF supplemental approved by Congress in 2007 is contributing significantly to this effort, but we must continue the process and strengthen our bilateral military relationship to resist efforts by Syria, Iran and their Hezbollah surrogates to undermine the sovereignty of Lebanon.

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Jordan is a regional leader in security and counter-terror training and one of our strongest partners. In 2007, Jordan hosted a large multi-national Special Operations exercise as well as six other military exercises. It also hosts the Peace Operations Training Center, the International Police Training Center, the Cooperative Management Center and the King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center. Additionally, Jordanian doctors and nurses operate and provide training in much needed hospitals in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Consistently supportive of our role and presence in the region, Jordan has played a major role in promoting stability and reconciliation in Western Iraq, supporting the Lebanese Armed Forces and training Palestinian Authority Security Forces. Currently, more than 1,000 Palestinian authority security personnel are receiving essential police training in Jordan.

Although it placed enormous stress on public services, Jordanian leaders opened their country to hundreds of thousands of Iraqis fleeing the violence in their own country. Jordanian efforts to improve border security are exemplary and set the standard for the region. U.S. military and economic assistance to Jordan are wise investments for a peaceful, secure and prosperous region.

Arabian Gulf States. We have improved participation and cooperation with the GCC states of **Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia.** Of note, **Iraq** has participated in GCC multi-lateral discussions and as an observer during exercises. Developing these relationships will eventually lead to greater security and economic opportunity for the entire region. Each of these nations has been a valuable

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contributor to our mutual security efforts providing essential base and port access, overflight rights and additional force protection for U.S. units in the region.

Our strong partnership with **Kuwait** is vital to the CENTCOM mission. Kuwait hosts the Combined Forces Land Component Command and provides a staging area for Coalition forces entering and departing Iraq. Military operations in Iraq would not be possible without critical support provided by Kuwait in the form of fuel, electricity, water, meals, waived customs fees and many other allowances totaling about a billion dollars per year. The military-to military relationship with Kuwait grows stronger through a robust military sales program and an extensive program of combined exercises.

The **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** has achieved significant success with an initiative to cut off funding to terrorists and restrain violence. Saudi leaders have enacted tough anti-terrorism laws, established a Financial Intelligence Unit to combat illegal “charities” that ultimately fund al-Qaeda and have built indigenous special operations and counter-terror forces capacity. They have also made efforts to reform their educational system and have promoted the ideals of tolerance and moderation in their leading mosques and promote rehabilitation programs for security prisoners. Saudi Arabia has been helpful in our efforts to support the stability and independence of the legitimate government of Lebanon. Our military relationship is based on extensive interaction between armed forces and a robust military sales program that we expect to grow in coming years. It is enhanced by a U.S. advisory presence in the Kingdom and by our training of Saudi military personnel.

Bahrain and the U.S. have enjoyed a close military relationship for more than a half a century. Today, Manama hosts U.S. Naval Forces Central Command. In addition,

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a Bahraini officer currently commands Coalition Task Force 152 with responsibility for Maritime Security in the Arabian Gulf. Bahrain hosted an Iraq Coalition conference this past October and is a strong supporter in the struggle against terror. In the past year, I attended the Manama Dialogue in Bahrain, and the Forum on U.S.-Islamic Relations in Qatar. These two widely respected fora are strongly supported by the host nations and allow leaders the opportunity to benefit from extensive engagement on substantive regional issues.

We are grateful to **Qatar** for hosting the CENTCOM forward headquarters at Camp As Saliyah and our Combined Air Operations Center at al-Udeid Air Base. The excellent military-to-military relationship with the Qatar Armed Forces is robust and mutually beneficial. Access to the airbase at al-Udeid facilitates air operations in the AOR. Doha also provides substantial in-kind support to U.S. forces, significantly offsetting the cost of our operations from there. Additionally, they have participated in the Gulf Security Dialogue meetings with the Departments of State and Defense in order to build infrastructure and systems necessary to improve deterrence.

The **UAE** has emerged as a staunch coalition partner, contributing to the continued security and stability of the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. In addition to access for air assets at the Al Dhafra Airbase, the Emirates provide nearly continuous access for Navy ships in the port of Jebel Ali. It is a leading partner in the campaign against terror, providing assistance in military, diplomatic and financial areas. Our military-to-military relationship ties are a key element of our excellent bi-lateral relations. We expect these relations to strengthen as the UAE serves as a regional example of the benefits of private sector growth and broadened opportunity for individual choice. The

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Emiratis are leading the Shared Early Warning initiative in the Gulf and have a robust Foreign Military Sales Missile Defense request pending.

Oman is a stable, secure and cooperative partner. The Sultanate allows the storage of important war reserve material, and its proximity to the Strait of Hormuz is a uniquely vital strategic position. We have had an enduring relationship with Oman since the early part of the 19th Century, and they have provided strong support for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Our cooperation with Oman in areas such as education and economic development support Oman's own measured path to economic growth and more participatory governance.

Pakistan. The recent election in Pakistan was encouraging and offers the potential for a peaceful return to democracy and much needed stabilization for this populous country. It is important to note that the Pakistani Armed Forces did not arbitrate these elections, but they did provide the essential security that enabled a generally peaceful process. Senior Pakistani leaders understand the threat of violent extremism to their country and are taking steps to transform their security institutions to be more effective in combating these challenges. The military aid we have provided in all forms has been critical in the fight against extremists inside Pakistan, particularly along the western frontier adjacent to Afghanistan. Pakistan has successfully deployed more than 100,000 troops to the western frontier, directly engaged al-Qaida, the Taliban and foreign fighters.

Pakistani security forces have captured and killed significant numbers of violent extremists, to include high-ranking leaders of al-Qaida and the Taliban. They have also suffered extensive casualties. Our long-term partnership with Pakistan is central to

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defeating extremist groups in the region, and it is difficult to imagine success in that struggle without its support and cooperation. We are working together to reduce the tensions stemming from the radical and violent extremist presence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Ongoing initiatives include regular meetings with Pakistan's military leaders, enhanced liaison and communications among our units operating along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and a Security Development Plan, which includes initiatives to establish a Frontier Corps Training Center, assist the Frontier Corps (FC) in establishing new Wings (battalion equivalent) and improve indigenous intelligence operation capabilities. Advisors will share lessons learned in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency mission sets, and FC personnel will be provided with modern equipment. Also, Sector Headquarters and Border Coordination Centers will be established to improve shared situational awareness and de-conflict border operations with coalition forces in Afghanistan.

Pakistan remains a strong partner of the United States, and our support for its counter-terror efforts will continue with a variety of focused programs. Our security cooperation funding and bilateral exercise programs help the Pakistani government conduct counter-terror operations, develop its counterinsurgency capacity and enhance its internal stability. In this critical time of democratic change it is vital that Pakistan view the U.S. as a long term trusted partner, particularly in our efforts to defeat common enemies.

Middle East Peace Process. Any discussion of security and stability in the region must include the Middle East Peace Process. Recent efforts to revive this effort

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are positive. A peaceful two-state solution that offers justice and security to Palestinians and Israel would negate the widespread perception of inequity in the Arab world.

Central Asian States. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. These five nations in Central Asia, are strategically important to the U.S., welcome greater interaction with us and play an increasing role in the global energy market. They reject violent extremists and all, save Uzbekistan with whom we have just reestablished a military dialogue, cooperate with the U.S. in a variety of security initiatives.

Kazakhstan is a valued partner in Iraq and offers the potential to serve as a regional leader for economic growth and prosperity. Kazakhstan is a key player in east-west trade and the potential northern nexus of a trade route that could stretch south to Pakistan, linking the less developed nations in the region with access to international markets in the Middle East, Europe and Asia. With regard to its security needs, we have been assisting Kazakhstan in refining its defense strategy, modernizing its armed forces and development of its peacekeeping forces.

Kyrgyzstan is rebuilding political stability after the turmoil of the past few years and hosts a U.S. presence at Manas Air Base, a key logistics node that facilitates operations in Afghanistan. We are seeking new and innovative ways to help develop the capabilities and capacity of Kyrgyz security forces to meet internal requirements and to contribute to regional stability.

Economic woes, an energy deficit and narcotics trafficking challenge **Tajikistan**, one of the poorest nations in the region. Tajikistan has made progress in building national unity, but much work remains. I am encouraged by Tajikistan's willingness to

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participate in international peacekeeping efforts, and our security cooperation programs are focused on helping Dushanbe build its capacity and secure its borders.

Turkmenistan is slowly but steadily emerging from the self-isolation of former President Niyazov. President Berdimuhamedov has loosened up internal controls, reached out to neighbors in need and demonstrated a stiff spine by halting gas exports to Iran for non-payment of agreed fees. Turkmenistan has expanded cooperation with us on a range of military-to-military activities and recently approved funding for a UN Drug Control program office in Turkmenistan. They have actively assisted our efforts in support of Afghanistan operations.

We have reinstated a security relationship with **Uzbekistan** after a hiatus of about three years following the expulsion of our forces from Karshi-Khanabad airbase, in the wake of the Uzbek government's response to an attempted extremist takeover of the town of Andijan in 2005. I met with President Karimov in January, and we welcome the opportunity to reverse the deterioration in relations between the U.S. and Uzbekistan, encourage better regional cooperation and reopen a dialogue to address issues of reform and human rights.

Throughout Central Asia, there is an opportunity to positively influence the future development of these countries. We are encouraging greater economic, political and security cooperation among these five states. Greater sustained diplomatic engagement, military aid and economic assistance would further mutual interests.

VI. Posturing the Force to Build and Sustain Joint and Combined Warfighting Capabilities and Readiness

Joint and Coalition Operations. Joint and combined war fighting capability and readiness are fundamental to our ability to prosecute ongoing military operations, maintain a credible presence to deter aggression and respond effectively to contingencies. Because we execute nearly all of our activities jointly and in concert with allies, we must cultivate effective inter-service and multi-national ways of doing business. Existing examples of such integration include the Multi-National Headquarters in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. Because our region is filled with uncertainty, we must maintain a full spectrum of responsive capabilities through an effective forward deployed force structure, thorough planning and realistic combined training exercises. Other critical capabilities include the following:

A Strong Coalition. Currently there are 41 partner nations with troops in Afghanistan and 31 with personnel in Iraq. They bring important mission capabilities but also significant integration challenges. Blending capabilities of these countries into effective action requires, among other factors, a command and control infrastructure that accounts for remote locations, multiple languages, cultural differences and challenging force protection issues. Our Coalition must share classified and sensitive information when appropriate and have the networks and infrastructure to facilitate such exchanges.

Interagency Coordination. Establishment of security and stability in our region requires the application of all elements of national power: military, diplomatic, economic and information. The military instruments can set conditions for security but other agencies foster lasting change.

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We are fortunate to have several U.S. Government entities engaged in the Central Command AOR. The Departments of State, Treasury, Justice, and Homeland Security, as well as subordinate agencies including the U.S. Agency for International Development, Diplomatic Security Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Coast Guard, are actively engaged in our theater. Their efforts are helping to protect critical infrastructure, prevent terrorist attacks on our homeland, train fledgling law enforcement organizations and rebuild damaged or aging infrastructure. There is clearly a need for better integration and more comprehensive application of all the elements of national power.

Flexible Logistics. Strategic airlift, rapid sealift, pre-positioned inventories and access to bases with critical infrastructure are the key logistics components which support operational flexibility. Our primary focus in this area remains the timely deployment, equipping, and sustainment of units engaged in combat operations. As an example, the rapid fielding of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles to our troops would not have been possible without the highly flexible contingency air and sealift capabilities. We will leverage commercial air and surface distribution across the theater and pursue initiatives to improve theater-wide logistics cost savings and work force reductions. We will continue working with the Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of State and partner nations to ensure access to the infrastructure we need to support ongoing and future operations.

Adaptable Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) Capabilities. Interoperable, high-volume communications systems are essential to conducting operations across a dispersed

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command space. Our systems operate near full capacity daily with little surge capability. Because many of our needs must be satisfied by commercial providers, access to them is critical. The largest challenge we face is integration of disparate systems into interoperable and reliable networks. We must embrace policies that enable successful integration and technologies that result in effective interoperability and efficient information-sharing.

Ultimately, our ability to target violent extremists depends on precise and actionable intelligence. We continue to evolve our techniques and procedures to optimize efforts to “find, fix, finish and exploit” targets. Our adversaries have been agile in adapting to our operations. We continue to improve battle space awareness, seeking greater specificity, detail and timeliness of intelligence whenever possible. We are aggressively seeking ways to manage shortfalls or capability gaps in imagery intelligence, wide area coverage, sensor integration, signals intelligence, moving target indicators, layered Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) architecture, biometrics, counterintelligence and human collectors. Your support of our intelligence needs is much appreciated, and I solicit your continued funding of these critical items.

Responsive Counter Improvised Explosive Device Program. Insurgents’ weapon of choice will likely continue to be the IED, or road-side bomb. They are cheap, effective, and anonymous and have been adapted to include toxic industrial chemicals such as chlorine. While some are crude, our adversaries increasingly use sophisticated technology, including EFPs from Iran. These weapons have killed or wounded thousands of military and civilian personnel in Iraq, and IEDs are becoming increasingly prevalent in Afghanistan.

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To counter this threat, and working with the interagency and our Coalition partners, we are fielding jammers, specialized route clearance vehicles and equipment and improved vehicle and personnel protective armor. The most effective counter to the IED is targeting the human networks which supply, train and employ the devices. We have pressed this approach through a comprehensive application of ISR. These initiatives have reduced IED effectiveness. We must continue to develop new technologies, tactics, techniques and procedures. Of particular importance to CENTCOM is continued fielding of MRAP vehicles, and further research and development to improve the detection of mines, IEDs and unexploded ordnance.

Personnel. Sustained operations in the CENTCOM AOR depend on personnel who have foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness competency in addition to military skills. Retention is a critical issue, and we depend heavily on quality of life enhancements such as Combat Zone Tax Relief, Imminent Danger Pay and Special Leave Accrual. The Rest and Recuperation program continues to be a success, serving more than 590,000 troops to date. Over the past year, we have conducted a comprehensive review of the manning of our headquarters, which, after six years of war, is still highly reliant on temporary individual augmentation personnel. My subordinate war fighting headquarters are also heavily manned with individual augmentees. I am committed to working with the Services and the Joint Staff to properly size and resource all of these headquarters.

CENTCOM is also working to address requirements for low density skills. Our present inventory of language and intelligence specialists (especially human intelligence) and counterintelligence agents does not support current requirements. Language

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expertise is crucial in counterinsurgency, counterterrorist and counterintelligence operations and will continue to be in high demand. Contracting language expertise provides interim capability, but in the long run, we need service members and career civilians with the requisite language and cultural skills.

We recognize the importance of co-locating our Service members with their families whenever prudent. We further recognize the value is compounded when done so overseas as our families interact with the host nation and strengthen the ties between our peoples. We have initiated the process to authorize our military families to return to areas as reduced threats permit. Before such actions, we will take every precaution to ensure protection and security measures are in place to safeguard our personnel and their families.

VI. Conclusion.

During this past year the men and women assigned to CENTCOM have fought valiantly in Iraq and Afghanistan, provided humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, and engaged with partners and allies in deterring aggression. They have worked tirelessly on behalf of the American people to provide essential security and stability for millions of others. They have trained and exercised alongside men and women from many other nations, providing experience, advice, mentoring and example in an effort to increase the capabilities of others to defend and secure their people. The engagement of our service personnel with foreign counterparts is key to gaining the trust of these people and facilitating our ability to influence outcomes in support of U.S. policy objectives.

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We stand ready to assist those who would work with us to bring lasting peace to this troubled region of the world.

The American people and the Congress have provided staunch and steady support for our efforts, and we greatly appreciate your advocacy and assistance. I am proud and honored to represent the men, women and supporting families of CENTCOM. On their behalf, thank you for your support and for this opportunity to testify before you.