

Statement of
General James T. Conway
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Before
Senate Armed Services Committee

***THE POSTURE OF THE
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS***



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General James T. Conway

Commandant of the United States Marine Corps



General Conway was born in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas and is a graduate of Southeast Missouri State University. He was commissioned in 1970 as an infantry officer. His company grade assignments included multiple platoon and company commander billets with both the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions; Executive Officer of the Marine Detachment aboard the USS KITTY HAWK (CVA-63); series and company commander at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego; aide to the Commanding General, and Director, Sea School.

As a field grade officer, he commanded two companies of officer students and taught tactics at The Basic School; he also served as operations officer for the 31st Marine Amphibious Unit to include contingency operations off Beirut, Lebanon; and as Senior Aide to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, he was reassigned to the 2d Marine Division as Division G-3 Operations Officer before assuming command of 3d Battalion, 2d Marines in January 1990.

He commanded Battalion Landing Team 3/2 during Operations DESERT STORM and DESERT SHIELD. Selected for colonel, he served as the Ground Colonels' Monitor, and as Commanding Officer of The Basic School. His general officer duties included Deputy Director of Operations, J-34, Combating Terrorism, Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.; and President, Marine Corps University at Quantico, VA. After promotion to major general, he assumed command of the 1st Marine Division. In November 2002, Major General Conway was promoted to lieutenant general and assumed command of the I Marine Expeditionary Force. He commanded I Marine Expeditionary Force during two combat tours in Iraq. In 2004, he was reassigned as the Director of Operations, J-3, Joint Staff, in Washington, D.C.

General Conway graduated with honors from The Basic School, the U.S. Army Infantry Officers' Advanced Course, the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and the Air War College.

General Conway's personal decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal with palm, Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with two Gold Stars, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal and the Combat Action Ribbon.





Executive Summary


Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and Distinguished Members of the Committee; I have pledged to always provide you forthright and honest assessments of your Corps. I bear that in mind today as I report to you on the posture of your Corps.

Your Marine Corps is fully engaged in what we believe is a generational struggle against fanatical extremists; the challenges we face are of global scale and scope. This Long War is multi-faceted and will not be won in one battle, in one country, or by one method. Your Marines are a tough breed and will do what it takes to win—not only in these opening battles of Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in the subsequent conflicts which we endeavor to prepare for today.

In the face of great hardship, your Marines have made a positive and selfless decision to stay resolved. More than 332,000 Marines have either enlisted or re-enlisted since September 11, 2001; more than 208,000 have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan—a telling number for a force of less than 200,000 Marines. Make no mistake, they joined or decided to re-enlist knowing they would go into harm's way.

They have answered the Nation's call and are fully engaged in this fight—serving with distinction as the professionals they are. It falls on us, then, to fully support them—we owe them the full resources required to complete the tasks ahead. Now more than ever, they need the sustained support of the American people and the Congress to provide them the help they need to fight today's conflict, prepare for tomorrow's, and fulfill our commitment to our Marine families.

Without question, Marines in combat are our number one priority. Taken as a whole, combat operations are indeed stressing our forces and families. That said, the Marine Corps will not fail her country when called. In fact, in answer to the most recent call to provide ready forces to serve our Nation, the Marine Corps is deploying more than 3,200 Marines to Afghanistan in addition to supporting ongoing surge operations in Iraq and other force requirements worldwide.



It is with these great men and women in mind that the Marine Corps has shaped its priorities—which are enduring and serve not only the conflict of today, but also the inevitable crises that will arise in our Nation’s future. Through this budget request, we seek to:

Right-size the Marine Corps for today’s conflict and tomorrow’s uncertainty.

To fulfill our obligations to the Nation, the Marine Corps will grow its personnel end strength to 202,000 Active Component Marines by the end of Fiscal Year 2011. This increase will enable your Corps to train to the full spectrum of military operations and improve the ability of the Marine Corps to address future challenges of an uncertain environment. Our growth will enable us to recover our ability to respond in accordance with timelines outlined in Combatant Commander war plans—thereby, reducing operational risk. More than just manpower, this growth will require training, infrastructure, and equipment to meet the needs of our Nation.

Reset the force and prepare for the next contingency. To meet the demands of this war, we must reset the force so that we can simultaneously fight, train, and sustain our Corps. The Long War is taking a considerable toll on our equipment, and we continue to make tough choices on how best to apply the resources we are provided. Congress has responded rapidly and generously to our requests for equipment and increased protection for our Marines and Sailors. We are committed to fulfilling our responsibility to manage these resources prudently as we modernize our force.

Modernize for tomorrow to be “the most ready when the Nation is least ready.” Congressionally-mandated to be “the most ready when the Nation is least ready,” your multi-capable Corps is committed to fulfilling this responsibility. We remain focused and steadfast in our responsibility to be the Nation’s premiere expeditionary Force-in-Readiness. To do so, we continue to adapt our organization and equipment to provide our country the best Marine Corps in the world.

Provide our Nation a naval force that is fully prepared for employment as a Marine Air Ground Task Force across the spectrum of conflict. The newly published Maritime Strategy reaffirms our naval character and reemphasized our enduring relationship with the Navy and, now, Coast Guard. Current operations limit our ability to aggressively commit forces to strategy implementation at this time. However, as we increase our end-strength to 202,000 Marines and as security conditions continue to improve in Iraq, the Marine Corps will transition our forces to other battles in the Long War. The most complex mission in the Maritime Strategy is the

Congressionally-mandated mission of amphibious forcible entry. Such an operation requires a high level of proficiency and long-term resourcing and is not a capability that we can create on short notice.

Take care of our Marines and their families. Our most precious asset is the individual Marine. Our Marines and families have been steadfast and faithful in their service to our country, and we have an equally enduring obligation to them. As such, we are committed to putting our family programs on a wartime footing—our Marines and families deserve no less.

Posture the Marine Corps for the future beyond the horizon. The United States faces a complex mix of states who sponsor terrorism, regional and rising peer competitors, failing states that undermine regional stability, and a variety of violent non-state actors—all serving to destabilize legitimate governments and undermine security and stability of the greater global community. We see this global security context as a persistent condition for the foreseeable future.

The Marine Corps continues to create a multi-capable force for our Nation—not only for the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also for subsequent campaigns of the Long War. We are committed to ensuring we remain where our country needs us, when she needs us, and to prevail over whatever challenges we face.

On behalf of your Marines, I extend great appreciation for your support thus far and thank you in advance for your ongoing efforts to support our brave service men and women in harm's way. I promise you that the Corps understands the value of each dollar provided and will continue to provide maximum return for every dollar spent.



James T. Conway
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps



I. Marines and Sailors in Combat are our Number One Priority

Marines in the operating forces have been pushed hard by the tempo and frequency of operational deployments; yet, their morale has never been higher—because they believe they are making a difference. Thanks to the Congress, your Marines know that the people of the United States and their Government are behind them. Your support has been exceptional—from the rapid fielding of life-saving equipment to the increase of Marine Corps end strength. With your continued support, your Marines will continue to make progress in their mission.

USMC Commitments in the Long War

Over the past year, your Marines deployed to all corners of the globe in support of our Nation. With more than 24,000 Marines deployed throughout the U.S. Central Command's Area of Responsibility, Operations IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) and ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) remain our largest commitment. The Marine Corps continues to support surge operations in Iraq in the form of two additional infantry battalions and the enabling forces that accompany them. As part of the Marine Air Ground Task Force in Iraq, these forces have proven extremely effective in the disruption of insurgent activities in the Al Anbar province.

As part of these forces, Marine Corps provides more than 250 personnel to OEF-Afghanistan. Approximately 100 of these Marines are members of a Marine Special Operations Company that routinely engages in combat operations with partnered Afghan and U.S. Special Forces units. The remaining Marine complement to Afghanistan forms the nucleus of seven Embedded Training Teams (ETTs); these detachments provide strong mentorship to Afghan National Army units in the continuing fight against the Taliban.

Taken as a whole, these recurring commitments of Marine forces in support of combat operations is indeed a stressing challenge on our forces and families. That said, the Marine Corps is fully cognizant of the regional and global effects of progress in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. In fact, in answer to the most recent call to provide ready forces to serve our Nation, the Marine Corps is deploying a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)-sized Marine Air Ground Task Force and an additional Battalion to conduct combat operations in Afghanistan. These 3,200 Marines are in addition to surge operations in Iraq and other force requirements worldwide.

The Marine Corps also deployed forces to participate in over sixty Theater Security Cooperation events, which ranged from small Mobile Training Teams in Central America to Marine Expeditionary Unit exercises in Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific. The Marine Corps also took part in civil-military and humanitarian assistance operations such as New Horizons events in Nicaragua, land mine removal training in Azerbaijan, and disaster relief in Bangladesh after a devastating cyclone.

II. Right-size the Marine Corps for Today's Conflict and Tomorrow's Uncertainty

To meet the demands of the Long War, as well as the unforeseen crises that will inevitably arise, our Corps must be sufficiently manned, well trained, and properly equipped. Like the Cold War, the Long War is a long-term struggle that will not be measured by the number of near-term deployments or rotations; it is this long-term view that informs our priorities and plan for growth.

To fulfill our obligations to the Nation, the Marine Corps will grow its personnel end strength to 202,000 Active Component Marines. This increase will enable your Corps to train to the full spectrum of military operations and improve the ability of the Marine Corps to address future challenges of an uncertain environment. Our growth will enable us to recover our ability to respond in accordance with timelines outlined in Combatant Commander war plans—thereby, reducing operational risk.

Current wartime deployment rates dictate an almost singular focus to prepare units for their next rotation and counterinsurgency operations. This focus and the deployment rate of many units threaten to erode the skills needed for Marine Corps missions such as combined-arms maneuver, mountain warfare, and amphibious operations. Our deployment cycles must not only support training for irregular warfare, but also provide sufficient time for recovery and maintenance as well as training for other contingency missions. By increasing dwell time for our units, we can accomplish the more comprehensive training needed for the sophisticated skill sets that have enabled Marine Air Ground Task Forces to consistently achieve success in all types of operations.

Just as importantly, this growth will relieve strain on those superb Americans who have volunteered to fight the Nation's battles. We must ensure that our personnel policies, organizational construct, and training enable our Marines to operate at the "sustained rate of fire." This means that we must have sufficient dwell time, equipment for training, and resources for our Marines *and their families* to sustain their efforts over time. Our recently begun growth to 202,000 Marines will significantly enhance our ability to operate at the "sustained rate of fire."

Our goal, during the Long War, is to achieve a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio for all of our active forces; for every seven months a Marine is deployed, he or she will be back at home station for fourteen months. Right now, many of our forces are at a 1:1 deployment-to-dwell ratio or less—which cannot be sustained in the long-term. We also aim to implement a 1:5 deployment to dwell ratio for our reserve forces and, eventually, achieve a peacetime deployment-to-dwell ratio goal is 1:3 for our active forces.

As we grow, we will develop all the elements of our Marine Air Ground Task Force in a balanced manner to meet the diverse challenges of an uncertain future. This growth includes:

- An increase in our end strength to 202,000 Marines;
- Adequate expansions of our infrastructure to provide for our Marines, their families, and their equipment; and
- The right mix of equipment for the current and future fight.

This additional end strength will result in three Marine Expeditionary Forces—balanced in capacity and capability. The development of Marine Corps force structure has been the result of a thorough and ongoing process that supports the Combatant Commanders and accomplishes our Title 10 responsibilities. The process addresses all pillars of combat development (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities) and identifies our required capabilities and the issues associated with fielding them. The most recent assessment revealed a requirement to front-load structure for recruiters and trainers to support our personnel growth and a phased introduction of units balanced across the Marine Air Ground Task Force.

In Fiscal Year 2007, we stood up two infantry battalions: 1st Battalion, 9th Marines and 2nd Battalion, 9th Marines. We also added capacity to our combat engineer battalions and air naval gunfire liaison companies. Our plan will gradually improve the deployment-to-dwell ratio of some of our other habitually high operational tempo units—such as military police, unmanned aerial vehicle, helicopter, air command and control, combat service support, and explosive ordnance disposal units.

Growing the Marine Corps as we simultaneously fight the Long War is a challenge, but we are committed to being the best stewards of the Nation's resources and working with the Congress to achieve these important goals.

Growing to 202K Marines

The Marine Corps surpassed its Fiscal Year 2007 authorized end strength goal of 184,000 and is on track to meet the goal of 189,000 Marines for Fiscal Year 2008 as well as our target end strength of 202,000 Marines by Fiscal Year 2011.

Recruiting. A vital factor in sustaining our force and meeting end strength goals is continuing to recruit qualified young men and women with the right character, commitment, and drive to become Marines. With over 70 percent of our end strength increase comprised of Marines on their first enlistment, our recruiting efforts are a critical part of our overall growth.

While exceeding Department of Defense quality standards, we continue to recruit the best of America into our ranks. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Marine Corps achieved over 100 percent of the Active Component accession goal necessary to grow the force as well as 100 percent of our reserve recruiting goals. We reached this goal without compromising the high quality standards the American people expect of their Marines.

We forecast that both active and reserve recruiting will remain challenging in Fiscal Year 2008, particularly given the increased accession missions needed to meet our end strength growth. We will need the continued indispensable support of Congress to sustain our existing programs and other incentives essential to achieving our recruiting mission.

Retention. Retention is the other important part of building and sustaining the Marine Corps. As a strong indicator of our force's morale, the Marine Corps has achieved unprecedented numbers of reenlistments in both the First Term and Career Force. The expanded reenlistment goal, in which we sought to reenlist over 3,700 additional Marines, resulted in the reenlistment of 31% of our eligible First Term force and 70% of our eligible Career Force—compared to the 22% first term and 65% career force reenlistments in Fiscal Year 2006. This achievement was key to reaching the first milestone in our end strength increase – 184,000 Marines by the end of Fiscal Year 2007—without sacrificing our high quality standards. In fact, a recent Center for Naval Analyses study concluded that the quality of our First Term force who reenlist has improved steadily since Fiscal Year 2000.

For Fiscal Year 2008, our retention goals are even more aggressive, but we fully expect to meet them. Our continuing success will be largely attributable to several important enduring themes. First, Marines are motivated to “stay Marine” because they are doing what they signed up to do—fighting for and protecting our Nation. Second, they understand our culture is one that rewards proven performance; our Selective Reenlistment Bonuses are designed to retain top quality Marines with the most relevant skill sets.

There is no doubt that your Marines' leadership and technical skills have rendered them extremely marketable to lucrative civilian employment opportunities. To retain the most qualified Marines, we must maintain Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) funding. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Marine Corps spent approximately \$460M in SRB and Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) to help achieve our end strength goal. With a reenlistment mission of 17,631 in Fiscal Year 2008—compared to an historical average of 12,000—the Marine Corps expects to spend approximately \$500M in reenlistment incentives during Fiscal Year 2008.

This aggressive SRB plan will allow us to retain the right grade and skill sets for our growing force—particularly among key military occupational specialties. The continued support of the Congress will ensure we have the necessary combat-trained Marines for the Long War and other contingency operations.

Reserve Component End Strength. Our fights thus far in Iraq and Afghanistan have been a Total Force effort—our Reserve forces continue to perform with grit and determination. Our goal is to obtain a 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio within our Reserve Component. As our active force increases in size, our reliance on our Reserve forces should decrease—helping us achieve the desired deployment-to-dwell ratio. We believe our current authorized end strength of 39,600 Selected Marine Corps Reserves is appropriate. As with every organization within the Marine Corps, we continue to review

the make-up and structure of our Reserve in order to ensure the right capabilities reside within the Marine Forces Reserve units and our Individual Mobilization Augmentee program.

Military-to-Civilian Conversions. Military-to-civilian conversions replace Marines in non-military-specific billets with qualified civilians, enabling the Corps to return those Marines to the operating forces. Since 2004, the Marine Corps has returned 3,096 Marines to the operating force through military-to-civilian conversions. We will continue to pursue sensible conversions as this will aid in our deployment-to-dwell ratio goals for the force.


Growing to 202K: Infrastructure

Military Construction is one of our keys to success in increasing the Marine Corps to 202,000 Marines by 2011. We have determined the optimal permanent locations for these new units and have generated estimates for the types and sizes of facilities needed to support these forces. Because our end strength will increase before final construction is complete, we are providing interim support facilities that will include lease, rental, and purchase of temporary facilities. Our plan will ensure adequate facilities are available to support the phase-in and Final Operating Capability of a 202,000 Marine Corps while meeting our environmental stewardship responsibilities.

Military Construction – Bachelor Enlisted Quarters Initiative. Housing for our single Marines continues to be our top military construction focus. Barracks are a significant quality of life element in taking care of our single Marines. We have put ourselves *in extremis* with regards to new barracks as we have degraded their priority for decades in lieu of operational requirements. We are now committed to providing adequate billeting for all of our existing unmarried junior enlisted Marines and non-commissioned officers by 2012—and for our increased end strength by 2014. To do that, we doubled the amount of our bachelor housing funding request from Fiscal Year 2007 to 2008; we will more than triple the 2008 amount in Fiscal Year 2009. We are also committed to funding replacement of barracks’ furnishings on a seven-year cycle and prioritizing barracks repair projects to preempt a backlog of repairs.

Public Private Venture (PPV) Housing. Our efforts to improve housing for Marines and their families continue. The housing privatization authorities are integral to our efforts to accommodate both current housing requirements and those resulting from our planned force increases. Thanks to Congressional support, the Marine Corps had business agreements in place at the end of Fiscal Year 2007 to eliminate all of our inadequate family housing. However, we need to continue our PPV efforts to address the current insufficient number of adequate housing units as well as the deficit being created by the increase in end strength to 202,000 Marines.

Training Capacity. Marine Corps Training & Education Command is increasing its training capacity and reinvigorating our pre-deployment training program to provide support to all elements of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) across the full spectrum of potential missions. In accordance with the Secretary of Defense's Security Cooperation guidance, we are developing and coordinating training and education



programs to build the capacity of allied and partner nations. We are also developing the capability to conduct large-scale MAGTF exercises within a joint, coalition, and interagency context to maintain proficiency in core warfighting functions such as combined arms maneuver, amphibious operations, and maritime prepositioning operations. Finally, we are ensuring our training and education programs and training ranges accommodate the 27,000 Marine Corps end strength increase.

Growing to 202K: Equipment

Our assessment of the materiel requirements for our growth has been significantly enhanced through cooperation between the Marine Corps and industry partners. Through this effort, the units we created in Fiscal Year 2007 were provided the equipment necessary to enter their pre-deployment training cycle. By prioritizing Marines in combat and redistribution of some of our strategic stocks, these new units were able to meet training and deployment requirements for combat. With the Congress' continued support, the numerous equipment contracts required to support our growth were met during Fiscal Year 2007 and will be met through Fiscal Year 2008 and beyond.

III. Resetting the Force and Preparing for the Next Contingency

To meet the demands of this war, we must reset the force so that we can simultaneously fight, train, and sustain our Corps. The Long War is taking a considerable toll on our equipment, and we continue to make tough choices on how best to apply the resources we are provided—either to replace our rapidly aging equipment with similar platforms or to modernize with next generation equipment. Additionally, we have routinely drawn additional equipment from strategic stocks, which need to be replenished in order for us to remain responsive to emerging threats. The Congress has responded rapidly and generously to our requests for equipment and increased protection for our Marines and Sailors. We are committed to fulfilling our responsibility to manage these resources prudently as we modernize our force.


Costs of Resetting the Force

Reset funds replenish the equipment necessary to keep the Marine Corps responsive to emerging threats. Costs categorized as “reset” meet one of the following criteria: maintenance and supply activities to restore and enhance combat capability to unit and pre-positioned equipment; replace or repair equipment destroyed, damaged, stressed, or worn out beyond economic repair; and enhance capabilities, where applicable, with the most up-to-date technology.

Our current reset estimate is \$15.6 billion. To date, Congress has appropriated a total of \$10.9 billion for Marine Corps GWOT reset costs. As the nature of the Long War evolves, “reset the force” cost estimates evolve as well. We not only need to “Reset” the force to support current readiness, but we also need to “Reconstitute and Revitalize” the force in preparation for future challenges. We are coordinating with other Services and the Joint Staff to refine estimates, and we are aggressively executing funding to ensure the Marines in the fight have the proper equipment in a timely manner.

Equipment Readiness

While the vast majority of our equipment has passed the test of sustained combat operations, it has been subjected to more than a lifetime’s worth of wear stemming from increased vehicle mileage and operating hours as well as harsh environmental conditions—resulting in an escalated maintenance effort. This maintenance requirement is a consequence of not only operational tempo and operating environments, but also the sheer amount of equipment employed in operations. Approximately 26% of all Marine Corps ground equipment is currently engaged overseas. Most of this equipment is not rotating out of theater at the conclusion of each force rotation; it remains in combat, used on a near-continuous basis at a pace that far exceeds normal peacetime usage.



For example, in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, crews are driving Light Armored Vehicles in excess of 8,700 miles per year—3.5 times more than the programmed annual usage rates of 2,480 miles per year. Our tactical vehicle fleet is experiencing some of the most dramatic effects of excessive wear, operating at five to six times the programmed rates. Many weapon systems have been modified during this conflict; some of these modifications have led to further wear and tear due to additional weight—for example, armor plating has been added for protection against improvised explosive devices. These factors, coupled with the operational requirement to keep equipment in theater without significant depot repair, has tremendously decreased the projected lifespan of this equipment. As a result, we can expect higher than anticipated reset costs and more replacements than repair of equipment. The depot level maintenance requirements for the equipment that is repairable will continue beyond the conclusion of hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our priority for equipment is to support Marines serving in harm's way. Therefore, we have drawn additional equipment from the Maritime Prepositioning Ships and prepositioned stores in Norway; we have also retained equipment in theater from units that are rotating back to the United States. The operational results of these efforts have been outstanding—the average mission capable rates of our deployed forces' ground equipment remain above 90%—but there is a price.

The cost of this success is a decrease in non-deployed unit readiness as well as an increase in the maintenance required per hour of operating time. Equipment across the Marine Corps is continuously cross-leveled to ensure that units preparing to deploy have sufficient equipment to conduct our rigorous pre-deployment training programs. Because the stateside priority of equipment distribution and readiness is to units preparing to deploy, there has been a trade-off in unit training for other types of contingencies. The timely delivery of replacement equipment is crucial to sustaining the high readiness rates for the Marines in theater, as well as improving the rates for the forces here at home. While additional equipment has been purchased, long lead times and production rates mean that, although funded, much of this equipment is still many months from delivery.

Aviation Equipment & Readiness

The operationally demanding and harsh environments of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa have highlighted the limitations of our aging fleet of aircraft. In order to support our Marines, sister Services, and coalition partners successfully, our aircraft have been flying at two to three times their designed utilization rates.

Despite this unprecedented use, our maintenance and support personnel have sustained a 79% aviation mission-capable rate for deployed Marine aircraft over the past twelve months. Maintaining the readiness of our aviation assets while preparing our aircrew for their next deployment is and will continue to be an enormous effort and constant challenge for our Marines. To maintain sufficient numbers of aircraft in deployed squadrons, our non-deployed squadrons have taken significant cuts in available aircraft and parts as they prepare for deployment—resulting in a 30% decrease in the number of non-deployed units reporting “deployment capable” over the

last five years. Reset funding has partially alleviated this strain, but continued funding is needed as we are simply running short of aircraft on our flight lines due to age, attrition, and wartime losses.

Reset programs have helped us mitigate degradation of our aircraft materiel readiness through aircraft modifications, proactive inspections, and additional maintenance actions. These efforts have successfully bolstered aircraft reliability, sustainability, and survivability; nevertheless, additional requirements for depot level maintenance on airframes, engines, weapons, and support equipment will continue well beyond the conclusion of hostilities.

Prepositioning Programs

Comprised of three Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadrons (MPSRON) and other strategic reserves, the Marine Corps' prepositioning programs are a critical part of our ability to respond to current and future contingency operations and mitigate risk for the Nation. Targeted withdrawal of equipment from our strategic stocks has been a key element in supporting combat operations, growth of the Marine Corps, and other operational priorities; these withdrawals provided necessary equipment from the existing inventory while industry catches up to our new requirements in the long-term. Generous support from the Congress has enabled the long-term solution, and as a result, shortfalls within our strategic programs will be reset as equipment becomes available from the manufacturer.

Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadrons (MPSRON). Our MPSRONs will be reset with the most capable equipment possible, and we have begun loading them with capabilities that support lower spectrum operations while still maintaining the ability to generate Marine Expeditionary Brigades capable of conducting major combat operations. Since 2007's report, all three squadrons have completed the Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) Maintenance Cycle eight (MMC-8). MPSRONs 1 and 3 were reconstituted to 91% and 100% respectively. The near-term reduction of MPSRON-1 was required to outfit new units standing up in Fiscal Year 2007 and Fiscal Year 2008 as part of our end strength increase. MPSRON-1 will complete MPF Maintenance Cycle-nine (MMC-9) in June 2008, and we anticipate it will be loaded with roughly 80% of its full equipment set as a result of our requirement to support end strength increase to 202,000 Marines. MPSRON-2 was loaded to 54% of its equipment requirements; much of MPSRON-2's equipment remains committed to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. With projected deliveries from industry, our intent is to fully reset and modernize MPSRON-2 and MPSRON-3 when they return for maintenance beginning in May 2008 and April 2009 respectively.

We are actively working with the Navy and Transportation Command to incorporate newer, more flexible ship platforms from the existing Military Sealift Command fleet into our aging legacy Maritime Prepositioning Force program. As we reset MPF, these changes are necessary to ensure we incorporate hard fought lessons from recent combat operations. Two decades of equipment growth and recent armor initiatives have strained the capability and capacity of our present fleet—that was designed to lift a Naval Force developed in the early 1980s.

We plan to incorporate three of Military Sealift Command's nineteen large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships (LMSR) as replacements for five of our older leased platforms. The LMSR significantly expands MPF flexibility and will allow us to reset and optimize MPF to meet current and emerging requirements.

Marine Corps Prepositioning Program- Norway. The Marine Corps Prepositioning Program – Norway (MCPN) was also used in support of current operations, growth of the Marine Corps, and resetting other Marine Corps shortfalls with a higher operational priority. The Marine Corps continues to reset MCPN in concert with our operational priorities while also exploring other locations for geographic prepositioning that will enable combat and theater security cooperation operations for forward deployed Naval Forces.

Depot Maintenance

The Marine Corps has aggressively worked to stabilize the conditions that affect our depot maintenance. These conditions include: the uncertainty of the timing of reset, asset availability, timing of funding, equipment condition, and evolving skill requirements. One area we focus on is the in-theater identification of equipment and scope of work to be performed; this effort enables better planning for parts, manpower resources, funding requirements, and depot capacity. Triage assessments made in theater and relayed back to the sources of repair have helped to ensure efficient repair preparation time. These efforts reduce the repair cycle time, returning the mission capable equipment to the warfighter as soon as possible—improving materiel readiness.

Depot capacity is elastic; productivity is not constrained by money or capacity; the limiting factor is asset (carcass) availability. We increase capacity to support surge requirements through a variety of means—overtime, additional shifts, and additional personnel. Performing work on over 260 product lines, our depot workforce currently has multiple trade skills ranging from laborers to engineers. Much of the equipment in theater today includes items not previously repaired by any depot facility—organic or non-organic. As a result, the existing work force may require additional training. New personnel and continued supplementation through contractor support may also be required. We continue to leverage state and local institutions, such as the technical colleges and universities, which can provide valuable assistance in training our workforce in skills such as welding, environmental science, and engineering.

Future challenges to meeting the increasing workload requirements include leveraging depot capacity, lessening the impact on our labor force, and ensuring parts are available. Continuing to partner with other Services and industry, we will enhance execution of reset using organic and non-organic sources of repair. We will continue to work with the Congress to anticipate the evolving depot maintenance funding requirements.

Equipment Retrograde Operations from Central Command Area of Operations

During 2006, in a continued effort to support the Commander, United States Marine Forces, Central Command, Marine Corps Logistics Command took the lead as the Service Executive Agent for the retrograde of equipment in theater determined to be excess. In addition to receiving, preparing, and shipping excess equipment within theater, Marine Corps Logistics Command (Forward) coordinates strategic lift requirements and manages the redistribution of principle end items in accordance with the Commandant of the Marine Corps' sourcing priorities. Since June 2006, over 15,731 principle end items have been processed at the retrograde lot in Al Taqaddum and approximately 11,799 items have been shipped back to Blount Island Command for disposition. Once disposition is received, assets are sent to Marine Corps Logistics Command for induction into the Master Work schedule, placed In-Stores, used to fill requisitions, or sent to the Defense Reutilization Marketing Office if deemed uneconomical to repair. The repair and return of items to In-Stores will enable us to better address the many demands for equipment. This, in turn, will keep us moving forward towards our goal of continued readiness improvement.

Operation IRAQI FREEDOM has led to a conceptual change in the way we provide operational-level logistics to the warfighter. Due to changing operational and mission requirements, Marine Corps Logistics Command is implementing capabilities extending beyond traditional boundaries, creating a more mobile and agile organization. The Marine Corps Logistics Command (Forward) was established to satisfy operational logistics requirements using competitive, comprehensive, and integrated solutions obtained from "the best" strategic Department of Defense and commercial providers. While continuing to execute its strategic-level responsibilities, Marine Corps Logistics Command has transformed from a garrison-centric organization to one capable of deploying operational-level logistics solutions to augment the sustainment requirements of Marine Forces in combat.

IV. Modernize for Tomorrow to be “the most ready when the Nation is least ready”

We know we have tough choices ahead of us to meet equipment demands across the Corps. As we reset, we are making prudent assessments on when it is more effective to replace aging and worn out equipment with similar equipment or to buy new equipment. We remain focused and steadfast on our responsibility to be the Nation’s premiere expeditionary Force-in-Readiness.

Experimentation

Our Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory conducts experiments to support operating force requirements and combat development. We continually seek to improve the capabilities of the operating forces by focusing on the needs of our lower-level ground combat and ground combat support units engaged in current and potential near-term contingencies. Some examples of current projects include:

“Combat Hunter,” a project aimed at enhancing observation and hunting skills of individual Marines operating in a combat environment;

- Company Level Intelligence Cell experiment, designed to provide us with a “best practices” model and to standardize infantry battalion intelligence processes;
- Squad Fires experiment, enhancing close air support to squad-level units;
- Combat Conditioning project, examining advances in physical fitness training to best prepare Marines for the demands of combat; and
- Lighten the Load initiative, an effort to decrease the amount of weight carried by Marines in the field.

Enhancing Individual Survivability

The Marine Corps continues to pursue technological advancements in personal protective equipment—our Marines in combat deserve nothing less. Fully recognizing the limiting factors associated with weight, fatigue, and movement restriction, we are providing Marines the latest in personal protective equipment—such as the Modular Tactical Vest, QuadGard, Lightweight Helmet, and Flame Resistant Organizational Gear.

Body Armor. Combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have highlighted the need to evolve our personal protective vest system. In February 2007, we began transitioning to a newly-designed Modular Tactical Vest (MTV). This vest is close to the same weight as its predecessor, the Outer Tactical Vest, but it integrates more easily with our other personal protection systems. It provides greater comfort through incorporation of state-of-the-art load carriage techniques, which better distributes a combat load over the

torso and onto the hips of the Marine. The MTV also incorporates our combat-proven Enhanced Small Arms Protective Inserts (E-SAPI) and Side SAPI plates. These plates are provided to every Marine in the Central Command theater of operations. The E-SAPI provides the best protection available against a wide variety of small arms threats—to include protection against 7.62mm ammunition. The initial acquisition objective for the MTV was 60,000 systems, with deliveries completed in October 2007. We are procuring additional MTVs during this Fiscal Year to ensure our Marines continue to deploy with the best body armor system available.

QuadGard. The QuadGard system is designed to provide ballistic protection for a Marine's arms and legs when serving as a turret gunner on convoy duty. This system, which integrates with other personal ballistic protection equipment, such as the MTV E-SAPI and Lightweight Helmet, provides additional protection against ballistic threats—particularly improvised explosive device fragmentation.

Lightweight Helmet. We are committed to providing the best head protection available to our warfighters. The Lightweight Helmet (LWH) weighs less than its predecessor and provides a high level of protection against fragmentation threats and 9mm bullets. We now require use of a pad system inside the helmet as multiple independent studies and tests demonstrated that it provides greater protection against non-ballistic blunt trauma than the sling suspension system. We are retrofitting more than 150,000 helmets with the pad system and have already fielded enough helmet pads for every deployed Marine. Since January 2007, all LWHs produced by the manufacturer are delivered with the approved pad system installed. In October 2007, we began fielding the Nape Protection Pad (NAPP), which provides additional ballistic protection to the occipital region of the head—where critical nervous system components, such as the cerebellum, brain stem, occipital lobe, and spinal cord are located. The NAPP is attached to the back of the LWH or the Modular Integrated Communications Helmet (MICH), which is worn by our reconnaissance Marines. Final delivery of the initial 69,300 NAPPs is scheduled for April 2008. That said, we continue to challenge industry to build a lightweight helmet that will stop the 7.62 mm round fired from an AK-47.

Flame Resistant Organizational Gear (FROG). In February 2007, we began fielding FROG to all deployed and deploying Marines. This lifesaving ensemble of flame resistant clothing items—gloves, balaclava, long-sleeved under shirt, combat shirt, and combat trouser—is designed to mitigate potential injuries to our Marines from flame exposure. These clothing items provide protection that is comparable to that of the NOMEX combat vehicle crewman suit/flight suit, while adding durability, comfort, and functionality. We have recently begun fielding flame resistant fleece pullovers to our Marines for use in cooler conditions, and we are developing flame resistant varieties of cool/cold weather outer garments and expect to begin fielding these to Marines in late Fiscal Year 2008. With the mix of body armor, undergarments, and outerwear, operational commanders can determine what equipment their Marines will employ based on mission requirements and environmental conditions. Through ongoing development and partnerships with other Services, we continue to seek the best available flame resistant protection for our Marines.

Sustained funding for the development and procurement of individual protective equipment has had a direct impact on our ability to reduce or mitigate combat injuries. Continued Congressional support is needed to ensure that our Marines and Sailors receive the best equipment available in the coming years.

Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (CIED). Responding to urgent warfighter needs, we are providing the most capable force protection systems available. We are upgrading our Counter Remote-controlled IED Electronic Warfare Chameleon systems to meet rapidly evolving threats while remaining engaged with the Joint Program Board to develop a joint solution. We are enhancing our ability to combat the effects of weapons of mass destruction as well as protecting our Marines worldwide by fielding eighteen consequence management sets using the best available commercial off-the-shelf technologies. These sets complement the capabilities of our Family of Incident Response Systems and the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force. Our Family of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Equipment has undergone significant modernization through enhancement of technician tool kits and greater counter IED robotics capability and availability.

Marine Aviation Plan

Resetting Marine Aviation means getting more capable and reliable aircraft into the operational deployment cycle sooner—not merely repairing and replacing damaged or destroyed aircraft. Daily, your Marines rely on these aircraft to execute a wide array of missions including casualty evacuation for our wounded and timely close air support for troops in contact with the enemy. Legacy aircraft production lines are no longer active—exacerbating the impact of combat losses and increasing the urgency for the Marine Aviation Plan to remain fully funded and on schedule.

The 2007 Marine Aviation Plan (AvPlan) provides the way ahead for Marine Aviation over the next 10 years as it transitions 39 of 71 squadrons from 13 legacy aircraft to 6 new aircraft; it incorporates individual program changes and synchronizes support of our end strength growth to 202,000 Marines.

Joint Strike Fighter (JSF). F-35B Lightning II development is on track with the first flight of BF-1 Short Take-Off / Vertical Landing (STOVL) variant scheduled for 2008. The F-35B STOVL variant is a fifth generation aircraft that will provide a quantum leap in capability, basing flexibility, and mission execution across the full spectrum of warfare. The JSF will act as an integrated combat system in support of ground forces and will be the centerpiece of Marine Aviation. The manufacture of the first nineteen test aircraft is well underway, with assembly times better than planned and exceptional quality demonstrated in fabrication and assembly. The first Conventional Take-Off / Landing (CTOL) aircraft flew in December of 2006 and accumulated nineteen flights prior to a planned technical refresh. The JSF acquisition strategy, including software development, reflects a block approach. The Marine Corps remains committed to an all-STOVL tactical aircraft force—which will enable future Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) to best fulfill its expeditionary warfighting responsibilities in support of the Nation and Combatant Commanders.

MV-22 Osprey. The MV-22 brings revolutionary assault support capability to our forces in harm's way; they deserve the best assault support aircraft in the world—without question, the MV-22 is that aircraft. The MV-22 is replacing the CH-46E aircraft. The CH-46E is over forty years old, with limited lift and mission capabilities to support the MAGTF. In September 2005, the V-22 Defense Acquisition Board approved Full Rate Production. Twenty-nine Block A and twenty-four Block B aircraft have been delivered and are based at Marine Corps Air Station New River, North Carolina; Patuxent River, Maryland; and Al Asad Air Base, Iraq.

Much like the F-35, the MV-22 program uses a block strategy in its procurement. Block A aircraft are training aircraft, Block B are operational aircraft, and Block C aircraft are operational aircraft with mission enhancements that will be procured in Fiscal Year 2010 and delivered in Fiscal Year 2012. One V-22 Fleet Replacement Training Squadron, one test squadron, and three tactical VMM squadrons have stood up. MV-22 Initial Operational Capability was declared on 1 June 2007 with a planned transition of two CH-46E squadrons per year thereafter.

VMM-263 is deployed to Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, and the significant capabilities of the Osprey have already been proven in combat. A brief examination of the daily tasking of the MV-22 squadron in Iraq tells a compelling story: a flight of MV-22s are doing in six hours what would have taken twelve hours in CH-46s. In addition, the aircraft easily ranges the entire area of operations and flies a majority of the time at altitudes beyond the range of our enemy's weapons. The Marine Corps asked for an aircraft that could take us farther, faster, and safer; and Congress answered.

KC-130J. KC-130Js have been continuously deployed in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM since February 2005—providing state-of-the-art, multi-mission, tactical aerial refueling, and fixed-wing assault support. The KC-130J is the workhorse of the MAGTF; its theater logistical support reduces the requirement for resupply via ground, limiting the exposure of our convoys to IEDs and other attacks.

The introduction of the aerial refuelable MV-22 combined with the forced retirement of the legacy KC-130F/R aircraft due to corrosion, fatigue life, and parts obsolescence requires an accelerated procurement of the KC-130J. In addition, the Marine Corps will replace its twenty-eight reserve component KC-130T aircraft with KC-130Js, simplifying the force to one Type/Model/Series. The Marine Corps is contracted to procure a total of forty-six aircraft by the end of Fiscal Year 2013; twenty-nine new aircraft have been delivered and four KC-130J aircraft requested in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget.

H-1 Upgrade. The H-1 Upgrade Program (UH-1Y/AH-1Z) resolves existing operational UH-1N power margin and AH-1W aircrew workload issues—while significantly enhancing the tactical capability, operational effectiveness, and sustainability of our attack and utility helicopter fleet. The Corps' Vietnam-era UH-1N Hueys are reaching the end of their useful life. Due to airframe and engine fatigue, Hueys routinely take off at their maximum gross weight with no margin for error. Rapidly fielding the UH-1Y remains a Marine Corps aviation priority, with the first deployment of UH-1Ys to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM scheduled for the spring of 2009.

Due to significant operational demands and aircraft attrition in the existing attack and utility helicopter fleet, the Marine Corps adopted a “build new” strategy for the UH-1Y in Fiscal Year 2006. Similarly, the Marine Corps began investing in Non-Recurring Engineering (NRE) in Fiscal Year 2007 for the production of a limited number of AH-1Z “build new” aircraft; these AH-1Zs will augment those existing AH-1Ws that will be remanufactured. This combined “build new” and remanufacture strategy will enable the Marine Corps to rapidly increase the number of AH-1s available, support the Marine Corps’ growth to 202K Marines, and alleviate inventory shortfalls caused by aircraft attrition. Ten production aircraft have been delivered. Operation and Evaluation (OPEVAL) Phase II commenced in February 2008, and as expected, showcased the strengths of the upgraded aircraft. Full rate production of the H-1 Upgrade (and the contract award of Lot 5 aircraft) is scheduled to take place during the fourth quarter Fiscal Year 2008.

CH-53K. In operation since 1981, the CH-53E is becoming increasingly expensive to operate and faces reliability and obsolescence issues. Its replacement, the CH-53K, will be capable of externally transporting 27,000 lbs to a range of 110 nautical miles, more than doubling the current CH-53E lift capability. Maintainability and reliability enhancements of the CH-53K will significantly decrease recurring operating costs and will radically improve aircraft efficiency and operational effectiveness over the current CH-53E. The program passed Milestone B (System Development & Demonstration [SDD] initiation) in December 2005. The SDD Contract was awarded to Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation in April 2006. Initial Operational Capability (IOC) is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2015, and is defined as a detachment of four aircraft, ready to deploy.

Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)

The Marine Corps is taking aggressive action to modernize and improve organic UAS capabilities. The Marine Corps’ UAS are organized into three echelons, appropriate to the level of commander they support. Tier III UAS serve at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level. Tier II UAS support Regimental Combat Team and Marine Expeditionary Unit operations, and Tier I UAS support battalion and below operations. At the Tier III level, we have simultaneously transitioned Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadrons (VMU) to the RQ-7B Shadow; started reorganizing the squadrons’ force structure to support detachment-based flexibility (operating three systems versus one for each squadron); and initiated the stand up of a third active component VMU squadron.

With the significant support of the Army, the Marine Corps has completed the transition to the RQ-7B Shadow in less than nine months. The transition to the Shadow provides a mature and modern—yet basic and readily available—Tier III platform upon which to baseline Marine VMU reorganization. A detachment-based concept of operations for the VMU will give Marine Expeditionary Force commanders flexibility to task-organize based on mission requirements. The addition of a third VMU squadron is critical to sustaining current operations by decreasing our current operational deployment-to-dwell ratio—currently at 1:1—to a sustainable 1:2 ratio. This rapid transition and reorganization, begun in January 2007, will be complete by the fourth quarter Fiscal

Year 2009, significantly improving organic Marine Corps UAS capability while increasing joint interoperability and commonality.

The Marine Corps is using an ISR Services contract to provide Scan Eagle systems to Multi-National Forces-West, Iraq to fill the Tier II void until future fielding of the Tier II/ Small Tactical UAS (STUAS), a combined Marine Corps and Navy program beginning in Fiscal Year 2008 with planned fielding in 2011. At the Tier I level, the Marine Corps is transitioning from the Dragon Eye to the joint Raven-B program, also common with the US Army.


When fully fielded, the Corps' Unmanned Aerial Systems will be networked through a robust and interoperable command and control system that provides commanders an enhanced capability applicable across the spectrum of military operations.

Ground Mobility

The Army and Marine Corps are leading the Services in developing tactical wheeled vehicle requirements for the joint force. Our efforts will provide the joint force an appropriate balance of survivability, mobility, payload, networking, transportability, and sustainability. The Army/Marine Corps Board has proven a valuable forum for coordination of development and fielding strategies; production of armoring kits and up-armored HMMWVs; and response to requests for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. The Ground Mobility Suite includes:

Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV). The Marine Corps provides the Nation's joint forces with a unique and flexible forcible entry capability from the sea. The EFV is specifically suited to maneuver operations conducted from the sea and sustained operations in the world's littoral regions. Its inherent capabilities provide utility across the spectrum of conflict. As the Corps' largest ground combat system acquisition program, the EFV is the sole sea-based, surface-oriented vehicle that enables projection of combat power from a seabase to an objective. It will replace the aging Assault Amphibious Vehicle—in service since 1972. Complementary to our modernized fleet of tactical vehicles, the EFV's amphibious mobility, day and night lethality, enhanced force protection capabilities, and robust communications will substantially improve joint force capabilities. Its over-the-horizon capability will enable amphibious ships to increase their standoff distance from the shore—protecting them from enemy anti-access weapons.

The Marine Corps recently conducted a demanding operational assessment of the EFV. It successfully demonstrated the most critical performance requirements, but the design complexities are still providing challenges to system reliability. To that end, we conducted a comprehensive requirements review to ensure delivery of the required capability while reducing complexity where possible. For example, the human stresses encountered during operations in some high sea states required us to reevaluate the operational necessity of exposing Marines to those conditions. Based upon this assessment, along with subsequent engineering design review, we will tailor final requirements and system design to support forcible entry concepts while ensuring the EFV is a safe, reliable, and effective combat vehicle.



Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV). The Army/Marine Corps Board has been the focal point for development of joint requirements for a Joint Light Tactical Vehicle—which will provide protected, sustained, networked, and expeditionary mobility in the light tactical vehicle weight class. Throughout 2007, Army and Marine Corps combat and materiel developers coordinated with the Joint Staff, defining requirements and acquisition planning for the replacement for the up-armored HMMWV. In December, the Defense Acquisition Board approved JLTV entry into the acquisition process at Milestone A, designating the Army as lead Service and initiating competitive prototyping during the technology development phase. Prototypes will be evaluated to demonstrate industry's ability to balance survivability, mobility, payload, network enabling, transportability, and sustainability. The program is on track for a Milestone B in early 2010.

Marine Personnel Carrier (MPC). The MPC is an expeditionary armored personnel carrier—ideal for irregular warfare—yet effective across the full range of military operations. Increasing armor-protected mobility for infantry battalion task forces, the MPC program balances vehicle performance, protection, and payload attributes. Through 2007, we completed both joint staffing of an Initial Capabilities Document and, a draft concept of employment. Additionally, the Analysis of Alternatives final report was published in December 2007. The program is on track for a Milestone B decision in the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2010 and an Initial Operational Capability in the 2015 timeframe.

Internally Transported Vehicle (ITV). The ITV is a family of vehicles that will provide deployed Marine Air Ground Task Forces with ground vehicles that are transportable inside the MV-22 and CV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft, as well as CH-53 and MH-47 aircraft. There are three variants of the ITV, the Light Strike, the Prime Mover-Weapon, and the Prime Mover-Trailer. Both prime mover variants are components of the Expeditionary Fire Support System designed to support the M327 120mm mortar. In conjunction with testing of our Expeditionary Fire Support System, we conducted an operational assessment of the ITV Light Strike variant during which it met all key performance parameters. We expect to begin fielding this variant the Light Strike Variant of the ITV in June 2008.

Vehicle Armoring

Our goal is to provide the best level of available protection to 100% of in-theater vehicles that go “outside the wire.” Our tactical wheeled vehicle strategy pursues this goal through the coordination of product improvement, technology insertion, and new procurement in partnership with industry. The Marine Corps, working with the other Services, is fielding armored vehicles such as: the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle (MRAP), the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement Armor System, the Logistics Vehicle System (LVS) Marine Armor Kit, and the Up-armored HMMWV.

Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) Armor System (MAS). MAS provides an integrated, armor enclosed, climate-controlled cab compartment and an armored troop carrier for our MTVR variants. These vehicles are also being upgraded with an improved blast protection package consisting of blast attenuating seats, five-point restraint harnesses, and improved belly and fender-well blast deflectors. Basic MAS has been installed in all of the Marine Corps’ MTVRs in the Central Command’s theater of

operation. Additionally, we are installing blast upgrade, fuel tank fire protection kits, and 300 AMP alternators; target completion for in-theater vehicles is Fourth Quarter Fiscal Year 2008.

Logistics Vehicle System (LVS) Marine Armor Kit (MAK) II. The LVS MAK II provides blast, improvised explosive device, and small arms protection. It has a completely redesigned cab assembly that consists of a new frame with armor attachment points and integrated 360-degree protection. The new cab will also have an air conditioning system that cools from 134 degrees Fahrenheit to 89 degrees Fahrenheit in twenty minutes. Additional protection includes overhead and underbody armor using high, hard steel, rolled homogenous armor, and 2.75" ballistic windows. The suspension system has been upgraded to accommodate the extra weight of the vehicle. We estimate the LVS MAK II armoring effort will complete fielding by February 2009.

M1114 Highly-Mobile Multi-Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV)-Upgrade—Fragmentation Kit 2 and Kit 5. Fragmentation Kit 2 enhances ballistic protection in the front driver and assistant driver wheel-well of HMMWVs. Fragmentation Kit 5 reduces injuries from improvised explosive devices as well as armor debris and fragmentation. Installation of both fragmentation kits was completed in Fiscal Year 2007. We are continuing to evaluate the U.S. Army's objective kit development and work with the Army and Office of Naval Research to assess new protection-level capabilities and share information. The Marine Corps has adopted a strategy of a 60% fully up-armored HMMWV fleet. All new Expanded Capacity Vehicles will have the Integrated Armor Package. Of those, 60% will be fully up-armored to include the appropriate "B" kit and Fragmentation kits during production. The Marine Corps will continue to work with the Army to pursue the development of true bolt-on/bolt-off "B" kits and fragmentation kits to apply as needed to post-production vehicles.

Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicles. MRAP vehicles have a V-shaped armored hull and protect against the three primary kill mechanisms of mines and improvised explosive devices (IED)—fragmentation, blast overpressure, and acceleration. These vehicles provide the best currently-available protection against IEDs. Experience in theater shows that a Marine is four to five times less likely to be killed or injured in a MRAP vehicle than in an up-armored HMMWV—which is why Secretary Gates made the MRAP program the number one acquisition priority for the Defense Department. MRAP vehicles come in three categories: Category I designed for use in urban environments and carries by up to six personnel; Category II for convoy escort, troop transport, and ambulance evacuation, which transports up to ten personnel; and Category III for route clearance/explosive ordnance disposal vehicles.

The total Department of Defense requirement for MRAP vehicles is 15,374—of which 3,700 are allocated for the Marine Corps. However, the Marine Corps requirement has been revalidated to 2,225, pending Joint Requirements Oversight Council approval. The Navy is the Executive Agent for the program and the Commander, Marine Corps Systems Command is the Joint Program Executive Officer. As an example of our adaptation to evolving threats, the Joint MRAP Vehicle Program Office has recently selected qualified producers of a new MRAP II vehicle for the Marine Corps and other forces. Vehicles procured through this second solicitation will meet enhanced survivability and performance capability required by field commanders.

The Marine Corps is very pleased with the overwhelming support of Congress on the MRAP program, both financially and programmatically. We ask that Congress continue their support for these life-saving vehicles and support us as we transition to the sustainment of these vehicles in future years.

MAGTF Fires

In 2007, we initiated a study entitled “The Major Combat Operations Analysis for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2024.” This study scrutinized the current organic fire support of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) to determine the adequacy, integration, and modernization requirements for ground, aviation, and naval surface fires. The study concluded that the MAGTF / Amphibious Task Force was unable to adequately address moving and armored targets 24 / 7 and in all weather conditions. This deficiency is especially acute during the Joint Forcible Entry Operation phase of combat operations. The study also reinforced the critical importance of both the Joint Strike Fighter and AH-1Z in minimizing the fires gap. With this information, we then developed a set of alternatives for filling these gaps—using either MAGTF reinforcing or joint fires. We also performed a supplemental historical study using Operation IRAQI FREEDOM data to examine MAGTF Fires in the full spectrum of warfare. These studies reconfirmed the requirement for a mix of air, naval surface, and ground-based fires as well as the development of the Triad of Ground Indirect Fires.

Our Triad of Ground Indirect Fires provides for complementary, discriminating, and non-discriminating fires that facilitate maneuver during combat operations. The Triad requires a medium-caliber cannon artillery capability; an extended range, ground-based rocket capability; and a mortar capability with greater lethality than current models and greater tactical mobility than current artillery systems. The concept validates the capabilities provided by the M777 lightweight 155mm towed howitzer, the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, and the Expeditionary Fire Support System, a 120mm rifled towed mortar.

M777 Lightweight Howitzer. The new M777 lightweight howitzer replaces our M198 howitzers. It can be lifted by the MV-22 Osprey and the CH-53E helicopter and is paired with the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement truck for improved cross-country mobility. Through design innovation, navigation, positioning aides, and digital fire control, the M777 offers significant improvements in lethality, survivability, mobility, and durability over the M198 howitzer. The Marine Corps began fielding the first of 511 new howitzers to the operating forces in April 2005 and expects to complete fielding in Fiscal Year 2011.

High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS). HIMARS fills a critical range and volume gap in Marine Corps fire support assets by providing twenty-four hour, all weather, ground-based, indirect precision and volume fires throughout all phases of combat operations ashore. We will field forty-six HIMARS—eighteen to the Active Component, eighteen to the Reserve Component, four to the Supporting Establishment, and six to the War Reserve Material Readiness – Forward. When paired with Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System rockets, HIMARS will provide a highly responsive, precision fire

capability to our forces. We will reach Initial Operational Capability this August and expect to be at Full Operational Capability by Fiscal Year 2010.

Expeditionary Fire Support System (EFSS). The EFSS, a towed 120mm mortar, will be the principal indirect fire support system for heli- and tiltrotor-borne forces executing Ship-to-Objective Maneuver as part of a Marine Air Ground Task Force. When paired with an Internally Transportable Vehicle, EFSS can be transported aboard MV-22 and CH-53E aircraft. EFSS-equipped units will have immediately responsive, organic indirect fires at ranges beyond current infantry battalion mortars. Initial operational capability is planned during Fiscal Year 2008, and full operational capability is planned for Fiscal Year 2010.

Infantry Weapons


Based on combat experience and numerous studies, we are developing infantry weapons systems with the following goals: increased effectiveness, lighter weight, improved modularity, and integration with other infantry equipment. The Marine Corps and Army are co-leading joint service capabilities analysis for future developments.

Individual Weapons. The M16A4 is our current service rifle and makes up the majority of our assigned individual weapons. It is supplemented by the M4 Carbine, which is assigned to Marines based on billet and mission requirements. We are participating in several Army tests which will evaluate the capabilities and limitations of our small arms inventory. In conjunction with the Army and Air Force, we will use these results to determine priorities for a future service rifle with focus on modularity, ergonomics, balance, and lethality. We also have executed a two-pronged strategy for a larger caliber pistol: supporting the Air Force's effort to analyze and develop joint capabilities documents for a new pistol and examining the Army's recent consideration of personal defense weapons.

Multi-Purpose Weapons. The Shoulder-Launched Multipurpose Assault Weapon (SMAW) is an aging, heavy weapon that is nearing the end of its service life. We are seeking ways to reduce weight, increase reliability, and improve target identification as well as develop a "fire from enclosure" capability that will enable Marines to fire the weapon from within an enclosed space.

Scout Sniper Capability. We are conducting a holistic assessment of our Scout Sniper capability to identify shortfalls and develop recommended solutions—concurrently integrating the doctrine, training, weapons, equipment, and identified tasks with a Marine sniper's professional development and career.

Non-lethal Weapons Technology. The complexities of the modern battlespace often place our Service men and women in challenging situations where sometimes, lethal force is not the preferred response. In these environments, our warfighters need options for a graduated escalation of force. As the Executive Agent for the Department of Defense Non-Lethal Weapons Program, we see the need for long-range, directed-energy systems. Marines and Soldiers in Iraq are already using non-lethal directed energy weapons; green laser warning devices have reduced the requirement to use lethal force



at checkpoints against wayward, but otherwise innocent, Iraqi civilians. We continue to pursue joint research and development of promising non-lethal weapon technologies, such as the millimeter wave Active Denial System. We thank the Committee for its support of these vital capabilities for modern warfare.

Counter-Sniper Technology. We are leveraging the work of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, our sister Services, the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, and the National Ground Intelligence Center in an effort to increase our ability to counter enemy snipers. We are examining different obscurant technologies as well as various infrared detection / location sense and warn capabilities. We are experimenting with advanced equipment and improved tactics, techniques, and procedures. The ability to detect enemy optics will provide our Marines warning of impending sniper or improvised explosive device attacks and the ability to avoid or engage the sniper before he can fire. Ongoing joint and interagency cooperation, coupled with industry collaboration, will shape our future experiments.

Infantry Battalion Enhancement Period Program (IBEPP). We are fielding additional equipment to infantry battalions to better enable Marines to fight and win on the distributed and non-linear battlefield. This equipment encompasses communications, optics, weapons, and vehicles, at a cost of approximately \$19M per battalion. Key elements of the IBEPP include a formal squad leader course for every rifle battalion squad leader, a tactical small unit leaders' course for prospective fire team leaders, and a "Train the Trainer" mobile training team to teach junior tactical leaders the skills required to more effectively train their own Marines.

Command and Control (C2) Harmonization

The Marine Corps' Command and Control Harmonization Strategy articulates our goal of delivering an end-to-end, fully-integrated, cross-functional capability to include forward-deployed and reach-back functions. We envision seamless support to Marines in garrison and in combat—taking the best of emerging capabilities to build a single solution that includes the Common Aviation Command and Control System (CAC2S), Tactical Communications Modernization (TCM) program, Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT), and training.

The CAC2S fuses data from sensors, weapon systems, and command and control systems into an integrated display, assisting commanders in controlling organic, joint, and coalition efforts while operating as a joint task force. Delivered in a common, modular, and scalable design, CAC2S reduces the current systems into one hardware solution. The TCM and VSAT programs fuse data on enemy forces into the Common Operating Picture and increase our ability to track friendly forces. Lastly, our C2 Harmonization Strategy increases capability to train our staffs through Marine Air Ground Task Force Integrated System Training Centers.

Information Operations

The ability to influence an adversary through information operations has been a critical capability our current operations and will be of even more importance as we continue to engage in security cooperation efforts around the globe. To better support our Information Operations (IO), we are standing up the Marine Corps Information Operations Center at Quantico, VA—our primary organization to integrate and deliver IO effects throughout the Marine Corps.

Marine Corps Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Enterprise

We are increasing the quality of our Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities through the use of an enterprise approach known as the Marine Corps ISR Enterprise (MCISR-E)—resulting in a fully-integrated architecture compliant with joint standards for data interoperability. MCISR-E will provide networked combat information and intelligence down to the squad level across the range of military operations. To ensure Marines have access to these new capabilities, our MAGTF Command and Control systems feed combat operation centers with information from wide field of view persistent surveillance systems such as Angel Fire, traditional ISR systems such as our family of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), and non-traditional collection assets such as Ground Based Operational Surveillance System (GBOSS). Intelligence sections down to the company level are equipped with ISR fusion systems as well as applications such as MarineLink that enable rapid discovery, data mining, analysis, and most importantly incorporation of Intelligence into tactical planning for operations and intelligence reporting down to squad level and up to higher headquarters.

Marine Corps Operational Logistics

Operating Force Sustainment Initiatives. We have aggressively moved forward on several forward-deployed initiatives that have improved our support to our Marines in combat. Our Marine Corps Logistics Command is working with our Marine Expeditionary Forces on extending heavy intermediate maintenance support within the continental United States. Maintenance Center contact teams at Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton are extending the service life of equipment through corrosion control and maintenance programs that enhance pre-deployment readiness.

Improving Combat Readiness Through Innovation. To assure optimum use of the resources provided by Congress and the American taxpayers, we are making innovations in how we equip, sustain, house, and move our war-fighters. We are aggressively applying the principles of continuous process improvement to these enabling business processes across the Corps. In just the past year we have cut costs and repair cycle time at both aviation and ground maintenance depots, revamped and speeded up the urgent universal needs statements process, and instituted regional contracting for materiel and services that is proving more cost effective. Such improvements are expected to increase as training and experience proliferate.

Urgent Universal Needs Statement (UUNS) Process

The UUNS process enables deployed commanders to request equipment based on their recent experience. Designed to procure equipment more expediently than if submitted in the regular budgeting process, the Marine Corps' UUNS process uses a secure, web-based system that provides full stakeholder visibility from submission through resolution. Through continuous process improvement, we have reduced our average processing time by 58.8 days. Our goal is responsive support to commanders in the field by providing a rational, disciplined, and time-sensitive process that fulfills their validated urgent requirements in the fastest, most logical way. We continue to review the system for opportunities to increase efficiency and timeliness. For example, as a result of a February 2006 Lean Six Sigma review, several improvements were implemented including standardization, on-line tracking, and streamlined approval. Typically, UUNS are funded by reprogramming funds from approved programs or through Congressional supplemental funding. They are funded with regard for current law, their effects on established programs of record, or other initiatives in the combat capability development process.

Information Technology Enablers / Global Combat Support System – Marine Corps

Global Combat Support System – Marine Corps continues to make strides toward delivering a modernized information technology system that will enhance logistics support to the warfighter. As the primary information technology enabler for the Marine Corps' Logistics Modernization efforts, the system's primary design focus is to enable the warfighter to operate while deployed and provide reach back capability from the battlefield. At the core is modern, commercial-off-the-shelf enterprise resource planning software that will replace our aging legacy systems. The Global Combat Support System – Marine Corps Block 1 focuses on providing the operating forces with an integrated supply/maintenance capability and enhanced logistics-chain-management planning tools. Field User Evaluations and Initial Operational Test & Evaluations are scheduled for 1st Quarter Fiscal Year 2009, followed by fielding of the system and Initial Operating Capability during Fiscal Year 2009. Future blocks will focus on enhancing capabilities in the areas of warehousing, distribution, logistics planning, decision support, depot maintenance, and integration with emerging technologies to improve asset visibility.

Secure Internet Routing Protocol Network (SIPRNET)

The Secure Internet Routing Protocol Network (SIPRNET) is our primary warfighting command and control network. The asymmetric nature of current attacks combined with future threats to our networks demand a greater reliance on the SIPRNET to ensure the security of Marine Corps warfighting and business operations. The Marine Corps is aggressively upgrading our existing SIPRNET capabilities and an expansion of our SIPRNET in the future will be necessary to meet operational demands. The resources required for this expansion will enable wider use of the SIPRNET across the Marine Corps as we transition more warfighting and business operations into a highly secure and trusted network.

Infrastructure Energy Considerations

The purchase of electricity, natural gas, petroleum fuels, and potable water to operate our facilities is a significant expense. Through proactive Facilities Energy & Water Management and Transportation Programs to reduce consumption, we are achieving substantial cost avoidance and environmental benefits including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants. Our program provides the direction, actions, and metrics necessary for commands to:

- Reduce rate of energy use in existing facilities;
- Improve facility energy efficiency of new construction and renovations;
- Expand use of renewable resources;
- Reduce water usage rates on our installations;
- Improve security and reliability of energy and water systems; and
- Decrease petroleum use through increased efficiency and alternative fuel use.

Marine Corps conservation efforts have been substantial, but installation energy and water requirements continue to increase as we increase our end strength and adjust to rising energy prices.

V. Provide our Nation a Naval Force Fully Prepared for Employment as a MAGTF Across the Spectrum of Conflict

The enduring value of naval expeditionary forces in protecting our homeland, preventing crises, and winning our Nation's wars is a key theme of the recently signed maritime strategy entitled "*A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*," the *Naval Operations Concept*, and the *Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment*. These documents acknowledge the uncertainty of the strategic environment and that winning the battle for influence—and thus preventing wars—is as important as our Nation winning wars. Influenced by a variety of geographic, diplomatic, and geographic factors, our country's access to strategic basing is in decline. Our strategies address the requirement to maintain a robust forcible entry capability: the ability to maneuver from the sea, gain and maintain access anywhere in the littorals as well as transition to operations ashore and sustain the force from the seabase. They provide a template for Maritime Service capability and capacity and underscore our Marine Corps-Navy warfighting interdependence.

These concepts and strategies also incorporate hard-fought lessons from our current battles in Iraq and Afghanistan. Combat casualties have in a very real sense become a center of gravity for America—no matter what the cause or conflict. Therefore, "increased risk" and "slower response times" must always be calculated in terms of their real costs—loss of life and materiel on the battlefield and then, potentially, the loss of support of the American people.

Seapower is a distinct asymmetric advantage of the United States. For Marines, that asymmetric advantage includes Joint Seabasing, which allows us to maximize forward presence and engagement while "stepping lightly" on local sensitivities, avoiding the unintended political, social, and economic disruptions that often result from a large American presence ashore. It allows us to conduct a broad range of operations in areas where access is challenged, without operational commanders being forced to immediately secure ports and airfields. Given diplomatic, geographic, and infrastructure constraints, Seabasing is absolutely critical to overcoming area denial and anti-access weapons in uncertain or openly hostile situations. The combination of capabilities that allows us to influence events ashore from over the horizon—amphibious warfare ships, innovative Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) ships, Joint High Speed Vessels, surface connectors, MV-22s, and Expeditionary Fighting Vehicles—play a key role in surmounting access challenges.

Seabasing is not exclusive to the Navy and Marine Corps—it will be a national capability. In fact, we view Joint Seabasing as a national strategic imperative. Just as the amphibious innovations championed by the Navy-Marine Corps team during the 1920s and 1930s were employed by all U.S. and Allied forces in every theater during World War II, we believe that the Seabasing initiatives currently underway will expand to become joint and interagency capabilities. Our control of the sea allows us to use it as a vast maneuver space—365 days a year. Seabasing allows us to project influence and expeditionary power in the face of access challenges, a distinct asymmetric advantage. These capabilities allow maritime forces to support our partners and to deter and defeat

adversaries in a complex and uncertain future. Today, another generation of Naval planners continues to envision how our amphibious capabilities can evolve into more fully sea-based operations and better meet the Combatant Commanders' varied and competing requirements.


Amphibious Ship Requirements

The maritime strategy advocates *credible* combat power as a deterrent to future conflict. The Marine Corps supports this capability through the flexibility and combat power of the Marine Air Ground Task Force embarked on amphibious warfare ships. By far the most complex of our congressionally-mandated missions, amphibious forcible entry requires long-term resourcing and a high-level of proficiency. It is not a capability that we can create in the wake of a threat.

The characteristics of amphibious ships (their command and control suites, flight decks, well decks, air and surface connectors, medical facilities, messing and berthing capacity, and survivability) merged with the general-purpose nature of embarked Marines, make them multi-mission platforms—unbeatable in operations ranging from humanitarian assistance to amphibious assault. These forces have brought hope and assistance to peoples ravaged by tsunamis, earthquakes, and cyclones—even hurricanes in our own country. They have provided a powerful combat force from the sea as evidenced by the opening days of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM when Marines provided the first conventional forces ashore in Afghanistan. An equally powerful force assaulted from amphibious ships up the Al Faw peninsula in early weeks of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. In spite of the proliferation of anti-access technologies among state and non-state actors, Navy-Marine Corps amphibious capabilities have answered our Nation's "911 call" over 85 times since the end of the Cold War. Many international navies have recognized the value of amphibious warfare ships—as evidenced by the global renaissance in amphibious ship construction.

Based on strategic guidance, in the last several years we have accepted risk in our Nation's forcible entry capacity and reduced amphibious lift from 3.0 Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) assault echelons to 2.0 MEB assault echelons. In the budgetary arena, the value of amphibious ships is too often assessed exclusively in terms of forcible entry—discounting their demonstrated usefulness across the range of operations and the clear imperative for Marines embarked aboard amphibious ships to meet Phase 0 demands. The ability to transition between those two strategic goalposts, and to respond to every mission-tasking in between, will rely on a strong Navy-Marine Corps Team and the amphibious ships that cement our bond. The Navy and Marine Corps have worked diligently to determine the minimum number of amphibious ships necessary to satisfy the Nation's needs—and look forward to working with the Committee to support the Chief of Naval Operation's shipbuilding plans.

The Marine Corps' contribution to the Nation's forcible entry requirement is a single, simultaneously-employed two Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) assault capability—as part of a seabased Marine Expeditionary Force. Although not a part of the Marine Expeditionary Force Assault Echelon, a third reinforcing MEB is required and will be provided via Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) capabilities. Each MEB assault



echelon requires seventeen amphibious warfare ships—resulting in an overall ship requirement for thirty-four amphibious warfare ships. However, given current fiscal constraints, *the Navy and Marine Corps have agreed to assume greater operational risk by limiting the assault echelon of each MEB by using only fifteen ships per MEB*—in other words, a Battle Force that provides thirty operationally available amphibious warfare ships. In that thirty-ship Battle Force, ten aviation-capable big deck ships (LHA / LHD / LHA(R)) and ten LPD 17 class ships are required to accommodate the MEB's aviation combat element.

In order to meet a thirty-ship availability rate —based on a Chief of Naval Operations-approved maintenance factor of 10%—a minimum of eleven ships of each of the current types of amphibious ships are required—for a total of thirty-three ships. The Navy has concurred with this requirement for thirty-three amphibious warfare ships, which provide the “backbone” of our maritime capability—giving us the ability to meet the demands of harsh environments across the spectrum of conflict.

Amphibious Assault Ship (Replacement) (LHA(R)). The legacy *Tarawa* class amphibious assault ships reach the end of their service life during 2011-2015. The eighth *Wasp* class LHD (multi-purpose amphibious assault ship) is under construction and will replace one *Tarawa* class ship during Fiscal Year 2008. To meet future warfighting requirements and fully capitalize on the capabilities of the MV-22 and Joint Strike Fighter, two LHA(R) class ships with enhanced aviation capabilities will replace the remaining LHA class ships. These ships will provide enhanced hangar and maintenance spaces to support aviation maintenance and increased jet fuel storage and aviation ordnance magazines. We are investigating the feasibility of incorporating the reduced island concept and well-deck capabilities in future, general-purpose assault ship construction.

Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD). The LPD 17 *San Antonio* class of amphibious warfare ships represents the Department of the Navy's commitment to a modern expeditionary power projection fleet that will enable our naval force to operate across the spectrum of warfare. It is imperative that eleven of these ships be built to meet the minimum of ten necessary for the 2.0 MEB assault echelon amphibious lift requirement.

The Navy took delivery of the first LPD 17 in the summer of 2005 and operational evaluation is scheduled for Spring 2008. The LPD 17 class replaces four classes of older ships—LKA, LST, LSD 36, LPD 4—and will have a forty-year expected service life. LPD 17 class ships will play a key role in supporting the ongoing Long War by forward deploying Marines and their equipment to better respond to crises abroad. Its unique design will facilitate expanded force coverage and decreased reaction times of forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Units. In forcible entry operations, the LPD 17 will help maintain a robust surface assault and rapid off-load capability for the Marine Air Ground Task Force and the Nation.

The Maritime Prepositioning Force


Capable of supporting the rapid deployment of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB), the Maritime Prepositioning Force is an important element of our expeditionary warfighting capability. MPF is a proven capability and has been used as a force deployment option in selected contingencies, to close forces on accelerated timelines for major combat operation, and in combination with amphibious forces to rapidly and simultaneously react to crises in more than one theater.

The next and necessary evolution of this program is incorporation of the Maritime Prepositioning Force-Future (MPF(F)) Squadron into the existing MPF Program. MPF(F) is a key enabler for Seabasing and will build on the success of the legacy Maritime Prepositioning Force program. MPF(F) will provide support to a wide range of military operations with improved capabilities such as at-sea arrival and assembly, selective offload of specific mission sets, and long-term, sea-based sustainment. From the sea base, the squadron will be capable of prepositioning a single MEB's critical equipment and sustainment for delivery—without the need for established infrastructure ashore.

While the MPF (F) is not suitable for forcible entry operations, it is critical for the rapid build up and sustainment of additional combat forces once our entry has been achieved by our assault echelon—launched from amphibious assault ships. The MPF(F), along with two legacy MPF squadrons, will give the Marine Corps the capacity to quickly generate three MEBs in support of multiple Combatant Commanders. The MPF(F) squadron composition decision was made in May 2005. That squadron is designed to consist of three aviation-capable big-deck ships, three large medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships, three T-AKE supply ships, three Mobile Landing Platforms, and two dense-packed container ships. All of these will be crewed by civilian mariners and, as stated earlier, are not designed to conduct forcible entry operations. The program is currently in the technology development phase of acquisition, with a Milestone B decision planned in Fiscal Year 2008.

Mobile Landing Platform (MLP). The MLP is perhaps the most flexible platform in the MPF(F) squadron. Designed to be the "pier in the ocean," the MLP is an interface platform for other surface lift ships and vessels. Instead of ships and lighters going to a terminal on shore, they could transfer vehicles and equipment to and from the MLP. The ship is being designed to interface with MPF(F) Large Medium-Speed Roll-on/Roll-off ships through sea state four and accommodate Landing Craft Air Cushion operations in sea state three at a minimum. Additionally other service platforms could leverage the ship as an interface. In concert with the Navy, the MLP capabilities development document was delivered to the Joint Requirements Oversight Counsel in January 2007.

Dry Cargo/Ammunition Ship (T-AKE). The T-AKE is a selectively off-loadable, afloat warehouse ship, which is designed to carry dry, frozen, and chilled cargo; ammunition; and limited cargo fuel. Key holds are reconfigurable for additional flexibility. It has a day/night capable flight deck. These ships can support the dry cargo and compatible ammo requirements of Joint forces and are the same ship class as the Combat Logistics Force T-AKE ships.



Large Medium-Speed Roll-on/Roll-off (LMSR) Ship. The LMSRs were designed to accommodate the Department of Defense’s largest vehicles—such as the Abrams Tanks, Rough Terrain Cargo Handler, and tractor trailers; this capacity is being leveraged to support Marine Corps vehicles and equipment. These ships, modified for MPF(F), will be very large, afloat equipment staging areas with additional capabilities including vehicle maintenance areas, berthing, ammunition breakout areas, two aviation operating spots, underway replenishment equipment, MLP interface, and a 113-ton crane capable of lifting vehicles or shipping containers. Importantly, they will also reduce strategic airlift requirements associated with our fly-in echelon.

Ship-to-Shore Mobility

Historically, Marine Corps amphibious power projection has included a deliberate buildup of combat power ashore; only after establishment of a beachhead could the Marine Air Ground Task Force begin to focus its combat power on the joint force’s operational objective. Advances in mobility, fires, and sustainment capabilities will greatly enhance operations from over the horizon—by both air and surface means—with forces moving rapidly to operational objectives deep inland without stopping to seize, defend, and build up beachheads or landing zones. The ability to project power inland from a mobile sea base has utility across the spectrum of conflict—from humanitarian assistance to major combat operations. The Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, MV-22 Osprey, and CH-53K heavy lift helicopter are critical to achieving necessary capabilities for future expeditionary operations.

High Speed Connectors. High-speed connectors will facilitate sustained seabased operations by expediting force closure and allowing the necessary sustainment for success in the littorals. Coupled with strategic airlift and sealift assets, the Joint High Speed Vessel and Joint Maritime Assault Connector provide an intra-theater capability, which enables rapid closure of Marine forces and sustainment ashore. These platforms will link bases and stations around the world to the sea base and other advanced bases, as well as provide linkages between the sea base and forces operating ashore.

VI. Taking Care of our Marines and our Families

Our most precious asset is the individual Marine. Our Marines and families have been steadfast and faithful in their service to our country, and we have an equally enduring obligation to them. As such, we are committed to putting our family programs on a wartime footing—our Marines and families deserve no less.

Putting Family Readiness Programs on a Wartime Footing

Last year, we directed a rigorous assessment of our family programs and have aggressively moved forward to improve them at every level. We continue our assessments—targeting younger Marines and their families to ensure that we are fully addressing their needs. We request that Congress continue to support these initiatives so that we can advance these reforms to meet the evolving requirements of our warfighters and their families.

Our Marine Corps Family Team Building Program and unit Family Readiness Programs, the centerpiece to our family support capability, was based on a peacetime model and 18-month deployment cycles. It was also largely supported on the backs of our dedicated volunteers; our volunteers have been performing magnificently while shouldering the lion's share of this program—but it is time to dedicate sufficient resources in light of the demands of our wartime operations.

We have recently initiated a sustained funding increase to implement Marine Corps family readiness reforms in Fiscal Year 2008. These reforms include:

- Formalizing the role and relationship of process owners to ensure accountability for family readiness;
- Expanding programs to support the extended family of a Marine (spouse, child, and parents);
- Establishing primary duty billets for Family Readiness Officers at regiment, group, battalion, and squadron levels;
- Improving the quality of life at remote and isolated installations;
- Increasing Marine Corps Family Team Building installation personnel;
- Refocusing and applying technological improvements to our communication network between commanders and families;
- Dedicating appropriate baseline funding to command level Family Readiness Programs; and
- Developing a standardized, high-quality volunteer management and recognition program.

The Marine Corps continues its proud heritage of “taking care of its own” and ensuring family programs sustain our families and our Marines for the Long War.

Casualty Assistance

Your Marines proudly assume the dangerous, but necessary, work of serving our Nation. Some Marines have paid the ultimate price, and we continue to honor them as heroes for their immense contributions to our country. Our casualty assistance program continues to evolve to ensure the families of our fallen Marines are always treated with the utmost compassion, dignity, and honor.

Our trained Casualty Assistance Calls Officers provide the families of our fallen Marines assistance to facilitate their transition through the stages of grief. Last year, Congressional hearings and inquiries into casualty next-of-kin notification processes revealed deficiencies in three key and interrelated casualty processes: command casualty reporting, command casualty inquiry and investigation, and next-of-kin notification. These process failures were unacceptable. Instantaneous with discovery of the process failures, we ordered an investigation by the Inspector General of the Marine Corps and directed remedial action to include issuing new guidance to commanders—reemphasizing investigation and reporting requirements and the importance of tight links between these two systems to properly serve Marines and their families. We will continue to monitor our processes, making every effort to preclude any future errors and to ensure Marines and families receive timely and accurate information relating to their Marine’s death or injury.

Wounded Warrior Regiment

In April 2007, the Wounded Warrior Regiment was activated to achieve unity of command and effort in order to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to Wounded Warrior care. The establishment of the Regiment reflects our deep commitment to the welfare of our wounded, ill, and injured. The mission of the Regiment is to provide and facilitate assistance to wounded, ill, and injured Marines, Sailors attached to or in support of Marine units, and their family members, throughout all phases of recovery. The Regiment provides non-medical case management, benefit information and assistance, and transition support. We use “a single process” that supports active duty, reserve, and separated personnel and is all inclusive for resources, referrals, and information.

There are two Wounded Warrior Battalions headquartered at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and Camp Pendleton, California. The Battalions include liaison teams at major military medical treatment facilities, Department of Veterans Affairs Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers and Marine Corps Base Naval Hospitals. The Battalions work closely with our warfighting units to ensure our wounded, ill and injured are cared for and continue to maintain the proud tradition that “Marines take care of their own.”

The Regiment is constantly assessing how to improve the services it provides to our wounded, ill, and injured. Major initiatives of the Regiment include a Job Transition Cell manned by Marines and representatives of the Departments of Labor and Veteran Affairs. The Regiment has also established a Wounded Warrior Call Center for 24/7 support. The Call Center both receives incoming calls from Marines and family members

who have questions, and makes outreach calls to the almost 9,000 wounded Marines who have left active service. A Charitable Organization Cell was created to facilitate linking additional wounded warrior needs with charitable organizations that can provide the needed support. Additionally, The Regiment has also strengthened its liaison presence at the Department of Veterans Affairs Central Office. These are just some of the initiatives that reflect your Corps' enduring commitment to the well-being of our Marines and Sailors suffering the physical and emotional effects of their sacrifices for our great Nation.

We are at the beginning of a sustained commitment to care and support our wounded, ill and injured. As our Wounded Warrior Program matures, additional requirements will become evident. Your continued support of new legislation is essential to ensure our Wounded Warriors have the resources and opportunities for full and independent lives.

Thank you for your personal and legislative support on behalf of our wounded warriors. Your personal visits to them in the hospital wards where they recover and the bases where they live are sincerely appreciated by them and their families. Your new Wounded Warrior Hiring Initiative to employ wounded warriors in the House and Senate demonstrates your commitment and support of their future well-being. We are grateful to this Congress for the many wounded warrior initiatives in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. This landmark legislation will significantly improve the quality of their lives and demonstrates the enduring gratitude of this Nation for their personal sacrifices. I am hopeful that future initiatives will continue to build upon your great efforts and further benefit the brave men and women, along with their families, who bear the burden of defending this great country.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

With the frequent use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and improved protective measures that reduce mortality rates, more Marines are exposed to possible traumatic brain injuries. As with other poorly understood injuries, there is sometimes a reluctance by individual Marines to seek medical attention at the time of the injury. Education is the best way to reduce this stigma, and it is to be the most effective treatment for those suffering a mild injury. TBI awareness and education is part of pre-deployment and routine training. All Marines are being screened for TBI exposure during the post-deployment phase and those identified as injured receive comprehensive evaluation and treatment. A pilot program for baseline neurocognitive testing is being implemented to improve identification of TBI and maintain individual and unit readiness in the field. The Marine Corps continues to work closely with DoD's Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury to continue to advance our understanding of TBI and improve the care of all Marines.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Marine Corps Training and Education Command, Naval Health Research Center, and others are studying ways to identify risk and protective factors for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and to increase our resilience to stress. By improving the awareness of both individuals and our leaders, we can provide early identification and psychological first aid for those who are stress-injured. Better screening and referral of at-risk Marines are underway via pre- and post-deployment standard health assessments that specifically screen for mental health problems. The Department of Veterans Affairs has established comprehensive guidelines for managing post-traumatic stress, which are available to all services.

The Marine Corps is grateful for the effort Congress has put into making TBI, PTSD, and other-combat-related mental illness issues a top priority. We will continue to do the same so that we can further improve our knowledge and treatment of these disorders.

Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC)

Marine Corps commanders are fully engaged in promoting the psychological health of our Marines, Sailors, and family members. Our commanders bear responsibility for leading and training tough, resilient Marines and Sailors, and for maintaining strong, cohesive units. Unit commanders have the greatest potential for detecting stress occurrences and assessing impact on warfighters and family members. Our leaders establish an environment where it is okay to ask for help and that combat stress is as deserving of the same respect and care as any physical wound of war. With the Navy's medical community, we are expanding our program of embedding mental health professionals in operational units—the Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) program—to directly support all elements of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force. We also continue our collaboration with sister Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Center for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and external agencies to determine best practices to better support Marines and their families.

Family Member Pervasive Developmental Disorders

The effectiveness of Marines and Sailors during deployment is dependent upon the adequacy of support provided to family members at home. Children of Service members with special needs, to include pervasive developmental disorders, have additional medical, educational, and social needs that are challenging to meet even when both parents are available. The TRICARE Enhanced Care Health Option has not been able to provide sufficient support. To address this issue, the Marine Corps is working with the Department of Defense Office of Family Policy Work Group on examining options to expand its Educational & Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS), a program that delivers Early Intervention Services to eligible infants and toddlers in domestic and overseas areas as well as through Medically Related Service programs in Department of Defense schools overseas.

Exceptional Family Member Program (Respite Care)

Parental stress can be heightened for families that are not only impacted by the current operational tempo but are also caring for a child with special needs. To focus on this need, we offer our active duty families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program up to 40 hours of free respite care per month for each exceptional family member. We seek to provide a “continuum of care” for our exceptional family members. In this capacity, we are using our assignment process, working with TRICARE and the Department of the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery to expand access and availability to care, and providing family support programs to ease relocations and ensure quality care transitions.

Water Contamination at Camp Lejeune

Past water contamination at Camp Lejeune has been and continues to be a very important issue for the Marine Corps. Our goal is, using good science, determine whether exposure to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune resulted in any adverse health effects for our Marines, their families, and our civilian workers.

The Marine Corps continues to support the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in their health study, which is estimated to be completed during 2009. With the help of Congress, the highly respected National Academy of Sciences is now helping us develop a way ahead on this difficult issue.

The Marine Corps continues to make progress notifying former residents and workers. We have established a call center and notification registry where the public can provide contact information so that we can keep them apprised of the completion of these health studies.

VII. Beyond the Horizon – Posturing the Marine Corps for the Future

History has proven that we cannot narrowly define the conditions for which our military must be ready. With little warning, our Nation has repeatedly called its Corps front and center. In the southern Pacific after Pearl Harbor, in Korea after the communist invasion in 1950, in the mountains of Afghanistan after 9/11, and southern Asia in the wake of the catastrophic tsunami of 2004—to name a few. These strategic surprises demonstrate the broad range of possibilities for which the Marine Corps must be prepared.

The United States faces a complex mix of states who sponsor terrorism, regional and rising peer competitors, failing states that undermine regional stability, and a variety of violent non-state actors—religious extremists, insurgents, paramilitary forces, pirates, and other criminals—all serving to destabilize legitimate governments and undermine security and stability of the greater global community. We see this global security context as a persistent condition for the foreseeable future.

Our Nation and its international partners are engaged in a global struggle for influence at the same time our access to many areas is acutely challenged—diplomatically, militarily, and geographically. In the past, the United States has maintained large forces on a significant number of permanent bases beyond our shores. Today, however, we have far fewer installations overseas. When conflict is imminent or crises occur, which may require land-based forces, we must conduct extensive diplomatic negotiations to acquire basing rights. Because of local and regional political, social, or economic pressures, even countries friendly to the United States decline to host or place conditional restrictions on basing U.S. forces. Furthermore, proliferation of anti-access technology among state and non-state actors further diminishes access opportunities.

Our national interests increasingly require us to operate in remote, developing regions of the world where infrastructure is either insufficient or rendered useless by natural disasters. The growing trend of violent, transnational extremism is especially prevalent in many of these remote areas. In addition to ethnic and religious intolerance, many developing regions are troubled with economic challenges and infectious diseases. These problems are especially severe in the densely populated urban centers common to the world's littorals, resulting in discontented populations ripe for exploitation by extremist ideologues and terrorist networks. We estimate that by the 2035 timeframe, more than 75% of the world's population will live within just 120 miles of the ocean; alternative energy sources will not be mature, so industrial and, increasingly, developing nations will depend on the free flow of oil and natural gas. Fresh water will be as equally important as petroleum products; during the 20th century, while the global population increased 300%, the demand for water increased 600%. Demographics and the aging of the population in industrial countries, accompanied by a youth bulge in developing countries, will literally change the face of the world as we know it. The U.S. technological advantage, economic power, and military might still exceed that of other nations, but will not be nearly as dominant.

Given these strategic conditions, the requirement for maritime forces to project U.S. power and influence has increased—and will continue to increase. With its inherent advantages as a seabased and expeditionary force, the Marine Corps can quickly reach key areas of the globe in spite of challenges to U.S. access. The Marine Corps and its naval partners will expand the application of seapower across an even wider range of operations to promote greater global security, stability, and trust—key objectives for winning the Long War. Our seabased posture will allow us to continue to conduct “Phase 0” operations with a variety of allies and partners around the world to ease sources of discontent and deter conflict. We must increase our capacity for these operations without forfeiting our warfighting prowess in the event of a major regional conflict. As a forward-deployed force, we are able to achieve familiarity with various environments, as well as behavioral patterns of regional actors—contributing to our significant advantage in speed and flexibility.

Recently combat-tested in the Middle East and historically engaged in the Pacific, the Marine Corps will seek to further enhance its operational capabilities in the Pacific theater. Some areas like Africa offer unique challenges and opportunities for significant U.S. engagement. The sheer breadth and depth of that great continent present their own challenges, but given the operational flexibility afforded by Seabasing and the extended reach of the MV-22 and KC-130J, the future bodes well for the ability of dispersed units of Marines—with interagency partners—to extend our partnerships within the continent of Africa.

Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF)

The linchpin of future Marine efforts to support the engagement requirements of combatant commanders to build partnership capacity will be the Security Cooperation Marine Air Ground Task Force. Similar to a Marine Expeditionary Unit but regionally-focused and task organized for security cooperation, Security Cooperation MAGTFs will provide training and assistance to partner nations—shaping the environment and deterring irregular adversaries.

The units comprising the Security Cooperation MAGTF are general purpose forces, which will maintain a foundation of excellence in combined arms and the full range of military operations. Additional training in culture, language, and foreign internal defense will further prepare these units for the unique tasks needed to train foreign militaries. Able to aggregate and dis-aggregate based on mission requirements, elements of the Security Cooperation MAGTFs will be capable of operating for sustained periods and will help prepare the militaries of partner nations to disrupt irregular adversaries and reduce the requirement for U.S. forces to be committed to these regions.

Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI) / Guam

Our recent force posture agreement reached under the auspices of the Defense Policy Review Initiative with Japan is facilitating an opportunity to more effectively employ Marine Corps forces while mitigating the effects of encroachment around United States facilities in Japan. The most significant DPRI action is completion of the Futenma Replacement Facility on Okinawa. Its completion is a prerequisite for realignment of Marine units north of Kadena Air Force Base on Okinawa, shifting KC-130s from Futenma to Iwakuni, Japan, and movement of approximately 8,000 Marines and their family members from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam. The Government of Japan is prepared to bear much of the cost associated with the planned changes, but there are still significant remaining military construction and other infrastructure needs that require United States financial support. For the past two years, the Marine Corps has worked with numerous stakeholders to shape the eventual basing of forces onto Guam. The Department of Navy-led Joint Guam Program Office is leading the detailed facility-level planning effort to support the force buildup on Guam. The Marine Corps is working with Joint Guam Program Office, the Secretary of the Navy, and Commander, United States Pacific Command to ensure plans meet operational requirements.

Law of the Sea Convention

To be able to maneuver from the seas in a timely and reliable manner, and in concert with the U.S. Navy, we support joining the Law of the Sea Convention. Joining the Convention will best preserve the navigation and overflight rights that we need to reliably maneuver and project power from the sea.

The Future of Training and Education

With Marine forces so heavily engaged in counterinsurgency operations, we will have to take extraordinary steps to retain the ability to serve as the Nation's shock troops in major combat operations. Continued congressional support of our training and education programs will enable us to remain faithful to our enduring mission: To be where the country needs us, when she needs us, and to prevail over whatever challenges we face.

The Long War requires a multi-dimensional force that is well trained and educated for employment in all forms of warfare. Historically, our Corps has produced respected leaders who have demonstrated intellectual agility in warfighting. Our current deployment tempo increasingly places our Professional Military Education (PME) programs at risk. No level of risk is acceptable if it threatens the steady flow of thinkers, planners, and aggressive commanders who can execute effectively across the entire spectrum of operations.

Marine Corps University (MCU). We have made substantial improvements in our Officer and Enlisted Professional Military Education (PME) programs and have significant improvements planned for the future. Marine Corps War College was the first senior Service college to be certified as Joint PME II and will soon undergo accreditation as

part of the process for joint education accreditation by the Joint Staff. The Command and Staff resident and non-resident programs are scheduled for Joint PME I re-accreditation in September 2008. We have integrated irregular warfare instruction throughout all levels of PME; at the same time, balance between irregular and conventional warfare has been maintained so as not to lose sight of our essential core competencies, including amphibious operations. Additionally, MCU has led the way for integration of culture and language by continually refining their curricula to provide proper balance among PME, culture, and language.

Last year we conducted a comprehensive assessment of the health of PME. The assessment examined six areas: students, curriculum, educational programs, staff, infrastructure, and policy. We are working diligently to improve our information technology and infrastructure by developing a facility master plan to accommodate needed growth. We must develop an aggressive plan and commit resources for additional faculty, facilities, and resources. The assessment was informative—we have world-class students, curricula, and faculty as evidenced by Marines' performance on today's battlefields. With continued Congressional support, we can build our information technology and facility structure to match.

Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned. Our Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned applies lessons from operational experiences as well as those of the Joint Staff, other Services, and Joint Forces Command to guide efforts for "fine tuning" and transforming our force. This rapid, continuous process ensures the latest enemy and friendly tactics, techniques, and procedures are used in training and are part of the decision-making for institutional changes. In 2007, as result of these lessons learned, the Marine Corps implemented changes in pre-deployment training in such areas as detention operations; transition teams; interagency coordination of stability, support, transition, and reconstruction operations; irregular warfare; and the role of forensics in counterinsurgency operations.

Center for Irregular Warfare. In 2007, we established the Center for Irregular Warfare as the primary Marine Corps agency for identifying, coordinating, and implementing irregular warfare capability initiatives. The Center reaches out through the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) and Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC) to other military and civilian agencies. Last year, the CAOCL expanded beyond pre-deployment unit training by offering operational culture, regional studies, and limited language courses for officer professional military education programs. Thus far, approximately 2,100 new lieutenants have been assigned regions for career long-term study through the regional learning concept, which will be expanded this year to include sergeants, staff sergeants, and captains. Both officer and enlisted Marines will receive operational culture education throughout their careers. We plan to have Language Learning Resource Centers at the eight largest Marine Corps bases and stations to provide local, on-call, operational language training. Congressional support, to include recent supplemental funding, has been invaluable.

Since early 2006, our SCETC formalized our military advisor training process and trained over thirty transition teams Fiscal Year 2007. In Fiscal Year 2008, the SCETC is scheduled to train over 100 teams (over 2,000 Marine advisors) as well as stand up a Marine

Corps Training Advisory Group to manage the global sourcing of future transition and security cooperation teams.

Foreign Area Officers. The Marine Corps has begun an expansion of its Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program in response to the wide-spread demand for language and cultural expertise for worldwide service with the Defense Attaché System and combined, joint, and Service headquarters. As a result, the training of Marine FAOs will more than double in the near term. In addition to our traditional emphasis on Arabic, Russian, and Chinese, FAOs selected this year will learn more than a dozen different foreign languages, including Pashto, Hindi, Thai, French, and Indonesian.

Training Marine Air Ground Task Forces

Operations in support of the Long War have significantly increased our training requirements. To meet deployment requirements and remain skilled in the full spectrum of operations, Marines must now train to a broader range of skills. However, due to high operational tempo, we face ever-decreasing timetables for Marines to achieve mastery of these skills. Our first major initiative to maximize effective use of limited time for training was the establishment of a standardized and well-defined Pre-deployment Training Program. Subsequently, we have instituted two additional training efforts: the Marine Combat Operations Training Group and the Infantry Battalion Enhancement Period Program.

Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group (MCTOG). We recently established the MCTOG to provide standardized training and instructor qualifications for ground combat elements, similar to our exceptionally successful Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course in Yuma, Arizona. The MCTOG is developing and implementing a Ground Combat Element Operations and Tactics Training Program to provide advanced training in MAGTF operations, combined arms training, and unit training management and readiness at the battalion and regimental levels. We will improve unit preparation and performance by:

- Providing focused, advanced instruction for key battalion and regimental staff personnel, and
- By assisting with the identification and vetting training requirements and deficiencies for our ground combat elements.

Located at Twentynine Palms MAGTF Training Center, the MCTOG will reach an Initial Operating Capability by Spring 2008 and a Full Operating Capability by Spring 2009.

Marine Aviation Training Systems Program (ATS). Marine Aviation, through Aviation Training Systems (ATS), is pursuing the development of fully integrated training systems at the post-accession aviation officer and enlisted level, to greatly enhance operational readiness, improved safety through greater standardization, and to significantly reduce the life cycle cost of maintaining and sustaining aircraft. ATS will plan, execute, and manage Marine Aviation training to achieve individual and unit combat readiness through standardized training across all aviation core competencies.

29 Palms Land Expansion. The Marine Corps currently lacks a comprehensive training capability to exercise all elements of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) in an environment that replicates operational conditions with our current equipment—as our new weapons systems have greatly increased ranges over legacy systems. As a result, we are conducting planning studies for expansion of our range complex at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California. Implementing this action will involve acquiring land and seeking assignment of airspace by the Federal Aviation Administration in support of large-scale MAGTF live fire and maneuver training. This will give us the maneuver space to simultaneously train three to four battalions in the range complex and train with our current equipment. Our proposed complex will further facilitate the use of the Western Range Training Complex and lead to the capability for future large-scale MAGTF, Coalition, and Joint National Training Center training.

Modernization of Training Ranges. In 2001, we activated a Range & Training Area Management Division, and in 2004, we began a comprehensive investment program to sustain, upgrade, and modernize our training infrastructure. This modernization effort provides tools for better planning and execution of live training. The four principles of our program are:

- Preserve and enhance our live-fire combined arms training ranges. The full development of our doctrine and the integrated employment of air and ground weapons will continue to require access to the volume of land and air space available at these larger installations.
- Recapture the unit-training capabilities of the Nation’s two premier littoral training areas, Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton. The transition of expeditionary combat power from sea to shore remains among the most challenging of military tasks, and we must reorient and update our training capabilities.
- Provide timely and objective feedback to Marines who are training. Proficiency with individual weapons and in combined-arms requires that we provide venues that have the air and land space to allow realistic employment and the instrumentation and targetry to provide objective, actionable feedback.
- Ensure our complexes are capable of supporting joint forces. Common range infrastructure and systems architecture to support the joint national training capability are requirements of our modernization program.
- The range modernization program is a program of record and has successfully programmed the resources to continue operating and maintaining the many investments made with supplemental and congressional-add funds.

Core Values and Ethics Training

As part of our ethos, we continually seek ways to improve ethical decision-making at all levels. In 2007, we implemented the following initiatives to strengthen our Core Values training:

- Tripled the amount of time Drill Instructor and recruits conduct “foot locker talks” on values;
- Institutionalizing habits of thought for all Marines operating in counterinsurgencies, the message of the importance of ethical conduct in battle, and how to be an ethical warrior is being strengthened and re-emphasized at all levels of the Marine Corps;
- Published pocket-sized *Law of War, Rules of Engagement, and Escalation of Force* guides;
- Increased instruction at our Commander's Course on command climate and the commander's role in cultivating battlefield ethics, accountability, and responsibility; and
- Educated junior Marines on the “strategic corporal” and the positive or negative influence they can have; and
- Re-invigorated the Values component of our Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, which teaches Core Values and presents ethical scenarios pertaining to restraint and proper escalation of force as the foundation of its curriculum.

We imbue our Marines with the mindset that “wherever we go, everyone is safer because a U.S. Marine is there.”

VIII. Conclusion

The Marine Corps continues to create a multi-capable force for our Nation—not only for the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also for subsequent campaigns of the Long War. We are committed to ensuring we remain where our country needs us, when she needs us, and to prevail over whatever challenges we face. Your continued support has been critical to our readiness for today and adaptation for tomorrow. I promise you that the Corps understands the value of each dollar provided and will continue to provide maximum return for every dollar spent.

Perhaps most importantly to keep in mind as we develop our force for the future, everything we read about the future indicates that well-trained, well-led human beings with a capacity to absorb information and rapidly react to their environment have a tremendous asymmetric advantage over an adversary. Ladies and gentlemen, that advantage goes to us. Our young Marines are courageous, willing to make sacrifices and, as evidenced by our progress in Al-Anbar, capable of operating in complex environments. Quiet in their duty yet determined in their approach, they are telling us loud and clear that wherever there is a job to be done, they will shoulder that mission with enthusiasm. On behalf of your Marines, I extend great appreciation for your support thus far and thank you in advance for your ongoing efforts to support our brave service men and women in harm's way.

