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House Armed Services Committee

STATEMENT OF

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ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

9 APRIL 2008

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I. Introduction

Chairman Skelton, Congressman Hunter, and distinguished Members of the Committee; on behalf of your Marine Corps, I would like to thank you for your generous and sustained support and look forward to this opportunity to discuss the readiness of your Marine Corps. Your Marines know that the people of the United States and their Government are behind them, and your support has been exceptional.

America's Marine Corps is fully engaged in the Long War. Around the globe, they are performing magnificently under challenging and dangerous conditions, and despite a high operational tempo, the morale and resiliency of your Marines have never been higher. They believe in what they are doing, and know that their sacrifices are making a positive difference everyday. We are currently meeting all operational requirements with ready, mission-capable forces, but sustained combat operations and our high operational tempo are taking a toll on our warriors, equipment, and full spectrum training readiness, as well as their families. To address these challenges we need your continued support to maintain current capabilities, reset the force, and modernize to prepare for future national security challenges. With your continuing support, we will remain the Nations' premiere expeditionary force in readiness—most ready when the Nation is least ready.

II. Stress on the Force—USMC Commitments in the Long War

Our operational tempo and the global demand for Marine forces in support of the Long War remain high. Today, nearly 32,000 Marines are deployed worldwide. Over 25,000 Marines continue to support operations in Iraq, where we are having extraordinary success in transitioning responsibility to Iraqi Security Forces and disrupting insurgent activities—resulting in dramatically improved security throughout Al Anbar province.

Elements of Marine Corps Forces Special Operation Command continue to serve afloat with our Marine Expeditionary Units, and provide foreign military training teams to partner-nation special operations forces—most recently in Mauritania. Also serving ashore, Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command continues to conduct combat operations with Afghan, US, and allied Special Forces units in Afghanistan. Additionally, this month the Marine Corps will deploy approximately 3,400 additional Marines to Afghanistan to conduct combat

operations against resurgent Taliban forces, and to help build capacity within the Afghan National Security Forces.

This past year, Marine forces participated in over sixty Theater Security Cooperation events, ranging from small Mobile Training Teams in Central America to Marine Expeditionary Unit exercises in Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific. Additionally, the Marine Corps conducted civil-military and humanitarian assistance operations including New Horizons events in Nicaragua, land mine removal training in Azerbaijan, fire fighting support in Southern California, and cyclone disaster relief in Bangladesh.

Across the globe, Marine Security Guard forces provide crucial support at US embassies from Amman to Zagreb. They perform their duties superbly, as demonstrated in Belgrade. Our Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Teams (FAST) provide a forward deployed expeditionary capability in support of the Combatant Commanders and their Naval Component Commanders by protecting our personnel and key infrastructure. They recently provided a quick reaction force in support of President Bush's trip to Africa.

Due to the continued high demand for Marine forces, our non-deployed units are consistently stressed by the requirement to send their leadership personnel as individual augmentees for transition teams, joint headquarters, and other requirements in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF). While these Marine leaders are enhancing the capabilities of Iraqi and Afghan security forces, and performing needed functions with our deployed joint headquarters, their extended absence from our non-deployed forces leave their units short of the key personnel needed to effectively train, develop unit cohesion, and lead.

Contributing to the stress on our force is the short dwell time between deployments and a necessarily intense focus on counter-insurgency operations. Deploying units conduct a rigorous pre-deployment training program focused heavily on the Iraq and Afghanistan counterinsurgency missions. The short dwell time available at home does not allow our units the time to train to the full spectrum of missions needed to be expeditiously responsive for other contingencies. This short dwell time and heavy training focus on counterinsurgency limit the ability to develop and maintain proficiency in core competencies such as combined arms and amphibious operations. Additionally, the need for units such as artillery, mechanized maneuver and air defense units to train and conduct "in lieu of missions" (such as security, military policing, and civil affairs)

degrades the readiness of those units to conduct their regular primary mission. While the result is a Marine Corps well trained for ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is significant risk in our degraded ability to support other operations, including major combat operations where those primary mission, full spectrum capabilities would be required.

The sustained, high operational tempo of the past several years continues to take its toll on our equipment readiness. In order to ensure that our forward deployed forces are sufficiently equipped, we have cross-leveled equipment from our non-deployed units, strategic programs, and in-stores assets. This cross leveling has degraded our non-deployed units' ability to train for and conduct additional contingency operations.

The net effect of focusing our equipment and personnel priorities on forward deployed units, coupled with a heavy training focus on counterinsurgency operations, is that our ability is very limited to rapidly provide ready forces to conduct other small or large scale operations as well as Theater Engagement, Theater Security Cooperation, and Humanitarian Assistance, missions. Currently, units require additional time to form, train, and equip their forces before deploying in support of contingency operations. Such delay limits effective early options for the Commander in Chief and increases the likelihood of US casualties.

As we continue the Long War, we must maintain current capabilities while we simultaneously prepare for the challenges of the future. The Marine Corps will do this by: right-sizing the force; resetting the force; taking care of our warriors and their families; and modernizing the Marine Corps for the future.

III. Right-sizing the Marine Corps

Today, your active component Marine Corps end strength is approximately 188,000 Marines. As the first step towards minimizing stress on our force and meeting the demands of the Long War, the Marine Corps will grow its active component personnel end strength to 202,000 Marines by 2011. This increase in structure will provide the capabilities for three balanced Marine Expeditionary Forces—each possessing significant ground, aviation, combat logistics, and command and control capability—capable of executing full spectrum operations anywhere in the world. Our end-strength growth is designed to move the unit deployment-to-dwell time ratio, currently near 1:1 for most units, to a more acceptable ratio of 1:2. This

increased dwell time will provide units with additional time to conduct full spectrum training, and significantly reduce the strain on Marines and their families. Our increase in training capacity will be gradual, as we stand up new units, add end strength, and grow our mid-grade enlisted and officer leadership. These are all vital parts of our growth that cannot be developed overnight.

Although growing our force structure presents challenges, we are progressing well. Last year we stood up two infantry battalions and added capacity to our combat engineer battalions and air naval gunfire liaison companies. This year we will add a third infantry battalion, and increase capacity in much needed skill sets including intelligence, communication, civil affairs, military police, unmanned aerial vehicle, helicopter, air command and control, combat service support, and explosive ordnance disposal. Additionally, our growth in Fiscal Year 2008 will add 200 Marines to the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, and nearly 500 to our Training and Education Command.

a. Growing the Force: 202K Marines

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

Recruiting. A vital factor in sustaining our force and meeting end strength goals is the recruitment of qualified young men and women with the right character, commitment, and drive to become Marines. With over 70% of our end strength increase comprised of Marines on their first enlistment, our recruiting efforts are a critical part of our overall growth. We continue to recruit the best of America's young men and women into our ranks. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Marine Corps added 5000 Marines to our total authorized end-strength, and achieved over 100% of the Active Component accession goal necessary to grow the force. We also met 100% of our reserve recruiting goals. We met these goals while maintaining the high quality standards the American people expect of their Marines. Over 95% of our accessions were high school graduates (DoD standard is 90%), and over 66% were in the upper mental group testing categories (DoD standard is 60%). In fact, we believe these high standards make the Marine Corps more attractive to those considering service in the armed forces in a time of war.

Furthermore, there is a direct correlation between the quality of youth today and the long term effects it has on reducing attrition at the recruit depots, increasing retention, and improving readiness in the operating forces.

We know that active and reserve recruiting will remain challenging particularly given the increased accession requirements needed to meet our end strength growth. To succeed, we need the continuing support of Congress to sustain our existing programs and the incentives essential to achieving our recruiting mission.

Retention. Retention is the other important part of building and sustaining the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps achieved unprecedented numbers of reenlistments in both the first term and career force in Fiscal Year 2007; a strong indicator of our force's high morale. The expanded reenlistment goals, 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. This achievement enabled us to reach the first end strength increase milestone of 184,000 while maintaining our high quality standards. In fact, a recent Center for Naval Analysis study showed that the quality of our first term force has improved steadily since Fiscal Year 2000. The percentage of Marines that were high school graduates, scored in the top 50th percentile of the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), and achieved a first class physical fitness test score, increased from 40% in Fiscal Year 2000 to 51% in Fiscal Year 2007.

For Fiscal Year 2008, our retention goals are even more aggressive—17,631 compared to 16,098 in Fiscal Year 2007—but we fully expect to meet them. Our continuing success will be attributable to two 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... and they know they are winning. Second, they understand our culture is one that rewards proven performance—our Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRB) are designed to retain top quality Marines that possess the most relevant skill sets.

Our Marines' leadership and technical skills make them extraordinarily marketable to lucrative civilian employment opportunities. To retain our outstanding Marines, we need Congress' support for SRB funding. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Marine Corps spent approximately \$460M in SRB and Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) to help reach our end strength goal. With a reenlistment requirement of 17,631 in Fiscal Year 2008, the Marine Corps expects to spend

\$536M in reenlistment incentives. 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.

Reserve Component End Strength. Our operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are a Total Force effort, which includes the superb performance by Marine Reserve forces. The Marine Corps goal is to obtain a 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio within our Reserve Component. As our active force increases in size, the current, necessary reliance on our Reserve forces will decrease—helping us achieve the desired deployment-to-dwell ratio within our current authorized end strength of 39,600 Selected Marine Corps Reserves. As with every organization within the Marine Corps, we consistently review the make-up and structure of our Reserve component to ensure the right capabilities reside within the Marine Forces Reserve units and the 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 returned 3,096 Marines to the operating force through military-to-civilian conversions. We have only 27 new conversions scheduled for Fiscal Year 2008, but plans are underway to convert approximately 900 military police billets to civilian security personnel over the next four years. We will continue to pursue sensible conversions that will help improve unit personnel readiness and aid in our deployment-to-dwell ratio goals for the force.

b. Growing the Force: Warfighting Investment

Close cooperation between the Marine Corps and our industry partners enabled an accurate assessment of the materiel requirements to grow our force. This cooperation was fundamental to providing the units created in Fiscal Year 2007 with the equipment they needed to enter their pre-deployment training cycle and to be prepared to deploy in this fiscal year. Prioritization of equipment levels and the redistribution of our strategic stocks also played a large role in the preparation of these units. With the Congress' continued support, the numerous equipment contracts required to support our growth to 202,000 Marines were met during Fiscal Year 2007 and will be met through Fiscal Year 2008 and beyond.

The Commandant recently directed a comprehensive Marine Corps-wide Tables of Equipment (T/E) review. The changing security environment and lessons learned by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have made it clear that many of our units T/E do not necessarily reflect the way we fight today, or will fight in the future. It will take three to four years to work through these equipping challenges and return our total force equipment readiness to the levels which preceded OIF/OEF, but it is a necessary step. The new T/E will support enhanced mobility, lethality, and command and control across a dispersed battlefield for the entire operating force—active and reserve components—and will ensure that our Marines remain capable of meeting both the traditional and irregular warfighting requirements of future conflicts.

c. Growing the Force: Infrastructure Investment

Military construction is an essential component supporting the Marine Corps growth to 202,000 Marines by FY 2011. 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. For single Marines, housing is our top military construction focus. Barracks are a significant quality of life element for our single Marines, but funding shortages and competing priorities over the past several decades forestalled new construction projects. We are now committed to providing adequate billeting for all of our unmarried, junior enlisted and non-commissioned officers by 2012—and for our increased end strength by 2014. To do that, we doubled our bachelor housing funding request from Fiscal Year 2007 to 2008; with more than triple the 2008 amount in Fiscal Year 2009. We are also committed to funding the replacement of barracks furnishings on a seven-year cycle and prioritizing barracks repair projects to preempt repair backlogs.

Public Private Venture (PPV) Housing. For married Marines, the housing privatization authorities are integral to our efforts to accommodate both current housing requirements and those resulting from our planned force structure 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 intend to continue our PPV efforts to address current inventory deficiencies in adequate housing units, as well as the housing deficit being created by the increase in end strength to 202,000. Presently, 99.2% of our US inventory is privatized and we will have 99.7% of the inventory privatized by the end of Fiscal Year 2013. 96% of our worldwide inventory is privatized and we will have privatized 97% of this inventory by this time next year. We don't expect to privatize more than 97% of the worldwide inventory.

Training Capacity. As part of our holistic growth plan, we are increasing training capacity and reinvigorating our pre-deployment training program to provide support to all elements of the MAGTF across the full spectrum of potential missions. In order to accomplish this we are conducting planning studies into an expansion of our range complex at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California in order to support large-scale MAGTF live fire and maneuver training. Additionally, in accordance with the Secretary of Defense's Security Cooperation guidance, we are developing 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 repositioning operations. Finally, our budget request supports our training and education programs and training ranges to accommodate the 27,000 Marine Corps end strength increase.

Infrastructure Energy Considerations. While we continue to concentrate on the many aforementioned programs, we have not lost our focus on efforts to reduce energy consumption at our installations. We have embraced recent legislative and Presidential mandates to reduce energy consumption and set into place several programs to meet the new energy reduction requirements. Since the new baseline year of 2003, the Marine Corps has reduced its annual energy consumption rate from an overall level of 98.7 Million British Thermal Units (MBTUs) per Thousand Square Feet (KSF) to a present level of 93.22 MBTU per KSF, equating to an estimated utilities cost avoidance of \$10.7 million in Fiscal Year 2007. For energy projects awarded since 2003, the average project payback period is 9.9 years.

We are focusing on our mandate to reduce consumption by a minimum of 3% per year through 2015. To achieve this, \$4 million in Fiscal Year 2008 and \$29 million in Fiscal Year

2009 are programmed to support energy projects that have payback periods of less than 15 years (such as solar roofs, replacement of older heating and air conditioning units with higher efficiency models, and hiring supplemental energy contractor staff whose employment is dependant on lowering installation energy consumption and costs). We also continue to focus on contractor financed energy programs that have been made available through the renewed Energy Savings Performance Contract legislation. Any additional Congressional funding support for the DoD MILCON Energy Conservation Improvement Program (ECIP) would also directly add to our energy reduction efforts. Noteworthy projects which the Marine Corps recently completed or awarded are: the installation of one of DoD's largest solar array field (1 megawatt, payback of 9.9 years with an annual cost avoidance of \$392,518) at MCAGCC Twenty Nine Palms; contract award of a 1.25 megawatt wind turbine (payback of approximately 11 years and an annual cost avoidance of \$493,727) at MCLB Barstow; and lighting and air conditioning upgrades at MCB Hawaii (payback of 11.8 years with an annual cost avoidance of \$1,089,600).

IV. Resetting the Force

For over five years now, the Marine Corps has been involved in intense combat operations resulting in the heavy use and the loss of our combat equipment. The demands of the conflict in Iraq and the greater Global War on Terror increased our equipment maintenance and replacement costs far beyond what was made available in our baseline budget. We are very thankful that Congress has been extremely supportive in providing required GWOT funding to continue our reset efforts.

a. Reset Funding

Reset funds replenish the equipment needed to keep the Marine Corps responsive to today's 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 with the most up-to-date technology. With Congress' help over the last three years, we have begun to make significant progress in drawing down our reset requirements. To date, Congress provided \$10.9 billion in supplemental funding towards our

estimated current total reset the force requirement of \$15.6 billion. The timely appropriation of procurement funds in the Title IX funds in Fiscal Year 2007 allowed us an early start on this year's procurement actions that will ultimately provide new and improved equipment to our Marines. We also look forward to receiving the \$1.3 billion reset funding remaining in the Fiscal Year 2008 GWOT. This funding is critical to our continued progress with resetting the force. As the Long War evolves, we will continue to refine and assess our reset costs.

b. Ground Equipment Readiness

Due to Congress' continuing support our deployed forces have the equipment they need and deserve. Our deployed warfighters are our number one priority and receive our highest equipping priority. Deployed units are reporting the highest readiness levels of equipment supply and condition. Sustaining high deployed equipment readiness has been a total force effort and is not without long term ramifications and consequences. Approximately 26% of all Marine Corps ground equipment and nearly 25% of our active duty aviation ground equipment are engaged overseas. Most of this equipment is not rotating out of theater at the conclusion of each force rotation; it remains in combat, often used on a near-continuous basis, at a pace that far exceeds normal peacetime usage. While the vast majority of our equipment passed the test of sustained combat operations, it is being subjected to more than a lifetime's worth of wear and tear stemming from increased vehicle mileage, operating hours, and exposure to harsh environmental conditions—accelerating both equipment age and maintenance requirements.

For example, in OIF, 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. Additionally, the IED threat forced us to modify vehicles with heavy armor plating, which further accelerated the wear and tear on these assets. These factors, coupled with the operational requirement to keep equipment in theater without major depot repair, significantly decreased the projected lifespan of this equipment. As a result, we can expect higher than anticipated reset costs due to the need to replace assets that are not economically repairable. Depot level maintenance requirements for the repairable equipment will continue beyond the conclusion of hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Equipment aging adds to the readiness challenge as well. As equipment ages, more time, dollars, and effort are expended repairing legacy equipment. Maintaining optimal readiness, while continuing to support OIF, OEF, and other contingencies, will require additional resources for maintenance as well as for the replacement of equipment.

To support deployed Marines, we drew additional equipment from our Maritime Prepositioning Ships, prepositioned stores in Norway, and also retained equipment in theater from units that rotate back to the United States. The operational materiel impacts of these efforts have been outstanding. The average mission capable rates of our deployed forces' ground equipment remain above 90% — but achieving this operational availability was not without cost.

The cost has been a decrease in non-deployed unit readiness. Because of funding lags and long lead times for production, the fielding of new equipment for the operating forces has lagged needs. As a result, equipment across the Marine Corps is continuously cross-leveled to ensure units preparing to deploy have sufficient equipment to conduct our rigorous pre-deployment training programs. This focus on “next-to-deploy” units for the distribution of equipment has left many non-deployed units with insufficient equipment to effectively train for the full breadth of possible contingencies. The timely delivery of replacement equipment is crucial to sustaining the high readiness rates for the Marines in theater and improving readiness of the forces here at home. While the Congress provided the funding requested to maintain our equipment readiness and grow the force, much of this equipment is still many months away from delivery.

c. Aviation Equipment Readiness

Similar to our ground equipment, the operational demands and harsh environments of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Horn of Africa taxed our aging fleet of aircraft. Our aircraft are flying at two to three times their designed utilization rates (Figure 1) to support our Marines, sister Services, and coalition partners.

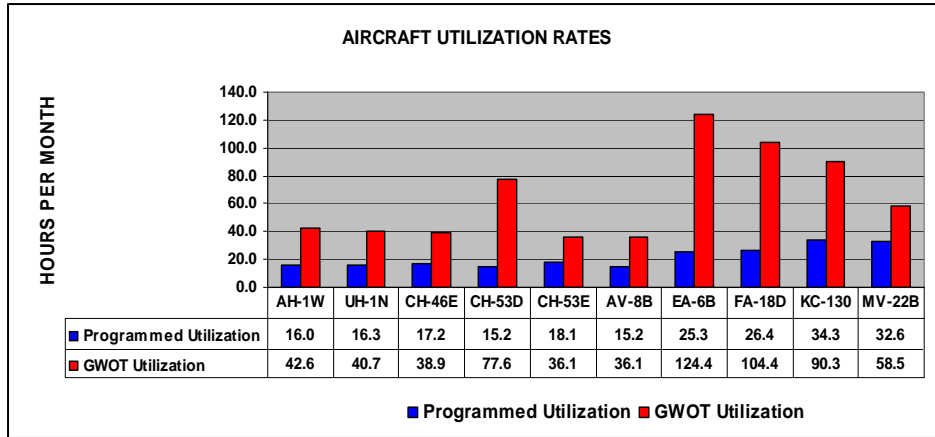


Figure 1

Despite this unprecedented use, our maintenance and support personnel sustained a 79% aviation mission-capable rate for deployed Marine aircraft over the past twelve months.

Maintaining the readiness of these aviation assets, while preparing aircrews 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 home squadrons took significant cuts in aircraft and spare parts—resulting in a 30% decrease in the number of non-deployed units that are deployment capable over the last five years. Reset programs have helped us mitigate degradation of our aircraft materiel readiness through aircraft modifications, proactive inspections, and additional maintenance actions. These efforts successfully bolstered aircraft reliability, sustainability, and survivability. Again, similar to our ground equipment, additional requirements for depot level maintenance for airframes, engines, weapons, and support equipment will continue well beyond the conclusion of hostilities. Because we are simply running short of aircraft on our flight lines due to age, peacetime attrition, and wartime losses, continued funding support for our essential programs to modernize our aircraft fleet is critically needed.

d. Pre-positioning Equipment and Stores

Comprised of three Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons and other strategic equipment stocks in Norway, the Marine Corps prepositioning programs are a critical part of our ability to respond to contingency operations and mitigate risk for the Nation. Targeted withdrawal of

equipment from our strategic stocks, along with cross-leveling of equipment in non-deployed units, has been a key element in supporting combat operations. Prepositioned equipment withdrawals have provided the necessary equipment in the near term, while we follow with the contracting and acquisition of new equipment. The Congress has generously supported our need to reset shortfalls within our strategic programs.

Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF). We used our MPF assets heavily in support of GWOT requirements. Eleven vessels supported the initial introduction of forces in Iraq in 2003. In February 2004, MPSRON-2 supported the reintroduction of Marine Forces into Iraq. The bulk of that equipment remains in Iraq supporting your Marines. Equipment was removed from MPSRON-1 in Fiscal Year 2007 to support the end strength growth of the Marine Corps to 202K Marines. This decision reduced readiness of the MPF, but it was the best solution to meet our demand in advance of new equipment deliveries from industry. MPSRON-1 will deploy with 80% of its prepositioned equipment and 100% of its stocks in June 2008, and will begin full reconstitution in June 2010 during its next scheduled maintenance cycle. MPSRON-2 was reconstituted to the greatest extent possible and returned to service with roughly 50% of its prepositioned equipment set. Equipment is being staged at Blount Island Command to support the reconstitution of MPSRON-2 during maintenance cycle 9 (occurring May 08 through June 09). While industry is responding to our funded demand for equipment, the window of opportunity when we can influence a ship's load during maintenance cycles is very short. Of course, we continue to balance the demands to reconstitute our MPF with the requirements to equip our growing force and deploying Marines.

Prepositioning readiness was impacted by changing the equipment needed to react to an adaptive enemy. To better protect our forward deployed Marines and Sailors, we are integrating protected vehicles into our prepositioning programs. The integrated armor on our trucks and engineer equipment is impacting the amount of equipment our ships can carry, due to their increased size and weight. To offset the loss in equipment stowage, we are working with the Navy to incorporate newer, more flexible ship platforms from the existing Military Sealift Command fleet to replace aging legacy Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS).

We seek to incorporate three of the Military Sealift Command's nineteen, large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships (LMSR) as replacements for five of our older leased platforms. The

LMSRs are U.S. owned and significantly expand MPF flexibility. These vessels provide a stability that new leasing laws preclude, while allowing the Marine Corps to reconstitute and optimize MPF to meet combatant commander requirements.

Marine Corps Prepositioning Program – Norway (MCPN). In addition to our afloat prepositioning program, equipment from Marine Corps Prepositioning Program – Norway (MCPN) is used in support of Long War operations. Attainment for major end items within MCPN is 46 %, an increase from 38% in our last report. The Marine Corps will reset MCPN in concert with our other operational priorities.

e. Depot Maintenance

Depot maintenance is key to sustaining equipment readiness. The Marine Corps aggressively works to improve equipment readiness and availability by managing the conditions that affect our depot maintenance rework plans. These conditions include: the uncertainty of the timing of reset, asset availability, timing of funding, equipment condition, and evolving skill requirements. The in-theater identification of equipment and scope of work to be performed 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 help to reduce the repair cycle time, return mission capable equipment to the warfighter quicker, and improve materiel readiness.

The only factor limiting our two depots is asset (carcass) availability, not funding or their workload capacity. When required, we can increase capacity to support surge requirements through: overtime, additional shifts, and additional personnel. Our depot workforce has multiple trade skills ranging from laborers to engineers, enabling work to be performed on over 260 product lines. However, much of the equipment in theater includes items not previously repaired by any depot facility, and as a result, the existing work force may require additional training. Ultimately, new personnel, as well as continued augmentation through contractor support, may be required. We are leveraging state and local institutions, such as technical colleges and universities, to provide valuable assistance in training our workforce in skills such as welding, environmental science, and engineering.

The Marine Corps Maintenance Centers have implemented Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) methodologies through the use of modernized business practices to enhance depot operations. Those tools include Manufacturing Resource Planning II (MRP II), Lean Six Sigma, Theory of Constraints, and International Standard Office (ISO) certified quality systems. This CPI approach, coupled with key engineering projects, significantly enhances depot maintenance processes and operations.

Additionally, Maintenance Centers collaborate with private industry and other Services to identify process improvements designed to enhance materiel readiness. We also coordinate with the other Services to reduce redundancy in our efforts. Examples of the excellent coordination between the Marine Corps and other Services include: the repair of Marine Corps M1A1 tanks at the Anniston Army Depot; the repair of various Marine Corps electronic equipment at Tobyhanna Army Depot; and Marine Corps maintenance on Navy/Coast Guard Paxman engines. The Marine Corps also contracts or out sources work which allows us to purchase repairs through: a Depot Maintenance Interservice Agreement with another service, a contract with a private vendor, or a Public/Private Partnership. In all cases, the repair source is evaluated for the best return on the investment for the Marine Corps.

f. Equipment Retrograde Operations from CENTCOM AOR

Marine Corps Logistics Command took the lead as the Service Executive Agent for the retrograde of equipment in the CENTCOM theater in 2006. In addition to receiving, preparing, and shipping equipment no longer required within theater, Marine Corps Logistics Command (Forward) coordinates strategic lift requirements and manages the redistribution of principle end items. Since June 2006, over 15,731 principle end items were processed at the retrograde lot in Al Taqaddum, Iraq, and approximately 11,799 items were shipped back to Blount Island Command for disposition. Once disposition is received, assets are sent to Marine Corps Logistics Command to be repaired, stored, or used to fill requisitions. If deemed uneconomical to repair, assets are sent to the Defense Reutilization Marketing Office. These actions will enable us to better manage the demand for equipment and to influence readiness rates across the enterprise.

In order to enhance our preparedness to retrograde a greater volume of equipment from the CENTCOM AOR, we are seeking facilities project improvements that will increase throughput operations at Blount Island Command. Naval Facilities Engineering Command is prepared to support us in this endeavor.

V. Taking Care of Warriors and Families

Taking care of our Marines, Sailors and their family members is a fundamental commitment and critical to our current and long-term readiness. Throughout our proud history, our successes have been through the cumulative efforts and sacrifices of individual Marines and Sailors. We have a moral obligation to ensure their well being during their time in the Marine Corps and their transition back to civilian life. When Marines are wounded, ill or injured, we will take care of them – they are Marines for life. When Marines die, we will honor our fallen angels, and assist their families. This enduring obligation also includes the well being of their families—who are essential to the resilience and effectiveness of our Marines and Sailors who serve alongside them. Because of the demands of the Long War and the need to improve support and services for our warriors and families, we are putting our family readiness programs on a wartime footing.

a. Casualty Assistance

Marines selflessly serve, assuming the often dangerous work of defending our Nation. Whenever Marines pay the ultimate price, we will continue to honor them as selfless patriots who gave their last full measure of devotion to the Nation. Our casualty assistance program will ensure the families of our fallen Marines are always treated with compassion, dignity, and honor.

Trained Casualty Assistance Calls Officers provide the families of fallen Marines assistance with their transition through the stages of grief. Last year during Congressional hearings and inquiries into casualty next of kin notification processes, we testified about deficiencies that we discovered in three key and interrelated casualty processes: command casualty reporting, command casualty inquiry and investigation, and next of kin notification. Reacting quickly to understand and fix these deficiencies, we ordered an investigation by the Inspector General of the Marine Corps. Without waiting for a final investigative report, the

Commandant of the Marine Corps directed actions, which included issuing new guidance to commanders — reemphasizing investigation and reporting requirements, and the importance of tight links between these two systems, and with next of kin notification. We will continue to monitor our processes to ensure families receive timely and accurate information relating to their Marine's death or injury.

b. Putting Family Readiness on a Wartime Footing

Last year, we conducted self-imposed, rigorous assessments of our family support programs. We gained reliable data to build upon our strengths and to execute needed improvements. Actions are underway to refresh, enhance, or improve: our family readiness programs at the unit and installation levels, including our Exceptional Family Member Program and the School Liaison Officer Program.

Through our assessments, we determined that major enhancements are needed to the Marine Corps Family Team Building Program and Unit Family Readiness Program. These programs form the centerpiece of our family support and are based on a peacetime model with an 18-month deployment cycle. They are also largely supported on the backs of our dedicated volunteers. While our volunteers are performing magnificently, they need substantial increases in program support. Reacting quickly to the assessments, the Commandant directed a sustained funding increase for Marine Corps family readiness program reforms in Fiscal Year 2008 which include:

- Formalizing the role and relationship of process owners to ensure accountability;
- 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.

We request Congress' continued support so we may continue to advance these reforms and address the evolving requirements of our warfighters and their families.

c. Wounded Warrior Regiment

In April 2007, the Wounded Warrior Regiment was activated to develop a comprehensive, integrated approach to Wounded Warrior care and to continue to ensure that "Marines take care of their own." The Regiment reflects our deep commitment to the welfare of our Marines, Sailors, and families 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 have liaison teams at major military medical treatment facilities, Department of Veteran's Affairs Poly-trauma Centers (VAPTC), and Naval Hospitals. Additionally, the Battalions provide local support in regions without military treatment facilities or VAPTCs through Marine For Life Home Town Links (M4L HTL), or Wounded Warrior Regiment District Injury Support Cells.

The Regiment constantly assesses how to improve the services it provides. One of the major initiatives is a Job Transition Cell manned by Marines and representatives of the Departments of Labor and Veteran Affairs. The Regiment also established a Wounded Warrior Call Center for 24 hour a day/7 days a week support. The Call Center receives incoming calls from Marines and family members with questions, and makes outreach calls to the almost 9,000 wounded Marines who left active service. A Charitable Organization Cell was created to facilitate linking wounded warrior needs with charitable organizations that can provide the needed support. Additionally, the Regiment maintains a liaison presence at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Headquarters, and liaisons from the VA and the Department of Labor are located within our Wounded Warrior Regiment headquarters at Marine Corps Base, Quantico.

I deeply thank you for your support on behalf of our wounded warriors and their families. The numerous visits from members of Congress and their own families, are deeply appreciated by them and their families. Your new Wounded Warrior Hiring Initiative to employ our injured

in the House and Senate demonstrates your commitment and support to their future well-being. We are grateful to Congress for the support for wounded warriors in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. This landmark legislation will significantly improve the quality of their lives and demonstrates the Nation's enduring gratitude for their selfless sacrifices.

d. Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)

The improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used by our enemies cause blast and penetrating traumatic brain injuries. TBI awareness and education is part of our pre-deployment, routine, and post-deployment training. All Marines are being screened for TBI exposure during the post-deployment phase and those identified with it receive comprehensive evaluation and treatment.

Concussive blast injuries to the brain are currently classified as mild, moderate, or severe traumatic brain injuries. Physical examinations performed by medical personnel, aided by screening tools such as the Military Acute Concussion Evaluation (MACE) and the Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS), assist in the diagnosis and categorization of TBI. Despite this, Mild TBI (mTBI) can be difficult to detect with the current screening techniques available in the theater of operations. The Marine Corps is seeking a means to use the Automated Neuropsychological Assessment Metrics (ANAM), developed by the Army, to evaluate an individual's neuro-cognitive functioning (i.e. brain operations that are responsible for all aspects of perceiving, thinking, and remembering) following exposure to concussive blast. To be maximally effective, pre-exposure testing with the ANAM is required to establish the baseline functioning of each Marine and Sailor prior to deployment. The Marine Corps is working closely with the Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury to advance our understanding of TBI and improve the care of all Marines.

e. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The Marine Corps has partnered with Veterans Affairs and its National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD) to improve the psychological health of our Marines, Sailors, and families through research and effective new training and early intervention programs. Our premiere PTSD research project is the "Marine Resilience Study," a collaboration with the VA at San Diego and

Boston, as well as the Naval Health Research Center, to prospectively study the biological, psychological, and social factors that predict resilience in two battalions of ground combat Marines bound for Iraq or Afghanistan. Initial phases of this ground-breaking study are under way at MCAGCC 29 Palms. Through collaborations with the NCPTSD and both Navy Medicine and the Navy Chaplaincy, we have also developed new Combat and Operational Stress First Aid tools for early intervention for acute traumatic stress and loss in operational environments. We have also partnered with UCLA and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network to establish over the next six months a family resilience training program known as FOCUS (Families Overcoming Under Stress) at our four largest mobilization and demobilization sites. We are determined to reduce the frequency and severity of PTSD in our Marines, Sailors, and family members through effective, evidence-based primary and secondary prevention programs.

The Marine Corps is thankful to Congress for their leadership and support of research as well as treatment for TBI, PTSD, and other combat-related mental disorders. We will continue to place a high priority on improving our knowledge and treatment of these disorders and providing non-clinical assistance to Marines and their families.

f. Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC)

Marine Corps commanders are fully engaged in promoting psychological health among our Marines, Sailors, and their family members. Small unit leaders have the greatest potential for detecting stress occurrences and assessing their impacts on warfighters and family members. Marine leadership fosters an environment at all levels where our warriors learn it is proper to ask for help, because taking care of Marines and ensuring their readiness means caring for physical and psychological health. We stress this to Marines repeatedly during pre-deployment training, deployment, and post-deployment periods, as well as through the training continuum. The Navy is supporting expansion of embedding Navy mental health professionals in operational units—the Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) program. The goal by Fiscal Year 2010 is for 161 Navy Personnel (62 Medical Officers, 16 Chaplains, and 83 Sailors) embedded at all levels of the MEF. We are also collaborating with the other Services, the Department of

Veterans Affairs' National Center for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and external agencies to determine best practices for Marines and their families.

g. Exceptional Family Member Program (Respite Care)

Parental stress can be heightened for families who are not only impacted by operational tempo, but have the challenges of children with special needs. To focus on this issue, we offer active duty families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) up to 40 hours of free respite care per month for each exceptional family member. Many of our families rely on TRICARE's Enhanced Care Health Option (ECHO) program which offers limited respite care, but provides other important benefits such as medical equipment, mental behavior therapy, rehabilitation, special education, and transportation. Unfortunately, in many cases, the monthly ECHO cap of \$2500 does not enable families to cover all of these services, forcing them to choose between respite care and other benefits. The Marine Corps EFMP now underwrites the respite care, enabling families to apply ECHO resources to these other treatment services. We also seek to provide a "continuum of care" for our exceptional family members through: 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.

h. Family Member Pervasive Developmental Disorders

The sustained readiness and effectiveness of Marines and Sailors during deployment requires that they know family members are supported at home. Currently, the TRICARE ECHO program is not able to provide sufficient support to children of Service members with special needs, to include Pervasive Developmental Disorders such as: Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, Rett's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (NOS). The Marine Corps is working closely with the Department of Defense Office of Family Policy Work Group on examining options to expand its Educational & Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS). EDIS is the DoD response to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal mandate that provides Developmental Services for children 0 to 3 years old, and Special

Education Services for children 3 to 21. EDIS delivers early intervention services to eligible infants and toddlers in domestic and overseas areas, and medically related service programs for school age children in Department of Defense schools overseas.

i. Water Contamination at Camp Lejeune

Past water contamination at Camp Lejeune continues to be a very important issue for the Marine Corps. Our goal is to use good science to 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 supports the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) in their health study, which is planned to be completed in March 2009. With the help of Congress, the National Academy of Sciences is also helping us by studying this difficult issue. Their study is expected to be completed in the fall of 2008. The Marine Corps is making progress notifying former residents and workers of this issue and we established a call center and notification registry, where the public can provide contact information, so we can keep them apprised of the completion of these health studies. Additionally, 50,000 letters will be mailed by 31 March 2008 to individuals who were identified in a Department of Defense personnel database that were former residents and/or workers at Camp Lejeune.

VI. Preparing Marines for Current Operations

The Training and Education Continuum for deploying Marines begins with entry level training, ascends through formal schools, home station training, Professional Military Education, and culminates with a final unit Pre-Deployment Training Program (PTP) assessment. This ascending-levels-of-competency approach allows Marines of all ranks to be trained at the right level, at the right time, and the right place. Mojave Viper (MV), Desert Talon (DT), and Mountain Warrior (MW) are established as the primary OIF/OEF Pre-Deployment Training Mission Rehearsal Exercises (MRX). The Marine Corps PTP is both realistic and adaptive. Utilizing role players and live fires, PTP prepares Marines mentally, physically, and culturally as to what they can expect in the combat environment. Training is constantly updated based on lessons learned. PTP is conducted in five nested blocks in ascending levels of competency and

culminates in a full-scale, intelligence-driven, controlled, and evaluated exercise conducted at Twentynine Palms, Bridgeport, Yuma, or an approved alternate venue. During Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007, the PTP resulted in over 42,000 Marines receiving combined arms and urban operations training at MV in Twentynine Palms, California; over 2,800 Marines receiving mountain operations training at the Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, California; and over 12,000 Marines participating in aviation-focused DT exercises in Yuma, Arizona.

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 and prepare Marines for the mental rigors and challenges of Combat:

- Tripled the amount of time Drill Instructor and recruits conduct “foot locker talks” on values (increasing instruction time from 14 to 41.5 hours);
- 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 in all operating environments and locations;
- Re-emphasized 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;
- Educated junior Marines on the “strategic corporal” and the positive or negative influence they can have;
- 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.

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 incorporated in our training programs. 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.

Experimentation. Research, development, and experimentation are key factors to adapting our force, enhancing training, and providing the foundation for our own future warfighting capabilities. We continuously work with the Office of Naval Research (ONR), the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and other Services Science and Technology (S&T) and Research and Development (R&D) activities, leveraging their special, significant efforts. The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory conducts experiments to support operating force requirements and combat development with improved capabilities. 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.

VII. Modernizing the Marine Corps

In addition to recruiting and retaining high quality Marines and ensuring their individual readiness, we are also committed to providing our warriors with the very best warfighting equipment and capabilities. Our equipment modernization has high priority, so that we can ensure ready, relevant and capable Marine Air Ground Task Forces now and in the future. As careful stewards of our Nation’s resources, we must decide the most effective ways to modernize our Total Force. With this in mind, we continue to sustain the readiness of our aging legacy equipment by resetting it and also fielding next generation capabilities. Because we are at war, we must do both, modernizing on the march. Thankfully, Congress has consistently supported

our efforts to achieve long-term modernization, while maintaining our current readiness to prosecute the Long War.

a. Urgent Warfighting Requirements.

Designed to procure equipment for commanders more expediently than if submitted through the traditional acquisition process, our Urgent Universal Needs Statement (UUNS) process uses a secure, web-based system that provides full stakeholder visibility from submission through resolution. We have studied and continue to review our overall capabilities based Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) requirements generation process, including the wartime UUNS process, to ensure we meet valid warfighter needs for timely effective and efficient material solutions. One example of our efforts to provide timely responses is that, through continuous process improvement, and a Lean Six Sigma review, we have reduced average UUNS processing time from 142 to 83.2 days and transitioned over fifty emerging capabilities into programs of record. Typically, UUNS are either funded by reprogramming funds from approved programs or through Congressional supplemental funding until we can transition them through the next budgeting cycle. We are committed to rapidly and properly equipping our warriors, continuously reviewing our system for opportunities to increase efficiency and responsiveness in order to provide Marines the best combat equipment and protection as swiftly as we can identify and test material solutions and field them.

b. Enhancing Individual Force Protection and Survivability

The Marine Corps is pursuing technological advancements in personal protective equipment because Marines in combat deserve the best gear for their mission. Fully recognizing the factors associated with weight, fatigue, and movement restriction, we are committed to provide our Marines with 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 highlight the need to evolve our personal protective vest system. In February 2007, we began transitioning to a newly-designed Modular Tactical Vest (MTV) which integrates more easily with our other personal protection systems and provides greater comfort by incorporating state-of-the-art load carriage

techniques. 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 to render the best protection available against a wide variety of small arms threats. The initial acquisition objective for the MTV was 60,000 vests in response to a Universal Urgent Needs Statement (UUNS), with deliveries completed in October 2007. The Marine Corps placed a final order for 24,000 additional MTVs and deliveries began in Nov 07 with approximately 17,000 vests received to date. With this initial capability fielded to all deployed forces we are now using feedback from our Marines and Sailors to refine the vest into a system that can further enhance the performance and safety of the warfighter.

QuadGard. The QuadGard system provides ballistic protection for a Marine's arms and legs when they are serving as a turret gunner on convoy duty. This system, which integrates with other personal ballistic protection equipment, provides additional protection against ballistic threats—particularly improvised explosive device fragmentation.

Lightweight Helmet. Similar to body armor, we continue to rapidly evolve the best head protection. The Lightweight Helmet (LWH) weighs less than its predecessor and provides a high level of protection against fragmentation threats and 9mm bullets. Because of tests, including studies by the University of Virginia on the effects of ballistics and blunt impacts, we now have replaced the sling suspension with a superior protection pad system inside the helmet. 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 were delivered with the approved pad system installed. In October 2007, we began fielding an initial buy of 69,300 of the Nape Protection Pad (NAPP), which provides additional ballistic protection to the occipital region of the head (where critical nervous system components are located), with final deliveries scheduled for April 2008. The NAPP is attached to the back of the LWH or the Modular Integrated Communications Helmet (MICH), which is worn by our reconnaissance Marines, to include MARSOC personnel. The Marine Corps currently has 1,800 MICHs in its inventory. We continue to work with the US Army and to challenge industry to build a lightweight helmet that provides greater ballistic protection by defeating the 7.62 mm round fired from widely used AK-47s.

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—will reduce exposure to flame injuries. We also began providing flame resistant fleece pullovers to Marines for use in cooler conditions, and are developing flame resistant varieties of cool/cold weather outer garments with planned fielding in late FY 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. As with individual and unit equipment, we continue ongoing development and partnerships with other Services, seeking the best available flame resistant protection for our Marines.

Counter Improvised Explosive Devices. The incorporation of lessons learned is integral to the Marine Corps CIED effort. We are mindful that our enemies are constantly evolving to offset our military capabilities and technology superiority; therefore, our ability to support the warfighter and maintain optimum readiness levels is accomplished through multiple complementary efforts within the Marine Corps and the larger Joint and Interagency CIED communities of interest. The following is a sampling of some of these efforts:

- Upgrading our Counter Radio-controlled IED Electronic Warfare systems to meet rapidly evolving threats, while remaining engaged with the Navy's Joint Program Office to develop a joint solution.
- Modernizing our Family of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Equipment through enhancement of technician tool kits and greater robotics capabilities.
- Evaluation of new technologies to enhance our Family of Imaging Systems portfolio and protect against both vehicle and personnel-borne IEDs.
- Continuing to field our point, route and area Persistent Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities -- Ground Based Operational Surveillance System, Unmanned Aerial Systems, and Angel Fire.
- Explosives odor detection, infantry-based, off-leash IED Detector Dogs have proven very effective in their first deployment and the Marine Requirements Oversight Counsel has approved an effort to eventually provide dogs to every deployed maneuver battalion.

- Specific to CIED, Training and Education Command's Marine Corps Engineer School has created Master Lesson Files, established Mobile Training Teams in support of home station training, incorporated CIED education into existing institutional and virtual training platforms, and is coordinating CIED upgrades to our training facilities.
- Lastly, we continue to develop CIED and counter insurgency capabilities normally associated with law enforcement through the fielding of Biometrics tool kits and embedded law enforcement officers.

c. Marine Aviation

Just like our ground combat and support elements, Marine Aviation must sustain current operations, reset the force and modernize. Execution of any one of these is a formidable challenge. Today, Marine Aviation is executing all three concurrently in order to win today's battles, while preserving our warfighting capabilities to be ready to respond to other contingencies. Your Marines rely on aging 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 (AvPlan) to remain fully funded and on schedule. The AvPlan incorporates individual program changes, synchronizes support of our end strength growth to 202,000 Marines, and provides the way ahead for Marine Aviation as it transitions 39 of 71 squadrons. By 2017, Marine Aviation will transition from 13 legacy aircraft to 7 new aircraft.

F-35B: Joint Strike Fighter (JSF). The Marine Corps has not received a new tactical aircraft in a decade, with our last delivery an F/A-18D in 1998. In FY09 we plan to procure the first of 420 F-35B aircraft, with IOC beginning in Fiscal Year 2012. We will complete the transition from the F/A-18 and AV-8B by Fiscal Year 2024. The Marine Corps literally skipped a generation of strike fighters in order to field an all Short Take-Off/Vertical Landing (STOVL) fifth generation aircraft force. The F-35B STOVL will provide a quantum leap in capability, basing flexibility, and mission execution across the full spectrum of warfare. The JSF will act as a networked, integrated combat system in support of ground forces and will be the centerpiece of Marine Aviation. F-35B Lightning II development is on track with the first flight of the BF-1

STOVL variant scheduled for spring 2008. The Fiscal Year 2009 budget requests eight aircraft for delivery in Fiscal Year 2010. These aircraft will support pilot transition training and are essential to the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) of Fiscal Year 2012. The manufacture of the first 19 test aircraft is on schedule and underway.

MV-22 Osprey. The 360 MV-22 aircraft planned for procurement by the Marine Corps are already bringing revolutionary assault support capability to our forces in harm's way. The MV-22 has begun to replace the CH-46E aircraft which are over forty years old, and which have very limited performance to support the MAGTF. In September 2005, the V-22 Defense Acquisition Board approved full rate production. MV-22 IOC was declared on 1 June 2007. The current inventory of 57 operational MV-22 aircraft that have been delivered are based at Marine Corps Air Station New River, North Carolina; NAS Patuxent River, Maryland; and Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. Even though we are at war, modernization on the march means we must transition two squadrons per year, with 30 aircraft per year requested in the budget. With current rate of production, the transition will be complete (FOC) in 2018.

VMM-263 is presently deployed to Al Asad Air Base in Iraq, and has already proven the significant capabilities of the Osprey in combat. The rapidly evolving use of MV-22s in Iraq tells a compelling story: on a daily basis MV-22s carry twice the load, twice as far, at twice the speed. The aircraft's operational reach rapidly ranges the entire area of operations at altitudes above the reach of our enemy's weapons. Congress answered our request for an aircraft that could carry more, fly farther, faster, and safer.

KC-130J. KC-130J Hercules aircraft are continuously deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom providing multi-mission, tactical aerial refueling, and fixed-wing assault support. Its theater logistical support reduces the requirement for resupply via ground, limiting the exposure of our convoys to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and other surface-borne attacks. The recent introduction of the aerial refuelable MV-22, combined with the retirement of the legacy KC-130F/R aircraft due to fatigue life and parts obsolescence, requires an accelerated procurement of the KC-130J.

The Marine Corps is programmed to procure a total of 46 aircraft by the end of Fiscal Year 2013. To date, 29 new aircraft have been delivered, 7 more are on contract and 2 aircraft are requested in the FY 2009 budget for a total of 38. This is still 13 aircraft short of our

inventory objective of 51 KC-130J's for the Active Force. Ultimately, the Marine Corps will also seek to replace our 28 reserve component KC-130T aircraft with KC-130Js, thus necking down our aerial refueling force to a single T/M/S.

UH-1 / AH-1. The H-1 Upgrades Program will replace AH-1W and UH-1N helicopters with state-of-the-art AH-1Z and UH-1Y models. The H-1 Upgrades Program, through a combination of remanufacture and new procurement, modernize our fleet to 100 UH-1Ys and 180 AH-1Zs. With approval to increase the size of the Marine Corps active component to 202,000, procurement must increase to 123 UH-1Ys and 227 AH-1Zs. To date, seven UH-1Y and four AH-1Z have been delivered. The first UH-1Y scheduled deployment is on track for the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2009. To support this effort and continue H-1 modernization, the Fiscal Year 2009 budget requests \$496.9 million for aircraft procurement and spares with \$3.9 million for continued R&D.

CH-53K. In operation since 1981, the CH-53E is becoming increasingly expensive to operate and faces reliability 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 in December 2005 with a subsequent contract awarded to Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation in April 2006. IOC is scheduled for Fiscal Year 2015. The program is proceeding through its developmental stages and will begin to procure airframes in the Fiscal Year 2013 budget request. The transition to the CH-53K will culminate in Fiscal Year 2021, with a total procurement of 156 aircraft for our seven active and one reserve squadrons.

d. Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Protection (Armoring)

Our vehicle armoring efforts are absolutely critical to protecting our Marines against IEDs and other weapons. 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 Army and 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 High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV).

Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) Armor System (MAS). The 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 fuel tank fire protection kits, blast attenuating seats, five-point restraint harnesses, improved belly and fender-well blast deflectors, and 300 AMP alternators. Basic MAS was installed in all of the Marine Corps MTVRs in the Central Command's theater of operation. The target for completing installation of MAS blast protection retrofits on in-theater vehicles is Fourth Quarter Fiscal Year 2008.

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

Up Armored High Mobility 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, and "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. In addition, new Up-Armored Expanded Capacity Vehicle (ECV) HMMWVs were fielded to theater in FY07 to support the "surge." The Marine Corps has adopted a strategy of armoring 60% of the current 25,385 HMMWV Authorized Acquisition Objective (15,231 vehicles). All newly acquired Expanded Capacity Vehicle (ECV) HMMWVs will have an Integrated Armor Package. Of those, 60% will be fully up-armored during production to include the appropriate "B" kit and fragmentation kits. 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 in a retrofit approach (as needed) to vehicles delivered with Integrated Armor Package only. We are also evaluating the Army’s objective kit development and collaborating with the Army and Office of Naval Research to assess new protection-level capabilities.

Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicles. Over the past two years industry has designed MRAP vehicles with 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. While designs are improving, these vehicles provide the best available protection against IEDs, just as the enemy is trying to improve these crude but potentially lethal weapons. 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. To date, no Marines have been killed or seriously injured from IED attacks while traveling in the MRAP vehicles.

The total Department of Defense requirement for MRAP vehicles is 15,374—of which 3,700 were originally allocated for the Marine Corps. However, the JROC recently approved the Marine Corps refined requirement for 2,225 MRAP vehicles (the JROC Memorandum is pending final signature this month). This decision supports the Marine Corps operational assessment of the vehicles, which reviewed changes in mission tasking and existing Tactics, Techniques and Procedures.

As another 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 and thankful for the overwhelming support of Congress on the MRAP program. We request Congress’ continued support for these life-saving vehicles as we transition to the sustainment of these vehicles into Fiscal Year 2009.

e. Ground Mobility

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

Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV). The EFV represents the heavy weight capability in our Ground Combat Tactical Mobility portfolio. The EFV is designed for maneuver operations conducted from the sea and sustained operations in the world's littoral regions, but its inherent capabilities provide utility across the spectrum of conflict. As the Corps largest ground combat system acquisition program, the EFV is the Nation's only sea-based, surface-oriented vehicle that projects combat power from a seabase to an objective. A fighting vehicle designed to strike fast and deep, it will replace the aging Assault Amphibious Vehicle—in service since 1972. The EFV's amphibious mobility, speed of maneuver, 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. An EFV mine protection feasibility study was completed last October, which assessed external V-Hull, internal V-Hull, and appliqué configurations for survivability and performance impacts. The study concluded that the appliqué configuration provides increased mine blast protection with minimum performance impacts. A final EFV feasibility report from The Center for Naval Analyses concerning this enhanced armor configuration is pending. System development and demonstration has been extended to allow design for reliability through 2008, and fabrication and test of seven new EFV prototypes, with Milestone C in 2011. Delivery of 573 vehicles will begin in 2013, with the program scheduled to achieve IOC in 2015 and FOC in 2025.

Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV). The JLTV represents the light weight capability in our Ground Combat Tactical Mobility portfolio and will be the centerpiece of our Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Fleet. This fleet will also include the HMMWV Expanded Capacity Vehicle

series, the MRAP Vehicle, and the Internally Transported Vehicle (ITV). The Army/Marine Corps Board has been the starting point for vetting of joint requirements for JLTV—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 HMMWV. In December, JLTV was approved for entry into the acquisition process at Milestone A with the Army as the lead Service. A Request for Proposal was released this month, initiating competitive prototyping for the fabrication of a family of vehicles and companion trailers. After prototype evaluation, we expect at least three competitors to be selected for the technology development phase. We must continue to sustain HMMWVs in our forces until their replacement with JLTVs. We are committed to full funding of 5,500 JLTVs in Increment one. IOC is scheduled for 2012.

Marine Personnel Carrier (MPC). The MPC represents the medium weight capability in the Ground Combat Tactical Mobility portfolio. It is not a replacement vehicle, but will complement the capabilities offered by the EFV and the JLTV across the range of military operations. Increasing armor-protected mobility for infantry battalion task forces, the MPC program balances vehicle performance, protection and payload attributes. Joint staffing of an Initial Capabilities Document and a draft concept of employment were completed in 2007. The MPC program is currently preparing for a Milestone A decision in the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2008 and is on track for a Milestone B decision in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2010. The MPC requirement is for 558 vehicles, with an IOC date in the 2015 timeframe.

Internally Transported Vehicle (ITV). The ITV is a family of vehicles that will provide deployed MAGTFs with MV-22/CH-53 internally and externally-transportable ground vehicles. The ITV program will field an expeditionary vehicle that provides units equal to or greater mobility than the maneuver elements they support. The ITV includes powered prime movers and towed trailers which will provide deep maneuver and rough terrain mobility for the Expeditionary Fire Support System (120 mm mortar) and other payloads. The Fiscal Year 2009 budget contains \$8 million for 44 ITVs. ITV recently successfully completed a Government Accounting Office audit and is currently undergoing a DoD Inspector General audit. IOC is planned during Fiscal Year 2008 and FOC is planned for Fiscal Year 2011.

f. MAGTF Fires

Our Triad of Ground Indirect Fires provides organic complementary, precision fire capabilities 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 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.

M777A2 Lightweight Howitzer. The Lightweight 155 (M777A2) is a Joint USMC/Army program in Full Rate Production which replaces all legacy, aging heavier weight M198 howitzers. It can be lifted by the MV-22 Osprey and the CH-53E helicopter and is paired with the MTRV for improved cross-country mobility. Through design innovation, navigation, positioning aides, and digital fire control, the M777A2 offers significant improvements in lethality (with the Excalibur precision munition capability), survivability, and mobility. We began fielding the first new howitzers to the operating forces in April 2005 and expect to complete fielding 511 howitzers in Fiscal Year 2011. The M777A2 was first used in OIF in October 2007.

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. When paired with Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System rockets, HIMARS will provide a highly responsive, precision fire capability to our forces. There is \$109 million budgeted in Fiscal Year 2009 to procure USMC HIMARS tactical and training rockets. To date, we have fielded and trained one reserve Battery and two active duty Batteries. Battery F, 2/14 completed the first operational deployment of a Marine Corps HIMARS unit, firing twenty-four tactical rockets in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). The requirement for HIMARS is 46 and we expect to achieve FOC by Fiscal Year 2010.

Expeditionary Fire Support System (EFSS). The EFSS will be the principal indirect fire support system for the vertical assault element of the Ship-to-Objective Maneuver as part of a

Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) assault element. EFSS consists of two ITV prime movers, a 120mm rifled towed mortar, an ammunition trailer, and ammunition. In conjunction with the MV-22 Osprey and the CH-53 helicopter, EFSS provides a 110 nautical mile radius, internal lift capability. Supported units will have immediately responsive, organic indirect fires at ranges and lethality well beyond their current battalion mortars. Fiscal Year 2009 provides \$22.1 million for accelerated procurement of 41 EFSS systems. The requirement for EFSS is 66 systems and will be manned and supported by artillery regiments. EFSS recently completed successful operational testing. IOC is planned for Fiscal Year 2008, and FOC is planned for Fiscal Year 2010.

g. 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 tiers, tailored to the mission and requirements of the supported command. 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 transitioned Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadrons (VMU) from our legacy Pioneers to the Army developed RQ-7B Shadow. We are also initiating a reorganization of the squadrons' force structure to better task-organize for mission requirements and began the stand up of a third active component VMU squadron. The addition of a third VMU squadron is critical to sustaining current operations and will help in decreasing the operational tempo from our current deployment-to-dwell ratio of less than 1:1—to a more sustainable 1:2 ratio. This rapid transition and reorganization, initiated in January 2007, will be complete by the fourth quarter Fiscal Year 2009, significantly improves organic Marine Corps UAS capability while increasing joint interoperability and commonality.

For our Tier II needs, using supplemental appropriations provided by Congress, the Marine Corps is using an ISR services contract to provide Scan Eagle systems to Multi-National Forces-West, Iraq. Contracted Scan Eagles are expected to fill the Tier II void until future fielding of the Tier II/Small Tactical UAS (STUAS), a combined Marine Corps and Navy program which began in Fiscal Year 2008 and is planned for fielding in 2011.

At the Tier I level, the Marine Corps is transitioning from the Dragon Eye to the Joint Raven-B program, used by the US Army. When fully fielded, the Marine Corps UAS family of systems will be networked through a robust and interoperable command and control system that will provide commanders an enhanced capability to use across the spectrum of military operations.

h. Logistics Modernization

Logistics challenges during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and subsequent operations accelerated the requirement to modernize Marine Corps logistics. The Marine Corps Logistics Modernization (LogMod) program is a three-pronged, enterprise-wide, logistics improvement and integration effort designed to increase the operational reach and lethality of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). LogMod is focused on enhancing the readiness of deployed forces, increasing the operational availability of equipment, and decreasing the logistics burden of Marine units. It constitutes the most comprehensive, end to end approach ever taken to improve MAGTF logistics. Once fully implemented, the LogMod program and its initiatives will drive improvements in technologies, processes, and people through modernization of doctrine, training, and organizations. As a roadmap for more effective expeditionary logistics, logistics modernization will greatly enhance our ability to operate in all environments and in all theaters. A key initiative was the implementation of the Marine Logistics Group reorganization.

The 2006-2007 reorganization of the garrison-focused Force Service Support Groups (FSSGs) into expeditionary Marine Logistics Groups (MLGs) created a more adaptable, capable, and rapidly deployable logistics organization. The MLG allows for the rapid formation of deployable, task-organized logistics forces, providing experienced logistics Command and Control for planning and operations while fostering strong habitual working relationships between supported and supporting units. Significant process change and adoption of new technologies will increase the effectiveness of logistics on the battlefield. By decreasing process steps and levels, supply and maintenance chains are being streamlined to increase velocity of support and services. Visibility of assets and requests for support, enhanced by new IT enablers and technologies such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), will allow deployed forces to decrease their support footprint on the battlefield, trading inventory volume for accurate and

timely information. Enhanced transportation and distribution processes and organizations provide dedicated assets to prioritize cargo, optimize routing, and reduce uncertainty. Deployed forces are using recently-developed technologies such as the Battlefield Command Sustainment Support System (BCS3) and Warehouse-to-Warfighter (W2) to gain visibility of assets as they move across the “last tactical mile” from sustainment areas to combat forces. In total, Marine Corps Logistics Modernization will ensure the readiness and sustainment of combat forces in any operational environment. Of critical importance is the development and fielding of the Global Combat Support System-Marine Corps (GCSS-MC).

Global Combat Support System—Marine Corps (GCSS-MC). GCSS-MC will deliver 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. GCSS-MC is designed with 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 and evaluations are scheduled for 2nd 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.

VIII. Conclusion

Since 2001, the austere expeditionary environment, high operational tempo, and effects of combat have tested the flexibility and exceptional abilities of your Marines. They have repeatedly succeeded. This sustained effort has come at substantial cost in terms of personal sacrifice on the part of individual Marines and their families, as well as the cumulative wear and tear on our equipment. Your Marine’s remarkable resilience and professionalism vindicates the Nation’s trust and confidence in them. In this Long War, it is imperative that we keep primary focus on support for our Marines in combat, while resetting and modernizing a multi-capable

force ready for our nation's future challenges. The Congress' continued and consistent support has enabled us to prevail in today's battles and will ensure that we always remain the Nation's premier expeditionary force in readiness!