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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
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JOINT STAFF
BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON READINESS
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Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee, I am pleased to provide this written statement on the readiness of the military Services to conduct current operations and execute contingency plans.

I must first acknowledge and thank the Congress for its sustained and significant support to the men and women of our Armed Forces. Your efforts were critical to arresting and reversing the declining readiness trends we experienced in the late 1990s. Quality-of Life initiatives, housing improvements and pay increases demonstrate your continued commitment to our dedicated soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. Our improved warfighting readiness is also reflected in good recruiting and retention rates, improved equipment mission capable rates and enhancements across a wide range of warfighting capabilities including logistics, intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance (ISR), munitions (particularly precision munitions), and command and control.

These improvements are manifesting themselves today in remarkable fashion on the battlefields of Iraq. While we conduct decisive combat operations in OPERATION Iraqi Freedom (OIF), our other forces remain deployed worldwide, serving our Nation's vital interests in numerous areas in many differing roles. For instance, our forces continue to enhance homeland security, prosecute the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) to include highly effective and on-going Enduring Freedom operations in Afghanistan, Horn of Africa and the Philippines; keep the peace in the Balkans, deter adversaries on

the Korean peninsula, and conduct a host of other smaller-scale but important endeavors. In every instance, our forces have performed well, validating the capability, flexibility and readiness of our force.

Our readiness to prosecute a major combat operation is evident and demonstrated every day in Iraq. Our forces are highly trained, professional, motivated and smart. Our equipment – ships, aircraft, ground forces, and command and control capabilities are ready and second to none. Our military leaders' ability to integrate and synchronize the effects of these capabilities to achieve our national objectives is well exercised. We stand prepared to meet the full demands of OIF and to continue to fulfill our global commitments in the War on Terror.

Maintaining this level of effort obviously presents challenges. We face challenges in several areas, including traditional readiness issues voiced by the Services, and joint readiness issues voiced by the Combatant Commanders. While our ability to generate major forces such as divisions, Air Expeditionary Wings and carrier battle groups to support another combat operation is robust, force enablers such as air and sea lift, ISR, battle management and munitions will require close management and prioritization. As a result, we must clearly formulate and implement our strategic priorities and make informed, deliberate decisions regarding the future disposition of our forces.

The nature of conflict precludes setting a precise date for cessation of OIF hostilities. However, it is certain that prosecuting a major combat operation impacts the readiness of the overall force, and a period of

reconstitution following combat operations in Iraq will be necessary. For now, the breadth, depth and duration of any reconstitution plan following OIF are not clear. The Joint Staff, in conjunction with the Services and Combatant Commanders, has developed a framework for Joint Force reconstitution that will provide a foundation for the accomplishment of Service and USSOCOM reconstitution goals. However, until we have entered the post-conflict phase of operations in Iraq, determining specific Service reconstitution timelines and combatant commander requirements for forces availability is informed speculation at best.

Additionally, to meet the demands of OIF, reserve component forces have assumed, understandably, a significant role. To reconstitute the force while meeting existing force presence requirements, a continued reliance on the reserve component may be necessary for the foreseeable future. What is certain, though, is that we can't reconstitute the total Joint Force at the expense of not satisfying our global military demands. I assure you, we will determine the best way to accomplish this with the least risk to the execution of the overall defense strategy.

Regardless of the specifics of a Joint Force reconstitution plan, a key element...perhaps the key element...will be the timely approval of supporting resources. The Fiscal 03 budget and FY04 request support our readiness requirements and unquestionably enabled the impressive performance we've witnessed thus far. Over the last several years, Operations & Maintenance funding has been increased to curb declining readiness trends, and the FY 04

budget ensures our forward deployed and “first to fight” forces continue to be ready to conduct their combat missions. It is clear that as we expend Service readiness executing OIF and other global operations, the FY03 budget alone will not fully support our readiness requirements. Our Services simply can’t absorb the cost of OIF, the Global War on Terrorism, and other on-going operations without a supplemental. The negative impact on force readiness, troop morale, and on-going transformation efforts would be manifested across all Services. Therefore, timely approval of supplemental funding is absolutely crucial to the continued preparedness of the Joint Force.

Briefly, I’d like to provide you with my assessment of two readiness initiatives...the Joint National Training Capability (JNTC) program and the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS). First -- the JNTC program holds great promise as a means to create a true Joint Training venue. It will provide a much-needed construct to enhance and standardize joint training and exercise events across all Services and Combatant Commands. Ultimately, the JNTC program will enable us to better exercise and measure the performance of the Joint Force, and further enhance the Joint readiness that is so evident in our forces deployed throughout the world.

Second -- Secretary Mayberry and his team in the OSD/Personnel and Readiness office are leading the Defense Readiness Reporting System effort, with support from the Joint Staff. I have been briefed on several aspects of DRRS, and I think it has great potential. Elements of the DRRS concept call for streamlined readiness data input/gathering, rapid assessment of multiple

scenarios, identification of non-committed forces and their readiness for conducting additional missions.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that our wartime experiences have proven that readiness is a fragile commodity. When expended in combat operations, it is important to re-establish readiness levels or they can quickly erode further. The Congress' support over the past years has made a dramatic, positive impact on the readiness of the Joint Force, and our ability to 'meet the call'. Post-OIF readiness will require your continuing support so that we rapidly reconstitute preparedness to meet the demands of the Global War on Terrorism and mitigate potential risk to the overall defense strategy. Again, I am grateful for having the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the 270 thousand soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who represent the product of your work in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I look forward to your questions.