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STATEMENT OF

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COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

BEFORE

THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

On

READINESS

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Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, and distinguished Members of the Committee; during my confirmation process and in our subsequent conversations, I have pledged to provide you forthright and honest assessments of your Corps, and I welcome this opportunity to report to you today.

Your Marine Corps has been fully engaged in the Long War—in campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as throughout the world. The challenges we face are of global scale and scope; this war is a multi-faceted, generational struggle that will not be won in one battle, in one country, or by one method. Throughout this war, your Marine Corps has been able to rapidly adapt to challenging strategic conditions and wide-ranging threats. This past year, you have seen evidence of this not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but in Lebanon (where we were partners in the largest noncombatant evacuation since Vietnam); in the southern Pacific—as part of humanitarian assistance and relief efforts in the wake of multiple natural disasters; and around the globe in scores of theater security cooperation engagements.

Your Marines are a tough breed and will always do what it takes, but there is a tangible price we pay for this excellence—both in terms of personal sacrifice and in the cumulative effect on our equipment. It is our moral imperative to support our Marines in combat to the hilt—we are always mindful that our forward-deployed Marines and Sailors in combat must be our number one priority. As a Corps, we remain true to our congressionally-mandated mission “*to be most ready when the Nation is least ready*”; thus providing the Nation a two-fisted capability—adept at counterinsurgency as well as major conventional operations.

## **I. Right-size our Corps**

To meet the demands of the Long War and the inevitable contingencies that will arise, our Corps must be sufficiently manned as well as trained and properly equipped. The Corps’ personnel policies, organizational construct, and training must be resourced so that Marines are able to operate at the sustained rate as well as meet the occasional “surge.”

**Strain on our Individual Marines.** Despite an unparalleled Personnel Tempo, the morale of our Marines and their families remains high. There are however, leading indicators showing signs of strain that concern us. To avoid an adverse toll on our Marines and their families, and to prevent a decrease in readiness, a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio goal was

established for all Active Component forces. The goal is for every seven months a Marine is deployed, he or she will be back at home station for fourteen months—providing needed rest, family time, and the opportunity to train for a variety of missions.

**Strain on the Institution.** Current wartime deployments dictate a singular focus to prepare units for their next rotations conducting counterinsurgency operations. This focus and the current 1:1 deployment-to-dwell ratio of many units threatens the individual and unit skills needed for Marine Corps missions such as combined-arms maneuver, mountain warfare, amphibious, and jungle operations. To fulfill our mandate as the Nation's Force in Readiness, our deployment cycles must not only support training for irregular warfare, but also provide sufficient time for recovery and maintenance as well as training for other contingency missions. By increasing the dwell time for our units, we can accomplish the more comprehensive training needed for the sophisticated skill sets that have enabled Marine Air Ground Task Forces to consistently achieve success in all types of battle. Our goal is to increase dwell time and achieve a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio for our active forces.

## **II. End Strength Increase**

The recently proposed increase of Marine Corps Active Component end strength from approximately 180,000 to 202,000 Marines will go a long way toward reducing the strain on the individual Marines and the institution as a whole. I need to emphasize, the underlying requirement for an end strength increase is separate from, indeed it pre-dates, the “plus-up” operation in Iraq. Our first task will be to build three new infantry battalions and elements of their supporting structure—approximately 4,000 Marines. We will then systematically increase the number of Marines on a schedule of approximately 5,000 per year. This end strength will do more than just add the much needed infantry battalions—we will balance the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and reduce the strain on military occupational specialties that are experiencing a 1:1 deployment-to-dwell ratio or less. These include rotary wing squadrons, military police, intelligence units, engineers, and other combat support and combat service support fields. Currently many of these units are deployed for seven months and only home for five.

<b>End strength (thousands)</b>	<b>FY07</b>	<b>FY08</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>FY10</b>	<b>FY11</b>	<b>FY12</b>	<b>FY13</b>
FY 2007 Baseline	175	175	175	175	175	175	175
PB08 Baseline Increase	0	5	19	24	27	27	27
<b>Sub-Total Active Force</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>202</b>
Funded in Supplemental	9	9	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total USMC Active Force</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>202</b>

For Fiscal Year 2007, the active component will grow by 9,000 Marines. Supplemental appropriations will fund this growth. In Fiscal Year 2008, the end strength increase will be funded by a combination of baseline and supplemental appropriations. In Fiscal Years 2009 and beyond, baseline appropriations will fund the end strength increase.

This end strength is important not only for the current requirements, but also to posture the Marine Corps for future mission requirements as the Nation's force in readiness.

**Reserve Component End Strength.** Our efforts in the Long War have been a Total Force effort, with our Reserves once again performing with grit and determination. Recent policy changes within the Department of Defense allow us to access the Reserve forces as they were structured to be employed—to augment and reinforce our Active Component forces. To this end, my goal is to sustain a 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio within our Reserve Component. As our active force increases in size, the reduced reliance on our reserve forces should allow us even more “buffer” as we work to maintain the proper deployment-to-dwell ratio for our Reserves.

### **III. Plus-Up Operations**

Currently, the Marine Corps has approximately 4,000 Marines affected by plus-up operations in Iraq. The affected units will be extended by 45-60 days. This extension will influence our Marines and their families, but we are ardently keeping our families informed of the details. We believe that family support systems and unit programs back home will help Marines and families meet the concomitant challenges of the extension. Further, between their return and next deployment, the addition of new infantry battalions will allow these units to lengthen their time at home.

Battalions moved forward in the rotation cycle will complete all required pre-deployment training that fully qualifies them for employment. These battalions will be subject to the same pre-deployment training standards as their fellow Marines. We have accelerated the normal cycle

through our main mission rehearsal exercise, Mojave Viper, to accommodate consistent training for all units rotating into theater.

The accelerated battalions will deploy with equipment from their home stations, and the additional equipment required will be provided by cross-leveling assets in theater as well as leveraging equipment already positioned forward. This has resulted in some home station shortfalls and has hindered some stateside units' ability to train for other missions and contingencies. While the readiness of deployed units remains high, we have experienced a decrease in the readiness of some non-deployed units.

There are no Marine Corps Reserve units involved in the plus-up operations.

#### **IV. Manning the Force**

An important factor in sustaining a viable force is continuing to recruit and retain qualified young men and women with the right character, commitment, and drive to become Marines. With over 70 percent of the proposed Marine Corps end strength increase comprised of first-term Marines, both recruiting and retention efforts are being challenged. A major part of this effort will involve increased funding for both the Enlistment Bonus and Selective Reenlistment Bonus Programs that we included in the President's budget request. We need the strong support of Congress to achieve continued success.

Purposefully exceeding Department of Defense quality standards, we continue to recruit the best of America into our ranks—in Fiscal Year 2006, the Marine Corps achieved over 100 percent of our Active Component accession goal. The Marine Corps Reserve also achieved 100 percent of its recruiting goals, but reserve officer numbers remain challenging because our primary accession source is from officers that leave active duty. We appreciate the continued authorization for a Selected Reserve Officer Affiliation Bonus in the Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act—it continues to contribute in this critical area.

We forecast that both active and reserve recruiting will remain difficult, particularly when viewed through the lens of new missions to meet the increased end strength of the Marine Corps. We will need the continued support of Congress for enlistment bonuses and other recruiting programs, such as advertising, which will be essential for us to continue meeting these growth challenges.

Retention is the other important part of manning the force. In Fiscal Year 2006, the Marine Corps exceeded its retention goals for both First Term and Career Forces. For Fiscal Year 2007, we expect to exceed our goals again. This success can be attributed to the Marine Corps' judicious use of the Selective Reenlistment Bonus. To keep the very best of our Marines, the President's budget increases the size of our bonus program in order to ensure that we have the right grade and military occupational specialty (MOS) mix to support the growing force. Not only will we have to retain more first-term Marines, but also we will have to increase the number of Marines reenlisting at the eight and twelve-year mark. This will require us to shift more funding toward key areas in the career force.

**V. Equipment Requirements for the 202K Marine Corps and the Iraq Plus-Up**

The conflict in Iraq and the greater Long War on Terror have increased our equipment maintenance and replacement costs far beyond what is available in our baseline budget. The challenge of restoring and maintaining traditional capabilities while fielding new capabilities to ensure success in the Long War has come to be known as "resetting the force." With your help over the last two years, we have begun to make progress in restoring our equipment readiness, but there is much work to be done if we are to win the current fight and still be able to respond to other challenges that face our country.

Slow deliveries of needed equipment have forced us to cross-level and redistribute equipment to ensure that our OIF-bound units have their full complement of equipment. This has resulted in home station shortfalls and hindered some stateside units' ability to train for other missions and contingencies. Personnel and equipment needed for mobile training teams and other non-traditional employment in theater has had a similar impact. While the readiness of deployed units and units preparing to deploy has remained high, we have experienced a decrease in non-deployed units' readiness.

To remedy the near term decline in readiness, we have received \$10.2 billion in funding to reset the force. Deliveries of equipment procured with reset funding are proceeding; however, increases in deployment and operating tempo will slow our efforts to reset the force. Equipment originally planned to replace home station shortfalls and prepositioning programs will now be used to address unit equipment requirements associated with the Iraq plus-up.

**Equipping a 202K Marine Corps.** In order to best equip proposed end strength increases, the Marine Corps has a phased approach across Fiscal Years 2008-11 that is synchronized with increases in personnel. We have established an Integrated Process Team (IPT) to identify the units and associated personnel required to support the Marine Corps growth to 202K. Once the units associated with this increase are identified, a Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, and Facilities (DOTMLPF) analysis will be conducted to determine the full spectrum of support required. While the vast majority of required equipment will be the procurement of additional existing weapon systems, when it makes sense, we will procure next generation equipment to keep pace with technological improvements. The Fiscal Year 2008 President's Budget includes \$2.2B in Procurement, Marine Corps to fund the items necessary to equip the additional Marines.

**Equipment in Support of Additional Troops in Iraq.** Equipment in support of additional troops in Iraq is acquired through a variety of sources. These include cross-leveling of equipment from within the Marine Force Component Command (MARFORs), cross-leveling within theater, pending procurement deliveries, Maritime Prepositioning Stores, Depot Maintenance Master Work Schedule, Forward In Stores stocks, and a variety of other smaller sources.

The deployment of additional Marine Forces to Iraq will have some impact upon the Marine Corps' reset efforts. The goal of our reset effort is to ensure the Corps is equipped to perform both GWOT and other future missions; reset is not intended solely to meet the demands of OIF. We do not envision our reset effort changing or our reset requirements growing because of the force increase. We do expect a dip in non-deployed unit readiness as we prioritize available equipment to outfit forward deployed units; however, this effect will be temporary and the delivery of new equipment funded by previous appropriations will increase Marine Corps readiness. The only known long term effect will be the increased attrition we expect as more equipment is employed in the hazardous and severe environment in Iraq. We have not yet fully assessed the potential impact of any increased attrition on our reset requirement but we anticipate that it will be small relative to the complete reset effort.

The Marine Corps prioritizes the distribution of available equipment to units according to their assigned mission and the position in the deployment cycle. Those units next to deploy

receive priority for available equipment as they begin their predeployment training. Most items are available in sufficient quantities to equip all units regardless of status, but many units will lack high demand or theater specific items such as the Up-Armored HMMWV. To ensure that adequate equipment is available to equip every unit, we embarked on a long-term reset effort. This effort is well underway and the Congress has been very responsive to our requests. In Fiscal Year 2006 and thus far in Fiscal Year 2007, the Marine Corps has received \$10.2B towards our reset needs and over half -- \$6.8B has already been committed or obligated. The Corps has taken delivery of large quantities of new equipment but much more will be delivered in the coming months. I believe that Marine Corps readiness will steadily increase and I am confident that we remain ready for all current and future missions.

**Personal Protective Equipment.** The Marine Corps currently has sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on-hand to outfit two additional infantry battalions. For plus-up operations in Iraq, the two additional battalions will receive protective equipment from home station Consolidated Issue Facilities (CIFs), prior to deploying to Iraq. This emerging requirement may require some cross-leveling between CIFs, but sufficient quantities are available for prescribed PPE. The Side Small Arms Protective Insert (Side SAPI) is currently an in-theater issued asset and one that Marines are not provided prior to deployment. Sufficient Side SAPIs are available in-theater to provide for issue to the two additional infantry battalions for the Iraq plus-up.

**Impact on Home Station.** Once equipment shortfalls are identified, Marine Forces Command (MARFORCOM) and Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) will identify those items that have an adverse impact on pre-deployment training of units in subsequent rotations. Our supporting establishment in concert with Marine Corps Logistics Command (MCLC) and Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) will mitigate these shortages to the Marine Forces Component Commands (MARFORs) through redirecting pending contract deliveries and depot maintenance cycles.

**High Demand Equipment.** Equipment in high demand continues to be monitored closely and critical shortfalls are filled through the process outlined above. In addition, new advances in technology have allowed for improved survivability. An example of this has been our progression in the armored vehicle from the basic HMMWV to the Marine Armor Kit

(MAK), to the fully fielded M1114, to the new Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) family of vehicles. Within the next 3-5 years, we expect the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) to be fielded, which will have the latest protection that science and technology can provide. This example shows how modern advances in technology along with the military partnering with industry have enhanced survivability on the battlefield.

To extend the life of high demand equipment, we have numerous programs in place. Marine Corps Logistics Command has established a forward maintenance augmentation program to conduct overflow of intermediate level maintenance in theater. We have established a Forward In Stores program designed to manage critical repair parts in theater. This has reduced the equipment repair time of selected critical high demand equipment. Our deployed forces also use the Army Materiel Command's forward maintenance capabilities. Another is the aggressive use of contracted logistics support capabilities. Additionally, we have a Principle End Item (PEI) rotation plan that allows critical assets to be systematically removed from the battlefield, sent back to the States, and inducted into depot level maintenance cycles. Currently, 56 separate equipment categories have been identified for induction into the PEI rotation plan. Our Fiscal Year 2008 PEI induction plan is an enhanced plan that identifies 128 separate equipment categories. This process allows for essential rebuild of those assets and an extension of their service life. While this depot level maintenance is being done, the latest technology available is being applied to ensure the best equipment available is returned to theater.

The two Marine Corps depots have rapidly realigned capability and capacity to meet immediate needs. This has been accomplished by overtime, additional shifts, and utilizing commercial vendors and other DoD depots. Currently, our depots are not constrained by funding or capacity. It is logical to expect an increase in depot rebuild requirements as the Marine Corps increases its deployed battalions forward in Iraq, while concurrently executing a robust equipment rotation strategy for combat forces.

**Impact on Marine Corps Aviation Equipment.** The Long War on Terror has resulted in aircraft use rates far greater than designed or programmed on Marine Corps aircraft. All USMC aircraft are operating at two to four times their programmed rates; our unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) squadrons are flying at ten times their programmed rate. In order to meet demands of the current fight and posture ourselves for success in the Long War, we must

husband these low density, high demand assets. The Marine Aviation Plan mitigation strategy sustains our legacy inventory while we simultaneously transition to new platforms to source the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) and joint force in the future.

The timely support and execution of the Marine Aviation Plan will determine USMC aviation force readiness today and tomorrow. KC-130J, H-1, and MV-22 production lines are now active but funded below maximum capacity. Additionally, F/A-18D and CH-53E aircraft will reach the end of their service lives before replacement aircraft become available. These shortfalls underscore the urgency for the F-35B and CH-53K programs to remain on schedule.

Turn Around Ratio (TAR) for all USMC helicopter and UAV squadrons as well as our air traffic control detachments and aviation logistics falls short of directed 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratios. Over the past year, many of these units have a dwell time less than 1:1 with most for seven months and only home for five. The combination of this deployment-to-dwell ratio and increased usage rates creates a cumulative effect that exacerbates the stress on some components of Marine aviation. Our end strength increase will include both aviation equipment and personnel increases to reduce this strain.

## **VI. Improving the Quality of Life for our Marines and their families**

Our family support mechanisms remain robust and flexible and are continuously assessed to ensure sufficiency and relevancy to our wartime mission—particularly during crucial “rapid fire” operations. Though some Marine Corps families will be impacted by extended deployments, family support systems to meet this requirement are within Marine Corps capacity. We continue to provide emphasis on Combat / Operational Stress Control (COSC), Casualty Assistance, and support to our injured Marines.

**Combat/Operational Stress Control (COSC).** Managing stress is vital to the Marine Corps as a fighting force and the long-term health and well-being of Marines and their families. The culture and climate of the Marine Corps must facilitate Marines and families seeking necessary help when their lives are not returning to normal. Unit leaders have the greatest potential to influence Marines and their families and ensure they feel comfortable asking for help. COSC, therefore, is the responsibility of Marine leadership and includes support from medical personnel and chaplains.

**Casualty Assistance.** Each Marine fatality is a tragic loss to his or her family and the Corps. We endeavor to honor their sacrifices with sincerity and commitment. Our Casualty Assistance Calls Officers are trained to treat next of kin and other family members as they would their own family. Each case is distinct, and assistance to surviving families must be carefully segmented and specifically adjusted to facilitate their transition through grief stages and completion of the casualty-notification process.

**Wounded Marines and Sailors.** The Marine For Life Injured Support program was developed to assist seriously and very seriously injured Marines, Sailors who have served or are serving with Marines, and their families. Among other components, the program seeks to bridge the gap between military and the Department of Veterans Affairs medical care by providing individual support through the transition period. Additionally, I have directed creation of a Wounded Warrior Regiment to provide centralized oversight of care for our wounded Marines and assist in the integration of their support with military, government, charitable, and civilian systems.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).** Recent measures to mitigate the impact of traumatic brain injuries to individual Marines and their units include release of a medical guidance letter from the Medical Officer of the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps has also implemented an improved helmet pad system to decrease impact of injury from a blast or blow to the head.

The science of diagnosing and treating PTSD continues to evolve. Screening is taking place in theater and at home stations. Research and training are underway to identify risk and protective factors for PTSD, increase resilience to stress, and improve individual / leadership awareness, early identification, and psychological first aid for those who are stress-injured.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to report to you on behalf of the valiant men and women of your Corps. They remain committed to their mission and know that the American people and its government support them in their endeavor. Your Corps stands ready to serve in any clime and place, but your continued support remains a vital and appreciated foundation to this Service.