

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
TACTICAL AIR AND LAND SUBCOMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TACTICAL AIR AND LAND FORCES
CONCERNING
2007 BUDGET REQUEST AND FYDP
ON
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Opening

Chairman Weldon, Ranking Member Abercrombie, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss force structure initiatives, current force protection program initiatives and other major ground component acquisition programs as part of the fiscal year 2007 budget request and future years defense program. Your Marine Corps is entering the fifth year of what has been aptly termed *The Long War* and because of the support received from Congress, Marines continue to demonstrate that they are an expeditionary force in readiness – *Most Ready When the Nation is Least Ready*. Scalable, flexible and adaptable for crises and always innovative for future challenges, your Corps' number one priority is fighting and winning the many battles necessary for our nation's survival. On behalf of all Marines, I thank the Committee for your continued support and commitment to the readiness of your Marine Corps. Your support has made us more effective in the fight, saved lives, and helped prepare us for an uncertain future.

Marine Corps Force Structure Initiatives

Force Structure Review Group. In 2004, with over two years of combat lessons to guide our adaptation, we conducted an extensive Total Force Structure Review recommending approximately 15,000 structure changes to posture the Corps and meet the long-term needs of the Global War on Terror in the emerging requirements of the 21st Century. This effort was end strength and structure neutral—offsets to balance these increases in capabilities come from military to civilian conversions and the disestablishment and reorganization of less critical capabilities.

Implementation of most FSRG initiatives are on-track in accordance with the original plan with key exceptions being 1st Battalion 9th Marines (1/9), 2d Battalion 9th Marines (2/9), and the Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Companies. Equipment availability has caused a delay in Initial Operational Capability (IOC) and Full Operational Capability (FOC) for 1/9 and the LAR companies. The IOC/FOC for 2/9 has slid to FY08/09 to align stand up with Military Construction (MILCON). In addition, 1/9 and 2/9 are being considered for possible compensation for the Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) as we shift forces and continue adapting our organization to fight the enemy.

Capabilities Assessment Group. Additionally, we initiated a Capabilities Assessment Group last month to take a focused look at our operating forces in order to ensure we have properly incorporated QDR guidance, the recent decision (28 October 2005) by the Secretary of Defense

approving a MARSOC consisting of approximately 2600 Marines and Sailors, and continuing lessons learned on the battlefield. The focus of this initiative is not limited to remaining end strength neutral as with the FSRG, rather the CAG will assess all aspects of our current operations and more importantly, our future requirements in order to determine the right end strength balance for our Corps. This review was initiated to ensure we are postured best for irregular warfare, and that we adjust to the establishment of MARSOC, our decision to man infantry battalions at 100%, and the potential reduction of authorized end-strength.

The Marine Corps continues to examine other opportunities to augment needed capabilities. For example, we are assigning each artillery regiment a secondary mission to conduct civil military operations (CMO). To do this, each regiment will be augmented by a reserve civil affairs capability. By assigning a secondary CMO mission to artillery units, we have greatly augmented our high-demand/low density civil affairs capability while retaining much needed artillery units. We continue to look for additional innovative ways to maximize our capabilities within our existing force structure.

End Strength. The Marine Corps greatly appreciates the increase in end strength to 179,000 as authorized in the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act. If appropriated, we will use this additional end strength to help implement our force structure initiatives, to support the Global War on Terror. Currently, our Program of Record requires that we internally fund any end strength in excess of 175,000 Marines. We are resourcing these additional costs through Supplemental funding.

Rapid Equipping Initiatives

Close coordination with forward deployed forces enables us to address our Marines' needs in Iraq and Afghanistan. While no armoring scheme can protect completely against anti-tank or tandem mines, very large IEDs, suicide vehicle bombs, etc., vehicle armoring, personal protection, and counter IED items have been fielded using a combination of internal reprogramming actions and supplemental funds provided by the Congress. In particular, the Marine Corps attacks along several axes to provide needed equipments capabilities. We exploit Service and Joint opportunities to pursue rapid development and fielding of equipment to our forward deployed forces. In November of 2003, we established the Urgent Universal Needs Statement (UUNS) process to rapidly translate mission-essential needs of Marines in theater to fielded materiel solutions. We also maintain a close collaborative and tightly integrated relationship with the Joint Improvised

Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) which has yielded counter-IED technologies that continue to save lives. Through these programs, over the past two years, JIEDDO has spent over \$2.73 billion to research, procure and operate counter IED technologies for the forward deployed forces. The Marine Corps has directly benefited through the funding of systems specifically for our use and through the funding of technologies and organizations that support the joint force.

UUNS: In order to adapt to an evolving threat, the Urgent Universal Needs Statement (UUNS) process has provided a streamlined process for our operating forces to identify and forward new requirements for weapons and equipment up the chain of command for rapid review and approval –most in under 90 days. Upon rapid approval by the Marine Corps Requirements Oversight Council, the Marine Corps and the Department of the Navy realigned necessary funds within permitted reprogramming thresholds. The sources for these reprogramming actions have been our investment account assets. In many cases, the funding was made available by our decision to accept risk and defer the full execution of otherwise approved programs in order to address immediate warfighting needs. Validated requests that exceeded established reprogramming thresholds were forwarded to the Congress for approval. Some of our most recent examples of UUNS are: second generation Counter Improvised Explosive Device (CIED) Jammers; the “side” Small Arms Protective Insert (SAPI); and the rapid fielding of the Enhanced-SAPI (E-SAPI) through Multi-nation Corps Iraq (MNC-I).

Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) The Commanding General, Marine Corps Warfighting Lab is the Corps’ representative to the JIEDDO under General (Ret) Meigs. Currently Marines are participating at every level from each working group to the JIEDDO staff with a permanently assigned Liaison Officer (LNO) in the JIEDDO Operations Center in order to maintain situational awareness on all IED related issues. Additionally, the recently approved JIEDDO Joint Manning Document has increased Marine participation from 11 to 20 billets. The Marine Corps and the JIEDDO continue to coordinate IED cross training both CONUS and in theater. The new Joint Counter IED Center of Excellence, headquartered at the National Training Center in Ft. Irwin, CA, includes a detachment at 29 Palms, CA, further linking the Services together in counter IED training efforts. To date, the Marine Corps has received funding for 100% of the requests that were presented to the JIEDDO specifically for Marines totaling over \$105M in FY 05 and \$290M in FY 06.

Force Protection Programs

Unable to match our conventional force in like fashion, our enemies have resorted to asymmetric tactics such as the Improvised Explosive Device. Our Marines and Sailors are equipped with the best force protection equipment possible. As technology advances are applied to emerging warfighter requirements, we will continue to bolster our force protection capabilities through the next generation of personal extremity protective equipment, vehicle hardening, explosive device jammers, unmanned ground vehicles, and immediate adaptation of new tactics techniques and procedures (TTPs) through lessons learned.

Personal Protection

The challenge of body armor design is a delicate balance between the desired payoff of additional personal safety against the loss of combat mobility and effectiveness due to increased aggregate weight and the potential for heat exhaustion and fatigue. As threats and the lethality of enemy snipers and IEDs have increased, we continue to adapt and provide enhancements to our personal protection systems.

- **Side - Small Arms Protective Insert (SAPI).** We are aggressively fielding Side-SAPI sets as fast as they are produced to meet our MARCENT requirement of 33,000 sets. As of last month we have fielded 25,885 sets and anticipate completing the requirement by the end of next month. Used in conjunction with the Enhanced SAPI plates already fielded, our Marines and Sailors operating in Iraq are afforded maximum protection while maintaining the best possible combat mobility needed to execute their mission.
- **Extremity Protection.** We have fielded over 113,990 Lightweight Helmets to date, and we plan to procure 43,145 more in Fiscal Year 2006. For unique mission requirements, we have fielded the MARCENT requirement of 4,500 sets of Quad Guard which provide ballistic protection for arms and legs. Lastly, by June of this year, we will have completed the fielding of the upgraded Military Eye Protection System (MEPS).

Vehicle Hardening.

- We are nearing completion of our current/near-term requirements. All Marine Armor Kits (MAKs) requirements for our base HMMWV and A2 models were achieved in November 2005. The MTRV (7-ton truck) Armor System (MAS) requirements will be completed next month. Our M1114 (up armored HMMWV) operational requirement will be complete in July 2006 (2,502 vehicles) leaving 312 sustainment vehicles to be delivered by November 2006 for a total of 2,814 M1114s to meet the MARCENT requirement for all Marines in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- In support of our engineers conducting Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, we have fielded the 26 required Cougars or Hardened Engineer Vehicles (HEV). The Marine Corps will

also procure 39 Joint EOD Rapid Response Vehicles (JERRVs). (6 have been delivered, 8 are enroute to Iraq with final deliveries scheduled for June 2006).

- The Army and Marine Corps have been working closely together for a mid-term solution through the M-1151/2 designed to replace our base HMMWV A2 models that have reached the end of their service lives. The M-1151/2 is the bridge vehicle to a Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) solution for the Army and Marines.

Counter Radio C-IED Electronic Warfare (CREW)

- Since 2003, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) have become the single most significant threat to U.S. forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Constantly adapted in size, fuzing, and techniques of employment, they are the primary source of U.S. casualties, both wounded and killed in action.
- Our enemy is adaptive and innovative. There is strong corroborating evidence that our enemy studies open media sources accessible via the internet as well as private, professional and technological fora to gain insights on our counter IED tactics, techniques and procedures.
- The Deputy Secretary of Defense, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Director of the JIEDDO agree that the safety of our in-theater forces merits a significant level of operational security. Accordingly, discussion of our Counter IED initiatives, while continually at the forefront of our efforts, will require a closed session to discuss.
- We are currently fielding second generation Counter Radio CIED Electronic Warfare (CREW) to respond to new enemy IED tactics.

Unmanned Ground Vehicles

- Family of Robots. To increase standoff from IED blast effects, we have equipped our Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) units and Combat Engineer Battalions with a host of robots to enhance force protection measures. Examples consist of the Marbot for engineer Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) use and the Talon, Packbot, Bombot, and RC-50 for EOD operations. Input from the field will permit selection of the best of these systems throughout our EOD teams and the training establishment.
- We are also procuring the “Gladiator,” an unmanned, tele-operated/semi-autonomous ground vehicle for remote combat scouting, assault, and reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition tasks in order to neutralize threats and reduce the exposure of individual Marines to hostile enemy action. The Gladiator is planned to achieve Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in June 2009.

Applying Lessons Learned / Pre-deployment Training

- For over three years, the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) has provided briefings, information papers and reports on observations and lessons from ongoing operations to various audiences including: decision makers; resource managers; Joint and Joint Forces Command “lessons learned” organizations; and coalition partners. MCCLL routinely has MCCLL data collectors embedded in our forward units in Iraq. A team just returned from

Afghanistan with more data. MCCLL members continue active collection of lessons and observations from current operations, and aggressive distribution of the lessons learned throughout our ranks. Concurrent collection, dissemination, archiving, and integration into our predeployment training and Expeditionary Force Development System (EFDS) continues in CONUS. The lessons learned are fully coordinated with U.S. Army Lessons Learned efforts and our information sharing is tightly linked with those of United Kingdom forces as well.

- An individual understanding of local culture and languages is a force multiplier in irregular operations, such as those we are conducting in Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa, and, as noted in this month's Defense Science Board report on Force Protection in Urban Environments, a critical enabler to our force protection efforts. Our cultural awareness and language training programs accomplished several milestones this past year. The Marine Corps graduated its first class of new lieutenants with formal training in the operational aspects of foreign cultures. During February 2005, we opened our new Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning, and it is already proving its value. The Center has distributed its first basic tactical language training programs, preparing individuals to serve in Iraqi Arabic and Pan-Sahel French cultures (*Pan-Sahel French is a predominant language in the former French colonies of Northwest Africa*). The Center also provided training to our newly established Foreign Military Training Unit, as well as to Marines selected to serve as advisors to the Iraqi security forces and Afghan National Army. CAOCL personnel provide training to every deploying unit. In the future, we look to build a permanent facility to house the Center as well as establishing satellite sites for sustaining language and culture training in our career force. Additionally, all graduates of all our Command and Staff College at Quantico will have received over 132 hours of Arabic language instruction in our first year of this initiative.
- Nothing is more critical to mission accomplishment and force protection than top-flight training. To focus our training efforts, all deploying Marine units continue to rotate through a standardized training package. At the center of these efforts is our revised Pre-Deployment Training Program conducted at the Marine Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, and at the Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, California (the latter for units deploying to Afghanistan). The real-time and continuous connectivity with forward forces enables our units in training to apply combat lessons learned directly into their pre-deployment training. During this past fiscal year over 21,000 Marines received combined arms and urban operations training at Twentynine Palms. In addition, over 4,000 Marines and coalition partners trained in the mountain operations course at Bridgeport, and another 11,000 Marines participated in the adjacent Desert Talon exercise series at Yuma. The success of our Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan is due in large measure to the training that they experience at these three sites. This training is demanding, realistic, and continually adjusted based on our latest lessons learned. I encourage you to visit Twentynine Palms so you can see first hand the quality of instruction afforded to our Marines going into the fight.

Current Ground Force Sustainment Programs

In addition to supporting our GWOT requirements, we are also focusing on the future fight. The Army-Marine Corps Board has been a valuable forum in meeting both needs. Our support to GWOT includes survivability, reliability and firepower improvements to the current fleet of combat

and tactical wheeled vehicles. Our programs for the future will enhance Ground Force mobility, survivability and sustainability through 2015 and beyond. The efforts include: Joint Light Tactical Vehicle; Light Armored Vehicle Program; M1A1 enhancements in safety and firepower; Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement; and Logistics Vehicle System Replacement.

EFV

- 15 EFVs have been produced for a comprehensive Milestone C Operational Assessment (OA) which began in January 2006 at Camp Lejeune and includes gunnery, land operations, Force on Force and amphibious operations testing.
- A Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) decision is planned for late 2006. A full rate production decision and Initial Operational Capability are planned for the Fall of 2010.
- The planned fiscal commitment within the FYDP (FY 07-11) for the EFV program is \$522M in R&D, \$2.6B in procurement. No ground vehicle will provide more capability to move from seabases or ground bases over any terrain/water obstacles in pursuit of irregular or conventional enemies, with a balance of speed, lethality and force protection characteristics.

JLTV

- The Army-Marine Corps Board (AMCB) has specifically proven to be an invaluable forum to harmonize Army and Marine Corps “long term” tactical wheeled vehicle procurement plans over the last year. In September 2005, the AMCB established a joint tactical wheeled vehicle program, focused on near-term joint requirements.
- The objective of these efforts is to define requirements for a JLTV that reflects not only an appropriate response to the operational threat, but also the best state of industrial art in meeting the survivability, mobility and network enabling needs of the joint force.
- Current plans target a Milestone B decision not later than October 2007 that supports an incremental acquisition strategy for the light fleet. We are “inventing” a new vehicle and working hard, but this takes time.

LAV (SLEP) / Replacement

- The current Light Armor Vehicle (LAV) fleet configuration was extended through a basic Service Life Extension Program (SLEP). The final phase of the SLEP is an Improved Thermal Sight System with first delivery beginning in September 2006 consisting of 486 systems. This will extend the current LAV family of vehicles through 2015.
- Survivability and reliability improvements to the current fleet will be provided by our LAV A2 program. This program will extend improvements to our entire fleet, purchase 120 new vehicles to equip the FSRG-initiated additional Light Armor companies and procure 13 vehicles to replace combat losses. The new vehicles and survivability upgrade are on contract and with delivery beginning in July 2007. This vehicle has given a superb accounting of itself in OEF, OIF I and OIF II and keeping it in the fight in top condition is essential to our Marines.

M1A1 (FEP)

The M1A1 Fire Power Enhancement Program (FEP) provides improved thermal sights and fire control computers. The FEP is on contract, has delivered 12 systems to theater, 3 systems within CONUS and continues production toward the 389 funded systems. A superb tank now, this program will ensure it remains the world's best.

MTVR (7-Ton Truck)

The MTVR has proven to be a true workhorse. In addition to being highly successful in its primary mission of tactical distribution of manpower and supplies, it has been modified with the MTVR Armor System (MAS) offering blast protection equal to that of the M1114. This system coupled with the exceptional ground clearance and shear mass of the vehicle has proven to be highly survivable in current operations. Additionally, the MTVR has been modified with an armored troop compartment. The first vehicle was delivered in 2001. With an ongoing production line to replace war losses and a life cycle of 21 years, the MTVR will serve our requirements well past 2020.

LVSR

The Logistics Vehicle System Replacement (LVSR) is expected to achieve a Milestone C Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) decision in May 2006. Operational testing will follow in FY 07 and a Full Rate Production (FRP) decision expected in June 2008. The Marine Corps will procure 1,581 vehicles with Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in FY 09. Essential to our logistic sustainment in an expeditionary environment, this program's progress will permit replacement of the aging, hard-used LVS fleet.

USMC participation in the Army's Future Combat Systems acquisition program

- The Marine Corps is actively working with the Army to leverage the command and control (C2) and technology development efforts of the Army's Future Combat Systems (FCS) acquisition program.
- We are mapping future MAGTF C2 architectural views to the FCS Brigade Combat Team (BCT) architectures within the joint force context. This work provides the basis for integrating FCS C2 and ISR components into our MAGTFs.
- We have assessed the requirements and employment concepts of FCS Spin Out 1 technology products and have adopted the seven specific requirements of the Intelligent Munition Systems (IMS), a landmine replacement system. We are working with Army Training and Doctrine (TRADOC) to develop the MAGTF unique architectural views for this planned procurement.
- We are selectively integrated with the Army's FCS Program Offices, ensuring a joint development of command and control network integration and interoperability and review of high payoff technologies and components. A Network Systems Integration Working Group has been established between the two services in the Joint Battle Management Command and Control Initiative. Our collaboration, guided by the Network Ready Key Performance Parameter set by the Joint Staff will ensure the interoperability and commonality needed by the joint force; we fully

expect that such joint C4 and technology development efforts will enhance interoperability between the services.

- We continue to work closely with the Army, reviewing all FCS developments, to determine additional opportunities to meet Marine Corps' operational requirements. We currently have 4 Liaison Officers (LNO) "on site" at various FCS locations and 10 Marine Corps System Command (MCSC) personnel working FCS engagement out of Quantico, Virginia.

Major Equipment Shortfalls

Approximately 40 percent of all Marine Corps ground equipment, 50-55 percent of communications equipment, and 20 percent of aircraft assets are being used in OIF/OEF/Horn of Africa (HOA) compared to approximately 21 percent of Marine operating forces deployed in support of those combat operations. Due to continuous combat operations, the Global War on Terror ground equipment usage rate averages range from four to nine times normal peacetime usage depending on the end item, hours/miles, and operational conditions. Our readiness priority is the support and sustainment of our forward deployed forces. High usage rates in a harsh operating environment, coupled with the added weight of armor and unavoidable delays of scheduled maintenance due to operational tempo, are degrading our equipment at an accelerated rate. More than 3,434 principal end items valued at \$196.2 Million have been destroyed. Those figures do not reflect our aircraft losses but are for ground systems alone. Required repairs on 3,590 damaged end items necessitate additional depot maintenance at a cost of \$157.1 Million.

At the direction of the Secretary of Defense, the Marine Corps prepared a Demand on Equipment (DOE) analysis. That analysis was performed for a select number of large dollar value ground and aviation systems, and it revealed that the additional wear on this equipment in theater was rapidly accelerating platform/equipment aging.

After completing the DOE analysis of all aircraft and 96 major ground systems, the Marine Corps identified \$2.2 billion in executable repair and replacement costs to begin resetting the force, which was reflected in the Marine Corps FY 2005 Supplemental request.

The Marine Corps also completed its evaluation of reset requirements and reviewed the top 300 high cost/high interest items for proper quantities, costs, executability and resourcing strategy (these 300 items equate to approximately 96 percent of the total reset cost estimate). For the remaining 2,100 items (approximately six percent in terms of cost), a common sense review was undertaken. Appropriate, approved modernization items (i.e., later type, model, series or enhanced capability) were included in the reset estimate.

Ground Equipment. The ground equipment readiness (mission capable) rates of our deployed forces average above 95 percent. Our pre-positioned stocks, within both the Marine Corps Preposition Program – Norway and Maritime Prepositioned Shipping – were heavily used and ensured the sustained readiness of our deployed ground units. We continue to sustain our readiness in theater through organic maintenance capabilities, contractor support, coordination with the Army leveraging their ground depot maintenance capability, an established principal end item rotation plan, and the established pool of ground equipment (Forward In-Stores) which expedites the replacement of damaged major end items. The corresponding ground equipment readiness (mission capable) rates for non-deployed units average 85 percent, although we do have shortages in home station equipment available for training due to “borrowing” equipment in support of GWOT. The continued improvement of the ground equipment readiness (mission capable) rates relies on the procurement of replacement equipment identified in our reset the force estimate.

Aviation Equipment. The aviation equipment readiness (mission capable) rates of our deployed forces averaged 82 percent over the past 12 months. In order to improve our readiness rate in theater, we are creating a limited aircraft depot maintenance capability. The corresponding aviation equipment readiness (mission capable) rates for units remaining in garrison averaged 74 percent over the past 12 months. Our legacy aircraft are performing their assigned missions and our maintenance Marines are providing constant perpetual care required to sustain them despite the higher utilization rates. Our Vietnam-era veteran CH-46 assault support helicopter has been flown and utilized in support of OIF at 200 percent of its peacetime usage rate. At such rates, maintaining the readiness of our aviation assets presents a considerable challenge.

We have lost a total of 27 aircraft in support of OIF/OEF/HOA operations. This is the equivalency of 2.25 squadrons. Until this year, we have not had a “hot” manufacturing line to replace these losses as we are in the midst of recapitalizing our legacy fleet. Due to the lack of an active production line for our CH-46, H-1 and CH-53 platforms, we have been managing these assets on the backs of our Marine mechanics, until our new generation of replacement aircraft becomes available. There are risks associated with this strategy, and we are managing those risks through a variety of approaches, including sustainment and individual component upgrade programs. We are also requesting funding in the FY 06 Supplemental to take an additional two CH-53E aircraft out of desert storage and refurbish them to replace aircraft destroyed during operations in support of the Global War on Terror. As the next generation of replacement aircraft complete

their operational evaluations and move from low rate to full rate production, we will be able to reduce operational risk.

Funding the Force. Per established guidelines, the Marine Corps' requirement is identified across multiple funding resources (FY 07 Budget and FY 06 Supplemental). The Fiscal Year 2007 budget is to sustain normal personnel, operations and maintenance, and investment in the Marine Corps for a 175,000 man force. Our total FY 06 supplemental requirement of \$10.4B (\$4.3B funded in the FY 06 Title IX and \$6.1B before the Congress now in the 2006 Supplemental request) addresses the incremental costs of war above and beyond the baseline budget, including personnel, operations and maintenance, transportation of equipment in theater, and the initial cost to replace equipment used in prosecuting the Global War on Terrorism. We believe that this process gives Congress greater visibility to funding needed for war prosecution than if it was contained within the baseline budget. Additionally, this process preserves progress towards maintenance and attainment of critical readiness and transformation activities by not diverting baseline budget to fund war expenditures. The costs of war are not entirely predictable and annual Supplementals provide greater flexibility to address warfighter needs. The Marine Corps acknowledges that Congress will fund requirements as they determine appropriate. We request timely action on the FY 06 Supplemental request to ensure that we can begin contracting for those investment items required by Marine units deploying into the AOR.

Reset the Force. Fighting the war, and resetting the force for the future, is our Commandant's balanced focus of effort. We continue to support DoD in developing a total reset cost estimate for the force, following the reduction in current operational tempo. We would not expect to execute the entire reset amount in one year due to industrial base limitations and we have phased our supplemental request accordingly.

Conclusion

Your Marines are fully dedicated to serving and protecting this Nation. Our hardworking recruiters are bringing in high spirited, high quality young patriots who want to be Marines, and retention of our best NCOs remains a heartening aspect for our warfighting Marine Corps. Their bravery, sacrifice, and commitment to warfighting excellence are well known to you. We recognize we have an essential mission, and that we have the solid backing of you and the American people. The Marine Corps fully understands that our greatest contribution to the Nation is our high-level of readiness across the spectrum of conflict.

In addition to being ready for the next fight, the Marine Corps' primary concern is protecting our Marines, Sailors and equipment essential to mission accomplishment. We do this by attacking along multiple, complementary lines to provide required capabilities. Leveraging Service and Joint forums, we field equipment and technology that address threats across the detect-collect-interrupt-mitigate force protection continuum. In particular, the evolution of our vehicle hardening efforts coupled with ongoing development in technologies to interrupt insurgents' IED attack cycle continue to save lives and preserve combat power. Wherever possible, we partner with our Sister Services to gain synergy in effort and economies of scale while ensuring appropriate stewardship of limited resources.

On behalf of all Marines, we thank the Committee for your continued support that has made us more effective in the fight, saved lives, and will allow us to protect this great Nation in an uncertain future.