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STATEMENT OF  
REAR ADMIRAL DONNA L. CRISP  
COMMANDER, JOINT POW/MIA ACCOUNTING COMMAND  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON  
MILITARY PERSONNEL  
JULY 10, 2008

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

This is my first opportunity to appear before you as the Commander of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), and on behalf of the men and women of JPAC, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your steadfast support to the personnel accounting efforts and to the men and women serving in the military at home and abroad, to our civilian workforce, and especially to the families of those who remain unaccounted for today.

## **MISSION**

As you heard from Ambassador Ray, JPAC is an integral part of the Department of Defense team executing a unique humanitarian mission to conduct global research, investigation, recovery and identification of service members and civilians who made the supreme sacrifice. JPAC reports to the Commander of U.S. Pacific Command, as 78% of our work is in the Pacific Command's Area of Responsibility. We have three forward deployed detachments in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. Our detachment in Thailand facilitates operations in Cambodia and India, as well serving as the logistical hub for the other two detachments and for teams operating throughout Southeast Asia and in Papua New Guinea and other locations. We are also home to the largest skeletal forensic identification laboratory in the world, which was recently re-accredited through the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors Laboratory Accreditation Board.

JPAC currently has 354 assigned military and civilian personnel who maintain a very high operational tempo, conducting approximately 70 research/investigation and recovery missions per year and deploying an average of 113 days per year.

This year, we are working in 15 countries to account for those missing from World War II, Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In 2008, we conducted or are planning to conduct operations in Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Japan, Pagan Island, Canada, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Germany, and France.

As Ambassador Ray noted in his remarks, he and I discuss personnel accounting issues on a daily basis and I welcome his frank advice and guidance in accomplishing our mission. JPAC and DPMO staffs routinely cooperate with each other across the strategic-operational level and together, we successfully interact with our foreign partners and embassy country teams in achieving success in accounting for missing Americans.

## **PRIORITY OF EFFORT**

Consistent with national-level guidance and direction, our primary efforts are focused in Southeast Asia. In Fiscal Year 2008, we planned 46 research, investigation

and excavation missions focused on accounting for those missing or dead from the Vietnam War, 16 such missions for World War II accounting and 5 missions for Korean War accounting. Our Laboratory identifies an average of 70 individuals per year. To date in 2008, we have identified 46 Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice and are being returned home to their families. We continue to seek opportunities to increase our investigations, recoveries, and identifications to ensure the fullest possible accounting for 74,374 World War II; 8,055 Korean War; 127 Cold War; and 1,757 Vietnam War unaccounted for Americans.

## **HOST NATION INTERACTION**

Our annual Operational Plan details our research, investigation, and recovery efforts to account for those still missing from our nation's conflicts. JPAC coordinates with host nation counterparts and with the primary U.S. agencies in the country of interest to ensure mission success.

Over the past 6 months, JPAC has conducted extensive bilateral discussions to further our progress in the accounting mission, not only with our traditional counterparts in the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic, but also with our constant supporters in the Republic of Korea and Papua New Guinea. We are also focused on resuming operations in the People's Republic of China and commencing our first missions in the Republic of India. We are joint partners in a humanitarian mission. With the overwhelming support of the host nations, our field investigation and recovery operations are successful.

I have had the opportunity to visit seven nations in the Asia Pacific region, and from these first-hand experiences with our foreign counterparts gained insights into the depth of support and commitment to the personnel accounting mission.

**Kingdom of Cambodia.** Cambodia is the model for cooperation on the POW/MIA accounting mission. At every turn, the Cambodians have committed themselves and resources to ensuring the greatest level of cooperation in order to achieve the fullest possible accounting of missing Americans. It is a blueprint by which other nations in the region can implement similar efforts.

**Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic.** The Lao have exhibited sustained cooperation in the accounting mission in the 25 years of continued dialogue and operations. During my visit to Laos in April 2008, the Lao reaffirmed their continued support for our joint investigation and recovery operations and have been extremely flexible in working with us on methods to achieve better efficiency and effectiveness in field operations. We continue to discuss raising the number of team members and conducting longer field activities.

**Socialist Republic of Vietnam.** Our efforts with Vietnam in the accounting mission improve at a measured pace. As Ambassador Ray noted, we are marking 20

years of regularly scheduled operations in September 2008. It is an opportunity for both sides to reflect upon past successes and discuss and implement concrete ideas to advance our cooperative actions. In late 2006, the Vietnamese agreed "in principle" to allow JPAC to use a U.S. Navy vessel for our underwater operations. Of particular note, we are planning to utilize a U.S. Navy hydrographic vessel for underwater investigations in 2009. We believe this vessel will enhance our capability for off-shore investigations and potentially provide critical information leading to future underwater excavation activities.

**Republic of Korea.** JPAC was at the forefront of the creation of the Korean counterpart organization known as the Ministry of Defense Agency for Killed in Action Recovery and Identification or MAKRI. During my visit with them in January 2008, I was impressed by their efforts to account for their own missing from the Korean War, which number 130,000, and their assistance to JPAC teams. We implemented the first Joint Forensic Review in November 2007, and earlier this year, we continued our commitment to support the on-going development of their scientific excellence by training two MAKRI forensic personnel in laboratory procedures. In my discussions with visiting ROK officials, to include their Vice Minister of National Defense last month, I have noted to them our goal to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Defense Agency for Killed in Action Recovery and Identification detailing our working relationship.

**Papua New Guinea.** The Papuans are enthusiastic partners and without hesitation, are supportive of JPAC activities in their country. They have been continuous partners since 1978 as we continue to prosecute cases from World War II operations consistent with the 2000 Congressional direction that the Department make reasonable efforts to recover the remains of U.S. servicemen lost in the Pacific theater while engaged in air operations, and specifically in Papua New Guinea.

**People's Republic of China.** We achieved some progress in our interaction with China this year with the successful agreement on archival research. We are continuing to negotiate with China on a recovery mission in Dandong, China. We remain hopeful we can conduct this mission along with several investigations in 2009.

**Republic of India.** In January 2008, Ambassador Ray and I engaged with Indian Government officials to conduct investigation and recovery operations to account for missing Servicemen from World War II. During my visit to India in March 2008, the Indians showed increased willingness to cooperate closely on our personnel accounting efforts and we are continuing to dialog with them on our plan to commence recovery operations in 2009.

**Europe.** While approximately 80 percent of our operations are in the Asia-Pacific region to account for missing from World War II, Korean War, Cold War, and Vietnam War, we have a world-wide mission. To accomplish our mission, we interact with countries in Europe on a regular basis to conduct research, investigations, and

excavations for World War II cases. This year, we will excavate loss sites in Germany and France – and exhume remains in Belgium and Hungary – to account for missing Servicemen from World War II. We are also conducting research in Germany and leveraging DPMO's Joint Commission Support Directorate's efforts in Eastern Europe to identify additional loss sites for investigation and recovery.

## **COMMANDER'S PRIORITIES**

As the Commander, my number one priority is the safety of our people. My second priority is quality of life of our military and civilian staff and finally continuous improvement to increase the effectiveness of every function in personnel accounting.

**Safety.** While executing the mission is very high in my priorities, the most important priority is the safety of our personnel, whether in the field or in an office environment. Safety takes precedence over excavating sites when risks cannot be mitigated sufficiently to reduce chances of serious or life-threatening injuries.

**Quality of Life / Quality of Service.** Quality of life and quality of the work environment is essential to retaining a professional staff. Over the past 6 months, we have added new temporary "modular buildings" at the headquarters and secured additional laboratory space on Pearl Harbor which will house our life support analysts, archeologists and material evidence. We have begun analyzing our recovery efforts, accessing past practices with an eye toward mitigating our high operational tempo.

Additionally, we are undertaking several initiatives to better posture the command's ability to meet the mission. These initiatives include the following measures:

**Military to Civilian Conversion.** We are converting 74 of our military billets to civilian positions. Most of our military linguist billets and some of the life support analyst positions are converting to civilian. This will result in transitioning from a traditional all-military field operations team, with the exception of the anthropologist, to a team with as many as three to four civilian members, thereby ensuring stability in our operations.

**Pay Structure.** I have also initiated a serious review of pay structures available within the National Security Personnel System to ensure our pay is commensurate with a world class organization and laboratory.

Recruitment and retention of our scientific staff is also a high priority of mine. We are conducting a labor market analysis, special skill set analysis, and potential options to ensure we retain our outstanding staff. Additionally, we must have a robust program to recruit new and talented scientists who will assist in maintaining the high quality of scientific excellence you are familiar with.

New Headquarters Building. Funding has been approved for the design phase of the MILCON project, which begins in Fiscal Year 2009. We have programmed for a 140,717 square foot facility, currently scheduled for construction over Fiscal Years 2010 – 2011. This new building will, for the first time, bring together all of the staff into a single headquarters and would house state-of-the-art laboratories to speed up our identification efforts.

## **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The fullest possible accounting requires teamwork and unity of effort from several inter-linking commands and nations. It is a continuous process requiring constant analysis, adjustment, and improvement. We work closely with our foreign counterparts to ensure more effective procedures are put in place to enhance our field operations. We also have undertaken the following steps to set conditions for greater success in our recovery missions.

**Technology Application.** A new technology we're implementing at JPAC is Geographic Information System or "GIS" tools. It is a system of computer software, hardware, data, and maps which together provide a world-class tool to manipulate, analyze, and present information that is tied to a spatial or geographic location. Essentially, with the click of a mouse on the computer, GIS turns multiple pieces of data into information to improve our investigative and excavation efforts. GIS also overlays hospital and airport locations and medical information such as Avian Flu outbreaks so that our field teams have the necessary information to ensure the safety of our teams. With GIS, we can view and interact with data from multiple sources simultaneously on a map, saving hours of manual labor and enhancing efforts in the field.

**Phase Two Testing.** We are also continuing to apply Phase Two Testing – a standard archeological procedure used successfully throughout the world for years – which allows JPAC archeologists or anthropologists to gather additional data on large sites to better prioritize, plan and resource our excavation operations. We have successfully used this process in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam in 2008 as a means to address more cases per year and potentially reduce the number of excavation days and number of times we return to an excavation site by having more precise information as a result of our investigations. Our 2009 operations plan will further utilize the Phase Two Testing process throughout Southeast Asia and we are also incorporating this process into our World War II, Cold War and Korean War operations.

## **CLOSING**

This gives you a quick glance into my philosophy and the direction we are moving within JPAC to bring home the brave Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen as well as many dedicated civilians, all who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and who remain missing from past conflicts.

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Madam Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to address you. I am prepared to respond to any questions you may have.