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House Appropriations Committee

STATEMENT OF

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COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

BEFORE

THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERAN AFFAIRS, AND
RELATED AGENCIES SUBCOMMITTEE

ON

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Chairman Edwards, Congressman Wamp, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide a written report for the record. My pledge, as always, is to provide you with a candid and honest assessment. On behalf of all Marines, their families, and our civilian employees, I want to thank you for your concern and continued support.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics. Your Marine Corps is a young force that provides great value to the Nation.

- The average age of a Marine is 25 years old. Almost 70 percent of your Marines are on their first enlistment, and some 30,000 have been in uniform for less than a year.
- Almost half of the enlisted force is between the ranks of private and lance corporal (pay grades E1 - E3), and the ratio of officers to enlisted Marines is 1:9 — the lowest of all the services.¹
- For *6.5 percent*² of the baseline 2010 Defense budget, the Marine Corps provides:
 - *17 percent* of the Nation's active ground combat maneuver units
 - *12 percent* of the Nation's fixed wing tactical aircraft
 - *19 percent* of the Nation's attack helicopters

Near-Term Focus. The near-term focus of the Marine Corps is as follows:

- The current fight in Afghanistan and the responsible drawdown in Iraq
- Readiness and reset of equipment
- Modernization of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF)
- Preparing for the next contingency and the uncertainties of the future

Enduring Priorities. Through the future years defense plan and beyond, we are focused on:

- Providing the Nation a naval expeditionary force fully prepared for employment as a MAGTF across the spectrum of operations
- Remaining the most ready when our Nation is least ready
- Providing for our Marines and their families

PERSONNEL

Our people — the brave men and women who wear our uniform and the spouses, children, and the parents who support them — are our most valuable resource. In 2009, your Corps lost 65

1. FY 2010 authorized endstrength 202,100 = 21,230 officers + 180,870 enlisted Marines = 1:9.

2. 6.5 percent of DoD budget represents FY10 USMC Green dollars and Direct Blue (Navy) dollars.

Marines to enemy action in combat. We also lost 52 Marines who died by suicide — this serious issue, which will be discussed later in this report, has my personal attention.

- **Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.** Since testimony before your committee last year, the Marine Corps has transferred authority for Anbar Province to the U.S. Army and is near completion of a responsible drawdown from Iraq.
 - From 2003-2009, our force levels in Iraq averaged 25,000 Marines.
 - As of February 19, 2010, there were 159 Marines in Iraq. By spring of this year, our mission in Iraq will be complete and your Marines will redeploy.
- **Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.** In Afghanistan, the mission has expanded.
 - As of September 23, 2009, there were more Marines in Afghanistan than in Iraq.
 - By March 2010, there will be more than 18,500 Marines in Afghanistan, and by mid-April, that number will grow to a robust MAGTF of 19,400 personnel with equipment, and will be commanded by a Marine two-star general.
- **Endstrength.** Current authorized endstrength is 202,100 Marines in the active component and 39,600 Marines in the Selected Reserve.
 - During fiscal year 2007, the Marine Corps requested and received authorization to grow 27,000 additional personnel by the end of fiscal year 2011. We completed our growth during fiscal year 2009 — two years ahead of schedule.
 - With this personnel increase, we will improve training, upgrade readiness, and enhance the quality of life for all personnel and their families. The goal is to build the equivalent capacity of three Marine Expeditionary Forces — the largest MAGTF and principal Marine Corps warfighting organization.
 - We are continuing to shape the Marine Corps with the right mix of units, grades, and occupational specialties.
- **Recruiting.** In fiscal year 2009, we exceeded goals in numbers and standards for the active component and the Selected Reserve. The active component accessed 31,413 personnel, and the Selected Reserve accessed 9,627 personnel. Including the active and reserve components, the high school graduation rate of our recruits exceeded 98 percent.
- **Reenlistments.** In fiscal year 2009:
 - 8,011 first-term Marines reenlisted — 109.2 percent of the goal.
 - 7,985 subsequent-term Marines reenlisted — 107 percent of the goal.
- **Reservists.** As of January 2010, there were 39,164 Marines in the Selected Reserve and another 55,233 in the Inactive Ready Reserve. Marine Forces Reserve includes 183 training centers in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The contributions of our Reserve have been invaluable.
- **Officers.** The quality of officers accessed and retained remains high. In one example, the share of Marine-option United States Naval Academy candidates in the top third of their graduating class greatly exceeded representative levels in 2008. The number of Naval

Academy graduates who chose to become Marine Corps officers last year was 270 — the highest number in history for the second year in a row.

- In fiscal year 2009, our officer retention rate was 93 percent and during fiscal year 2010, we expect officer retention to remain stable.
- **Reservists.** The Marine Corps Reserve is a full partner in the total force. As of January 2010, there were 39,164 Marines in the Selected Reserve and another 55,233 in the Inactive Ready Reserve. Marine Forces Reserve includes 183 training centers in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
 - The extensive contributions of the Reserve have reduced deployment requirements for the active component, thereby improving the health of the total force. More than 54,000 Marines from the Selected Reserve and the Inactive Ready Reserve have mobilized and deployed in support of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM, ENDURING FREEDOM, or other operational commitments around the globe.³
- **“Every Marine into the Fight.”** The majority of your Marines joined the Corps after our Nation was already at war. They expect to train, deploy, and fight because that is what they believe Marines are supposed to do. At the same time, we monitor carefully the frequency and duration that units and individual personnel spend deployed.
 - As of January 2010, 100,760 Marines had deployed for at least 120 consecutive days in the last two years, and 73 percent of the available Marines have deployed in support of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM, or other operational commitments around the globe.
- **“Deployment to Dwell.”** The metric we use to measure unit operational tempo is the ratio of “deployment to dwell” — months deployed to months at home station. We limit the duration of deployments for units and individual Marines to no more than seven months for battalions and squadrons. Higher headquarters units deploy for one year.
 - Our goal is to achieve a 1:2 deployment to dwell ratio in the active component and a 1:5 ratio in the reserve component. Our reserve units are currently operating at a ratio that more closely approximates a ratio of 1:4, while many of our active component units, on average, are nearing the goal of 1:2
- In summary, Iraq and Afghanistan have not adversely affected personnel readiness or the resiliency of the force. The Marine Corps continues to recruit and retain the highest quality people. Your Marines want to make a difference; they understand being a Marine means deploying and fighting our Nation’s battles. Indeed, the highest morale in the Corps resides in those units posted in in Afghanistan.
- **Suicide Prevention.** The number of Marines who have died by suicide in recent years is shocking and unacceptable. **This issue has my personal attention, and we have multiple programs at work to reverse this trend.**
 - **Causes.** Our studies have shown that regardless of duty station, deployment, or duty status, the primary stressors associated with Marine suicides are problems in romantic relationships, physical health, work-related issues, such as poor performance and job

3. As of 3 January 2010.

dissatisfaction, and pending legal or administrative action. Multiple stressors are typically present in a suicide. This is consistent with the findings of the other services and civilian agencies.

- ***Deployments.*** We analyze suicides monthly and annually for combat-related trends such as the number of deployments and dwell time. Although it is reasonable to assume that one or more deployments may cause an increase in suicides, to date, we have been unable to establish a direct correlation between deployments and suicides.
- ***Sexual Assault Prevention and Response.*** Sexual assault is a crime, and it tears at the very fabric of our ethos. We continue to train and educate all Marines on the warning signs and the situations that lead to sexual assault. To our commanders, we have reinforced their responsibility to investigate all allegations of sexual assault and take the appropriate actions consistent with their findings. Finally, we continue to take aggressive strides toward improving our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program.

Families. While we recruit Marines, we retain families. More than 45 percent of your Marines are married, and we believe that investing in military families is critical to the long-term health of the institution. When Marines know that their loved ones at home station have access to quality housing, healthcare, child development services, and education, they are better prepared to face the rigors of deployment and more inclined to stay in uniform when they return home. Toward this end, we are grateful for the new hospital forthcoming at Camp Pendleton.⁴

- ***Family Readiness Programs.*** Our baseline budget in fiscal years 2010 and 2011 for family programs is \$399 million per year. We have reformed our family readiness programs at every level of command at all of our installations. As an example, we have created more than 400 full-time positions for family readiness officers down to the battalion and squadron level.
- ***Child Care.*** Today, we are currently meeting 64 percent of potential need for child care spaces. To meet the DoD standard of 80 percent of potential need based on the current population, we would require approximately 3,000 additional spaces. With your support, we have programmed an additional 2,615 spaces that will open over the next 18-24 months.
- ***Families with Special Needs.*** With an increase of \$11 million for the Exceptional Family Member Program in this year's baseline budget, we have made great strides improving the programs that support special needs family members. More than 8,900 exceptional family members are in the program. The Marine Corps assigns a caseworker to each family. Moreover, the Marine Corps now underwrites the cost of up to 40 hours of respite care per month for families in the program.⁵

Wounded Warriors. About 9,000 Marines have been injured or fallen seriously ill while serving in support of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM or ENDURING FREEDOM. We are

4. This is a \$563 million U.S. Navy facilities project funded by the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for a new 511,000 square foot hospital at Camp Pendleton, California. The construction contract is expected to be awarded during September 2010.

5. To date, the Marine Corps has provided more than 250,000 hours of respite care for families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program.

deeply committed to their care as well as the welfare of their families. Since activation in April 2007, the Wounded Warrior Regiment has provided a wide range of non-medical care for the injured and ill. The Marine Corps now also has wounded warrior battalions at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune.

- **Infrastructure.** The Marine Corps is investing \$50 million from the 2009 Overseas Contingency Operations supplemental for the construction of resource and recovery centers at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune. These recovery centers will provide spaces for counseling, physical therapy, employment support, financial management, and other training and outreach programs in support of our wounded.
- **Outreach.** With a 24-hour call center for wounded Marines and their families, the Wounded Warrior Regiment has contacted 99.4 percent of all Marines (7,654 out of 7,703) who were wounded since the beginning of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM, in order to determine their health status. We also maintain a toll-free number to the medical center in Landstuhl, Germany for families to contact their loved ones who have been wounded.
- **Recovery Care.** The Marine Corps has 42 recovery care coordinators, who coordinate non-medical services for Marines and their families during recovery, rehabilitation, and transition.
- **Mental Health**
 - **Traumatic Brain Injury.** Naval medicine remains at the forefront of researching and implementing pioneering techniques to treat traumatic brain injury. One technique, Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment, is showing great promise. We anticipate a study to begin this spring that tests the efficacy of this revolutionary treatment. The Marine Corps has a formal screening protocol for Marines who suffer concussions or who are exposed to blast events in theater.
 - **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).** We are attentive to the mental health of our warriors and we are dedicated to ensuring that all Marines and family members who bear the invisible wounds caused by stress receive the best help possible. We developed the Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) program to prevent, identify, and holistically treat mental injuries caused by combat or other operations.
 - With the increased workload, we do have concerns about the capacity of mental health care in military medicine. Operational support and current treatment facility demands continue to stretch our mental health professional communities, even though DoD has taken many steps to increase mental health services. Our shortages of mental health professionals are a reflection of Nation-wide shortages of this specialty. We are actively engaged in discussions about possible solutions.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION

Bachelor Housing. Our number one priority in military construction is barracks. In years past, due to fiscal constraints, we had focused on operational concerns. We now have a program under way that will provide adequate bachelor housing for our entire force by 2014. Table 1 depicts Marine Corps fiscal year 2011 investment in new barracks.

Table 1. USMC Fiscal Year 2011 Barracks Construction

<u>Location</u>	<u>FY11 Investment</u>	<u>New Barracks Spaces</u>
Twentynine Palms, CA	\$53.2 million	384
Camp Lejeune, NC	\$326.6 million	2,794
Cherry Point, NC	\$42.5 million	464
Camp Pendleton, CA	\$79.9 million	860
MCB Hawaii, HI	\$90.5 million	214
MCB Quantico, VA	<u>\$37.8 million</u>	<u>300</u>
Total	<u>\$630.5 million</u>	<u>5,016</u>

- The Marine Corps is committed to funding the replacement of barracks furnishings on a seven-year cycle and to funding the repair and maintenance of existing barracks to improve the quality of life of Marines.
- Our personnel growth has outpaced our growth in infrastructure, and your continued support is needed to provide the additional barracks, messing, and office spaces required.

Family Housing. Under our current plan, we will eliminate all inadequate family housing by 2014. Moreover, we support the privatization of family housing.

- We have found that private sector projects result in better quality homes, community support facilities, and maintenance services than the Marine Corps can provide through the traditional Military Construction and Operations and Maintenance processes. Thus, we have privatized the majority of family housing.
- Less than 6 percent of Marine Corps families still live in government-owned housing.
- Over 94 percent of families now live in private sector housing, including housing privatized under the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, long-term leases, and rental guarantee housing.

Future Realignment of Marine Forces in the Pacific. The governments of the United States and Japan have agreed to invest in a realignment of forces that will result in Marine Corps forces postured in the Pacific for a long-term presence on Japan, Guam, and Hawaii. Critical requisites to the implementation of this realignment are:

- Japanese construction of a replacement for Marine Corps Air Station Futenma that meets both operational and safety requirements.

- An appropriate force laydown that supports the operational requirements of the Commander, U.S. Pacific Command.
- Adequate available airlift and sealift within theater to transport Marines to training areas and partner countries.
- Adequate training areas and ranges in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands that can maintain readiness as well as support security cooperation with our regional partners.
- An enduring, sustainable “live where you work,” base on Guam that maximizes operational effectiveness, minimizes encroachment, accommodates future development, and provides a quality of life on Guam commensurate with any other U.S. base.
- Continued political and financial support by the governments of the United States and Japan.

Refined planning and staff interaction processes within the Department of Defense have made significant contributions to our efforts to align these requirements. Planned and executed properly, this realignment effort will result in an enduring solution that provides forward deployed combat ready Marine forces to uphold our Nation’s commitment to the security and stability of the Pacific region.

Energy and Water Initiatives. We believe energy and water are two of our Nation’s most valuable resources. We are focused on improving our stewardship at our installations and on the battlefield. Since 2003, the Marine Corps has used over \$625 million to implement new technologies to (a) reduce energy consumption, and (b) increase our use of alternative and renewable energy.

- ***Our Installations.*** We have already gained efficiencies and achieved savings at all our major installations. We have three major goals:
 1. From 2003-2015, reduce energy consumption by 30 percent
 2. Through 2020, reduce water consumption by 2 percent per year
 3. By 2020, increase the use of alternative energy at our installations to 50 percent of the total energy consumed
- ***On the Battlefield.*** Operations in Afghanistan have forced us to reevaluate energy and water distribution and usage in expeditionary environments. We believe the future security environment will again require the Marine Corps to operate over long distances in austere environments, and we are actively pursuing a wide range of solutions to:
 - Lighten the combat load of our Marines and Sailors
 - Reduce our overall footprint in current and future expeditionary operations
 - Lessen energy consumption and dependence on fossil fuels
 - Achieve resource self-sufficiency in expeditionary environments

PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

- **“Two-Fisted Fighters.”** The report from the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review calls for increased capacity for irregular warfare in the general purpose forces of the United States.⁶
 - The Marine Corps has long recognized the special skills required to operate with host nation forces and among local populations.⁷
 - Today, we are institutionalizing the lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan in training, education, organization, doctrine, and capability development. One of the ways we are doing this is through the *Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned*. Moreover, through standing Marine Corps organizations such as the *Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning* and the *Center for Irregular Warfare*, and programs such as the *International Affairs Officers Program*, we continue to build capacity in foreign language, and regional and cultural skills.⁸
- **Leadership Development.** We recognize the need for a diversity of skills and specialties, and our standing guidance to promotion, command, and special selection boards is to give due consideration to personnel with special skills and non-traditional career patterns.
- **Marine Corps University.** Annually, a percentage of Marine Corps officers from the rank of captain through colonel attend year-long resident courses in professional military education at Marine Corps University in Quantico. The Marine Corps University is regionally accredited to award postgraduate degrees and, in 2009 alone, University schools awarded 200 master’s degrees.⁹
 - Facilities are an integral part of supporting professional military education. To that end, the Marine Corps fiscal year 2011 military construction budget request includes funding for additions in Quantico to the General Alfred M. Gray Research Center and the Staff NCO Academy. These projects will support our plan to upgrade the infrastructure of the Marine Corps University.

6. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR Report)* (Washington, DC: Feb 2010), pp. 20-26.

7. Evidence of this dates back to the Marine Corps publications of *Small Wars Operations* (1935) and the *Small Wars Manual* (1940), both comprehensive texts on counterinsurgency operations and irregular warfare.

8. Each year, the Marine Corps selects officers for the **International Affairs Officer Program**, which consists of two professional tracks: Foreign Area Officer (FAO), and Regional Area Officer (RAO). The International Affairs Officer Program provides graduate-level study and language training for nine geographic areas. There are 329 international affairs officers on active duty (262 FAOs, 67 RAOs). The officers in this program possess advanced knowledge and expertise in the language, culture, and political-military affairs of a given region. Since 2008, the Marine Corps has doubled the number of accessions in the FAO program, and accessions will continue to increase through 2015. Moreover, the Marine Corps provides mid-grade officers (major – lieutenant colonel) for the **Afghanistan-Pakistan (AFPAK) Hands Program**. Our current requirement is to provide 63 officers — three cohorts of 21 officers each.

9. The Marine Corps also has a separate, voluntary graduate education program, through which officers attend **Naval Postgraduate School** and other secondary institutions to obtain advanced degrees. There are 300 officer billets in the Marine Corps that require master’s degrees. The Marine Corps also maintains an active **fellowship program**.

- ***Acquisition Professionals.*** The Marine Corps has an active acquisition professional program in place to meet the need identified in the QDR “for technically trained personnel — cost estimators, systems engineers, and acquisition managers — to conduct effective oversight.”¹⁰
 - There are about 520 acquisition billets in the Marine Corps — 400 are entry and mid-level positions filled by enlisted Marines and officers, and 120 are senior-level acquisition professional positions filled by field grade officers who oversee our major ground and aviation programs.
 - Our acquisition professional officers are members of the Defense Acquisition Community; they possess Level II certification, four years of acquisition experience, at least 24 undergraduate credit hours in business.

CONCLUSION

As a naval expeditionary force in the form of an elite air-ground team, the Marine Corps is ready and willing to go into harm’s way on short notice and do what is necessary to make our country safe. America expects this of her Marines. In the complex and dangerous security environment of the future, the Marine Corps stands ready for the challenges ahead. We appreciate the continued support of Congress. Thank you again for this opportunity to report on the posture of your Marine Corps.

10. DoD, *QDR*, p. 76.