NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

STATEMENT OF

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES F. AMOS
DEPUTY COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
(COMBAT DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION)

BEFORE THE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

CONCERNING
SHIPBUILDING AND FORCE STRUCTURE

ON
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I. Introduction

Chairman Kennedy, Senator Martinez and distinguished Members of the Seapower Subcommittee; it is my privilege to report to you on Marine Corps shipbuilding and force structure requirements.

We know these next few years will be challenging — not only in the immediate conflict in Iraq, but in subsequent campaigns in the Long War on Terror. This is a multi-faceted, generational struggle that will not be won in one battle, in one country, or by one method. Many of the underlying causes of the current conflict will persist in the coming decades and may be exacerbated by states and transnational actors who are unwilling or unable to integrate into the global community. In this environment, the Marine Corps must be able to rapidly adapt to broad strategic conditions and wide-ranging threats. We remain faithful to our enduring mission—to be wherever, whenever our country needs us and to prevail over whatever challenges we face. We have done this and will continue to do so by recruiting and retaining the best of our Nation's sons and daughters, training them in tough, realistic scenarios and providing them the best equipment available. We are confident that with your continued support, your Corps will remain the Nation's force in readiness and continue to fulfill its Congressionally-mandated mission of being *the most ready when the Nation is least ready*.

II. Looking to the Future

Strategic Vision Group (SVG)

To improve our capacity to anticipate, the Commandant of the Marine Corps established an SVG in June of 2007. This group is designed to assist the Commandant in determining how best to posture the Marine Corps for successful service to the Nation in the years to come. The Group studies the future state of the world, considers the most likely world conditions and threats, and then conducts assessments of our military, political, and economic power to derive implications for the country, the Department, and the Marine Corps from now through 2025. For example, the SVG characterizes the most likely future conflicts as a blurred mix of irregular and conventional warfare in which terrorists, extremists, and criminals may become the most lethal and dominant enemy. Additionally, the SVG discerned that enemy states may adopt similar asymmetric tactics and techniques that will make access to operating areas ashore and subsequent operations,

including combat, more challenging. Armed with these critical assessments, the SVG will translate them into tangible products addressing implications to national security and Marine Corps' continued readiness and relevance.

The SVG has made significant progress in synthesizing inputs from United States and allied strategic assessments, and has established relationships with a wide community of subject matter experts and related sister Service efforts. The Group has briefed our senior leadership on assessments of the 2025 security environment, the key patterns and trends that can be foreseen impacting the strategic context, and future operational environments. Most significantly, recent assessments prompted development of the Commandant's overarching Marine Corps Vision and Strategy. This document will provide a comprehensive, actionable, and compelling narrative that describes how the Marine Corps will continue to serve as the nation's "force in readiness" for the 21st Century and will be published in June of 2008.

Science and Technology (S&T)

By always keeping an eye to the future, advances in S&T provide an immediate, measurable advantage to our warfighters and provide for development and implementation of concepts only dreamed of twenty years ago. In light of this importance the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), and the Commandant recently completed and published a combined *Naval S&T Strategic Plan* that establishes objectives and provides direction to ensure our investments are focused on accomplishment of Navy and Marine Corps visions and goals. This plan identifies, as objectives, our five most critically needed technology enhancements:

- lightening the load of our dismounted Marines and Sailors through new materials and technologies that are both lighter and that provide enhanced protection;
- the application of robotics to ground logistics delivery and a cargo unmanned aerial vehicle to rapidly move logistics on a distributed battlefield;
- high-fidelity immersion simulation in support of small unit ground tactical training;
- improved vehicle survivability for our future family of tactical vehicles through application of new construction materials such as synthetic armor;
- persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance technologies aimed specifically at providing tactically relevant intelligence in all phases of a broad spectrum of operations.

III. Provide our Nation a naval force that is fully prepared for employment as a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) across the spectrum of conflict

Long War Concept

The Marine Corps' concept of force employment to meet the need for counterinsurgency and building partnership capacity is outlined in our February, 2008 concept of employment "The Long War: Send in the Marines." This employment concept further explains how the Marine Corps will support the National Defense Strategy and multinational efforts in the Global War on Terrorism/Long War. This publication is nested within our major concepts and strategies: the Maritime Strategy, the Naval Operations Concept, and Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment. The focus of this new Long War concept is to increase the Marine Corps' global, persistent forward presence, tailored to build partnership capacity for security, while adapting existing forces and creating new capabilities for an uncertain future. Through these efforts, we will better enable multinational partnerships to address existing regional challenges, while mitigating the conditions that allow irregular threats to proliferate.

Although we will continue to develop our full spectrum capabilities, this war will place demands on our Marines that differ significantly from those of the recent past. Paramount among these demands will be the requirement for Marines to train and mentor the security forces of partner nations in a manner that empowers their governments to secure their own countries. This Long War Strategy helps posture our Corps to serve as the Nation's expeditionary force-in-readiness – able to answer the call when needed.

Maritime Strategy

The October, 2007 Maritime Strategy reaffirms our naval character and reemphasizes our enduring relationship with the Navy, and now, the Coast Guard. Current combat operations limit our ability to aggressively commit forces to strategy implementation at this time. However, as we increase our end-strength to 202,000 Marines and as security conditions continue to improve in Iraq, the Marine Corps will transition our forces to forward presence in other priority areas and other battles in the Long War. The Maritime Strategy notes that, "Our ability to overcome challenges to access and to project and sustain power ashore is the basis of our combat credibility." Our means of projecting power is the Congressionally-mandated mission of

amphibious forcible entry. The same flexible, expeditionary capabilities that enable forcible entry also have great utility in enabling the wide range of missions needed to counter the growth of extremist movements and terrorism. Such expeditionary capability and readiness require a high level of proficiency and long-term resourcing and is not a capability we can create on short notice.

Today, information moves almost instantaneously around the world via cyberspace, and while people may quickly travel great distances by air, the preponderance of materiel still moves the way it has for millennia — by sea. Whenever the United States has responded to conflict around the globe, the vast majority of United States joint forces, their equipment, and supplies have been transported by sea. In the first half of the 20th Century, demonstrating considerable foresight and innovation, U.S. Navy and Marine Corps leaders developed the capabilities necessary to establish sea control and project power ashore where and when desired. In the latter half of the same century the importance of these capabilities waned, as the United States enjoyed the luxury of extensive basing rights overseas, to include secure ports and airfields.

In recent years, this network of overseas bases has been dramatically reduced, even as we are confronted by a variety of strategic challenges and are locked in a global struggle for influence. The ability to overcome political, geographic, and military challenges to access has re-emerged as a critical necessity for protecting vital interests overseas. Fortunately, the United States possesses an asymmetric advantage in that endeavor: seapower. Our ability to cross wide expanses of ocean and to remain persistently offshore at a time and place of our choosing is a significant national capability. This means that the Navy-Marine Team can use the sea as both maneuver space and as a secure operating area to overcome impediments to access.

Seabasing

The approach for overcoming these impediments is called *Seabasing.* The Joint Seabasing concept — particularly when using aircraft carriers and amphibious ships with embarked Marines — mitigates reliance on ports and airfields in the area of operations. It is the ideal method for projecting influence and power ashore in a selectively discrete or overt manner — from conducting security cooperation activities, to providing humanitarian assistance, to deterring and, when necessary, supporting major combat operations.

The seabasing capability currently employed by the Navy-Marine Corps team, however, is limited in its ability to support large joint operations. The sealift transporting the preponderance of the joint force's materiel is still dependent upon secure ports and airfields. Recognizing the importance of seabasing to 21st Century needs, the Navy and Marine Corps evolved a robust body of conceptual work and, with other joint partners, produced a *Seabasing Joint Integrating Concept.* This concept defines Joint Seabasing as "the rapid deployment, assembly, command, projection, reconstitution, and re-employment of joint combat power from the sea, while providing continuous support, sustainment, and force protection to select expeditionary joint forces without reliance on land bases within the Joint Operations Area. These capabilities expand operational maneuver options, and facilitate assured access and entry from the sea."

Just as the amphibious innovations championed by the Navy-Marine Corps during the 1920s and 1930s benefited the entire joint and allied force in World War II, the Navy-Marine Corps seabasing initiatives currently underway are expanding into more comprehensive joint and interagency endeavors. The ability to conduct at-sea transfer of resources, for both ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore purposes, has emerged as a key enabler for deploying, employing, and sustaining joint forces from the sea. Building upon the cornerstones provided by amphibious ships and aircraft carriers, initiatives include developing high-speed intra-theater connectors, surface connectors, and Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) (MPF(F)). These initiatives — as well as others — will be employed in combination to achieve an increasingly robust capability to reduce the joint force's reliance on ports and airfields in the objective area.

Together, the Navy and Marine Corps provide the Nation with its capability to rapidly project and sustain combat power ashore in the face of armed opposition. When access is denied or in jeopardy, forward-postured and rapidly deployable Marine forces are trained and ready to create and exploit seams in an enemy's defenses by leveraging available joint and naval capabilities, projecting sustainable combat power ashore, and securing entry for follow-on forces. The Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) is the Nation's premier forcible entry force. Two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) provide the assault echelon that fights from amphibious ships. These forces launch from over the horizon to strike inland objectives and fracture the enemy's defenses. They are reinforced by a brigade of Marines employed through MPF(F). Collectively, these capabilities provide an ability to respond to crisis across the spectrum of operations without reliance on infrastructure or basing ashore.

In recent years our amphibious and prepositioned capabilities have been in high demand across the spectrum of operations. These capabilities have enabled over eighty-five commitments, such as the recent Lebanon non-combatant evacuation and tsunami and Katrina relief operations, since the end of the Cold War — doubling the rate at which they were employed during that superpower stand-off. Considering this demonstrated utility, the modest investment of thirty-four amphibious ships and MPF(F) is not too much of an investment to secure the United States' ability to conduct forcible entry operations; ensure strategic access and retain global freedom of action; strengthen existing and emerging alliances and partnerships; and establish favorable security conditions.

IV. Shipbuilding Requirements

Based on strategic guidance, in the last several years the Navy and Marine Corps have accepted risk in our Nation's forcible entry capacity, and reduced amphibious lift from 3.0 MEB assault echelon (AE) to 2.0 MEB AE. In the budgetary arena, the value of amphibious ships is too often assessed exclusively in terms of forcible entry — discounting their demonstrated usefulness across the range of operations and the clear imperative for Marines embarked aboard amphibious ships to meet Phase 0 demands. The ability to transition between those two strategic goalposts, and to respond to every mission-tasking in between, will rely on a strong Navy-Marine Corps Team and the amphibious ships that facilitate our bond. The Navy and Marine Corps have worked diligently to determine the minimum number of amphibious ships necessary to satisfy the Nation's needs.

The Marine Corps' contribution to the Nation's forcible entry requirement is a single, simultaneously-employed two MEB assault capability — as part of a seabased MEF. Although not a part of the MEF AE, a third reinforcing MEB is required and will be provided through MPF(F) shipping. Each MEB AE requires seventeen amphibious warfare ships — resulting in an overall ship requirement for thirty-four amphibious warfare ships. However, given current fiscal constraints, *the Navy and Marine Corps have agreed to assume a degree of operational risk by limiting the assault echelon of each MEB by using only fifteen ships per MEB* — in other words, a Battle Force that provides thirty "operationally available" amphibious warfare ships.

Amphibious Ships

In that thirty-ship Battle Force, ten aviation-capable big deck ships (LHA / LHD / LHA(R)), ten LPD 17 class ships, and ten LSD class ships are required to accommodate the MAGTF capabilities. In order to meet a thirty-ship availability rate — based on a CNO-approved maintenance factor of ten percent — a minimum of eleven ships of each of the current types of amphibious ships are required — for a total of thirty-three ships. The CNO has concurred with this requirement for thirty-three amphibious warfare ships, which provide the "backbone" of our maritime capability — giving us the ability to meet the demands of harsh environments across the spectrum of conflict.

The LPD 17 *San Antonio* class of amphibious warfare ships represents the Department of the Navy's commitment to a modern expeditionary power projection fleet enabling our naval force to operate across the spectrum of warfare. The LPD 17 class replaces four classes of older ships — LKA, LST, LSD 36, LPD 4 — and will have a forty-year expected service life. It is imperative that eleven of these ships be built to meet the minimum of ten necessary for the 2.0 MEB AE amphibious lift requirement. Procurement of the tenth and eleventh LPDs remains a priority.

Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) (MPF(F))

Capable of supporting the rapid deployment of three MEBs, the legacy Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) is a proven capability used as a force deployment option in selected contingencies to close forces on accelerated timelines for major combat operations and, in combination with amphibious forces, to rapidly and simultaneously react to crises in more than one theater. The next and necessary evolution of this program is fielding of the (MPF(F)) Squadron. MPF(F) is a key enabler of Seabasing and will build on the success of the legacy MPF program. It will provide support to a wide range of military operations with improved capabilities such as at-sea arrival and assembly, selective offload of specific mission sets, and long-term, sea-based sustainment. From the sea base, the squadron will be capable of prepositioning a single MEB's critical equipment and sustainment for delivery offshore — essentially creating a port and airfield at sea. While the MPF(F) is not suitable for independent forcible entry operations, it is critical for the rapid build up and sustainment of additional combat forces once entry has been achieved by our AE. The MPF(F), along with two legacy MPF squadrons, will give our Nation the capacity to quickly generate three MEBs in support of

multiple Combatant Commanders. The MPF(F) squadron composition decision was made in May 2005 and is designed to consist of three aviation-capable big-deck ships, three large medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships, three T-AKE supply ships, three Mobile Landing Platforms, and two dense-packed container ships. Many of these will be crewed by civilian mariners and, as stated earlier, are not designed to conduct forcible entry operations.

Ship Modernization

Amphibious and maritime prepositioning ship modernization is vital to maintaining our Nation's maritime forward presence and expeditionary capabilities. Two decades of equipment growth and recent armor initiatives have impacted the capability and capacity of our present amphibious and maritime prepositioning ship fleets that were designed to lift an early 1980's Naval force. We are monitoring the Navy's progress in upgrading and extending the service lives of our big-deck amphibious assault support ships to ensure those vessels are uniformly outfitted with up-to-date seabased communications and network capabilities, and will be able to compensate for increased weight and density of Marine Corps assets as a result of armoring initiatives. We must ensure that the dock landing ship fleet is recapitalized to accommodate 21st Century Marine Corps forces. Moreover, we are actively working with the Navy to incorporate newer, more flexible ship platforms from the existing Military Sealift Command fleet into our aging Maritime Prepositioning Ships program. As we reset these ships, changes are necessary to ensure future afloat prepositioning platforms can accommodate our updated tables of equipment and sustainment support requirements.

V. Right-sizing our Marine Corps

To meet the demands of the Long War, and prepare for other contingencies for which the MAGTF is uniquely capable, our Corps must be sufficiently manned, well trained, and properly equipped. To fulfill our obligations to the Nation, and with the approval of the President and the Congress, we are growing our end strength to 202,000 Active Component Marines. Our decision to grow to 202,000 Marines was based on National strategic guidance combined with increasing operational forward presence requirements, and was guided by the Department of Defense's 1:2 unit deployment-to-dwell ratio policy. The additional end strength will result in three balanced

MEFs — balanced in both capacity and capability — and will ensure the Marine Corps can meet increasing Combatant Commander demands for expeditionary forces.

The development of Marine Corps force structure has been the result of a thorough and ongoing process that supports the Combatant Commanders and accomplishes our Title X responsibilities. The process addresses each pillar of combat development — Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities — and identifies our required capabilities and the issues associated with fielding them. We have front-loaded structure for recruiters and trainers to support this growth and have phased the introduction of units balanced across the MAGTF. The increase in capacity will be gradual, as we stand up new units and add end strength through Fiscal Year 2011, while we simultaneously grow mid-grade enlisted and officer leadership — a vital part of our growth that cannot be developed overnight. In addition to personnel, this growth includes expansions of our infrastructure to provide suitable housing and support facilities, and the right mix of equipment for the current and future fight.

Our engagements thus far in Iraq and Afghanistan have been a Total Force effort — our Reserve forces continue to perform impressively. As our active force increases in size, our reliance on our Reserve forces should decrease — helping us achieve the 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio. We believe our current authorized end strength of 39,600 Selected Marine Corps Reserves is the right level. As with every organization within the Marine Corps, we continue to review the make-up and structure of our Reserve to ensure the right capabilities reside within Marine Forces Reserve units and our Individual Mobilization Augmentee program.

Building Educational and Training Structure

As part of our holistic growth plan, we are increasing training capacity and reinvigorating our pre-deployment training program to provide support to all elements of our MAGTFs. In accordance with the Secretary of Defense's Security Cooperation guidance, we are developing training and education programs to build the capacity of allied and partner nations. We are also developing the capability to conduct large-scale MAGTF exercises within a joint, coalition, and interagency context to maintain proficiency in core warfighting functions such as combined arms maneuver, amphibious operations, and maritime prepositioning operations. Finally, our budget

request supports our training and education programs and training ranges to accommodate the 202,000 Grow the Force effort.

World Class Marine Corps University (MCU) Our success in the Long War hinges on a multi-dimensional force well trained for the current fight, but educated for the next. Historically, our Corps has produced respected leaders who have demonstrated intellectual agility in warfighting; however our current deployment tempo places our Professional Military Education (PME) programs at risk. We must maintain the steady flow of thinkers, planners, and aggressive commanders who can execute effectively across the entire spectrum of operations. Last year we conducted a comprehensive 'health of PME' assessment which identified six areas necessary for the creation of a world-class MCU: students, curriculum, educational programs, staff, policy, and infrastructure. We have world-class students and faculty as evidenced by Marines' performance on today's battlefields. We have made substantial improvements in our curricula by integrating irregular warfare instruction while maintaining a balance with conventional and amphibious warfare. Seeking to ensure readiness for the next challenge, this year we added Iran and China faculty chairs. We must however, correct significant infrastructure and information technology deficiencies. It is crucial that resources to support our MCU master plan be committed and approved to support this critical effort. With proper investment and your support, the MCU will become a world class educational institution to match its world class students.

Center for Irregular Warfare (CIW) In 2007, we established the CIW as our primary agency for identifying, coordinating, and implementing Marine Corps irregular warfare capability initiatives. The CIW reaches out through the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) and Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC) to other military and civilian agencies. Last year, the CAOCL expanded beyond pre-deployment unit training by offering operational culture, regional studies, and limited language courses for officer PME programs. Thus far, approximately 2,100 new lieutenants have been assigned regions for career long-term study through the regional learning concept, which are being expanded this year to include sergeants, staff sergeants, and captains. Both officer and enlisted Marines will receive operational culture education throughout their careers.

Since early 2006, the SCETC has formalized our military advisor training curricula, and in Fiscal Year 2007 trained over thirty transition teams. In Fiscal Year 2008, the SCETC is scheduled to train over 100 teams (over 2,000 Marine advisors) and we will stand up a Training Advisory Group to manage global sourcing of future transition and security cooperation teams.

VI. Conclusion

Our Nation rightfully has high expectations of her Corps — as she should. Your Marines are answering the call around the globe, performing with distinction in the face of great hardships. As they continue to serve in harm's way, our moral imperative is to fully support them — we owe them the full resources required to complete the tasks we have given them. Now more than ever they need the sustained support of the American people and the Congress to simultaneously maintain our readiness, reset the force during an extended war, and to modernize to face the challenges of the future. Again, we thank you for the opportunity to report to you on their behalf.