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COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

OPENING STATEMENT TO
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
THE POSTURE OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

April 16, 2012

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith and Members of the Committee, I'm pleased to appear before you today to outline the 2013 posture of your United States Marine Corps. I am equally pleased to be sitting alongside my Service Secretary, The Honorable Ray Mabus, and my good friend and fellow shipmate, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, the Chief of Naval Operations.

For more than 237 years your Corps has been a people-intense force. We have always known our greatest asset is the individual Marine. Our unique role as America's premier Crisis Response Force is grounded in the legendary character and warfighting ethos of our people. Today's Marines are ethical warriors, forged by challenging training, and made wise through decades of combat. You can take great pride in knowing that as we gather here in this storied hearing room, some 30K' Marines are forward deployed around the world, promoting peace, protecting our nation's interests, and securing its defense.

Sergeant Major Barrett and I recently returned from Afghanistan and can attest to the progress there. Marines have given the Afghan people a vision of success, and the possibility of a secure and prosperous society. I'm bullish about the positive assistance we are providing the people of Helmand Province and I remain optimistic about their future. Afghan Security Forces have the lead now in most every operation...our commanders and their Marines assess the ANSF overmatches the Taliban in every way, and in every engagement.

Speaking today as both a service chief and as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff... the foundations of the Defense Strategic Guidance depends upon regional stability and international order to underwrite the global economic system. Failing to provide leadership in the collective security of the global order will have significant consequences for the American people. Worse,

a lapse in American leadership and forward engagement will create a void in which lasting security threats will be left unaddressed, and new security challenges will find room to grow.

The realities of today's security environment reveal the value of forward naval presence. With declining resources to address the emerging security challenges...neo-isolationism does not advance our country's national interests. Forward deployed sea-based naval forces do however. They support our proactive security strategy, while remaining capable of shaping, deterring and rapidly responding to crises...all while treading lightly on our allies' and partners' sovereign territory. Amphibious forces are a sensible and unmistakable solution in preserving our national security. Naval Forces, and the Marine Corps in particular, are our nation's insurance policy...a hedge against uncertainty, in an unpredictable world. A balanced air-ground-logistics team...we respond in hours and days to America's needs, not in weeks and months. This is our *raison d'être*...it's always been that way.

This year's baseline budget submission of \$24.2 billion was framed by our following Service level priorities:

- First, we will continue to provide the best trained and equipped Marine units to Afghanistan.
- Second, we will protect the readiness of our forward deployed rotational forces.
- Third, we will reset and reconstitute our operating forces as our Marines and equipment return from nearly 12 years of combat.
- Fourth, as much as is humanly possible, we will modernize our force through investing in the individual Marine, and by replacing aging combat systems...

- And lastly...we will keep faith with our Marines, Sailors and our families.

Ladies and Gentlemen, your Marine Corps is well aware of the fiscal realities confronting our Nation. During these times of constrained resources, the Marine Corps remains committed to being responsible stewards of scarce public funds.

In closing... the success of your Marines and your Marine Corps is directly linked to the unwavering support of Congress and the American people. You have my promise that during our economic challenges, the Marine Corps will only ask for what it needs...not what it might want. We will continue to prioritize and make the hard decisions before coming to Congress. We will continue to offer a strategically mobile force, optimized for forward presence and rapid response. Your Marine Corps stands ready to respond whenever the Nation calls...wherever the President may direct.

Once again, I thank the Committee for your continued support and I am prepared to answer your questions.