

## The Commandant's Posture of the U.S. Marine Corps PB19 - Executive Summary

The Commandant's written testimony on the Posture of the U.S. Marine Corps for the President's Budget Fiscal Year 2019 (PB19) does three things: broadly describes how your Marine Corps is adapting to increase its competitive advantage against pacing threats; explains our budget priorities for the PB19 submission; and describes how continued support from the Congress will result in a more lethal force, postured to prevent conflict, yet ready to prevail in the next fight. This executive summary aims to succinctly touch upon each of these items.

Today, the Marine Corps faces many challenges; some as a consequence of rival adaptations, and some as a result of unpredictable funding. Years of sustained operations ashore in Iraq and Afghanistan have increased the divide between the Marine Corps and the Navy. We have focused on power projection and assured access while assuming sea control would remain uncontested, taking presumptive sea control for granted, despite warnings. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Sea Services have enjoyed well-earned, uncontested global dominance. Those days are over. We need to modernize and address peer competition or risk falling further behind. Our budget priorities – *modernization, readiness, and manpower* – coupled with the evolution of our global posture, will provide our Nation's leaders the right capabilities at the right places to create the decision-making space necessary for competition and contingency at the lowest cost in resources possible.

The Marine Corps will adapt its global posture. As a naval force, deployed Marines predominately reside aboard ship, fully integrated with the Navy and expanding the competitive space and advantage of the Joint Force. The ocean provides flexibility, freedom of maneuver, survivability, and agility. Despite being the subject of competitor tracking, hitting a moving target is much more difficult than one that has been in the same position year after year, and thus affords much greater unpredictability – imposing a cost on any competitor. In recent history, we have found our forces tied to fixed locations in special arrangements to support necessary requirements during times of increased instability throughout specific regions of the globe. We must put these forces back on ship, whether upgraded amphibious warships postured to deter or respond to conflict or alternative platforms. This postures us to assure partners and allies, compete with rivals, and defeat violent extremist organizations. We recognize the continued issues with our amphibious, maritime, and expeditionary ship inventory; however, we must focus on increasing the capabilities of the ships we do have, while developing cheaper alternatives for more permissive environments.

We will continue to foster and strengthen our partnerships and alliances as today's strategic environment requires strong global partners. When our adversaries choose to test our will or capabilities, we must be ready with our allies to act with the appropriate force to overcome those hostile acts with such speed and decisiveness as to prevent further acts of aggression. We will prioritize those joint, multinational, and bilateral exercises that offer the greatest return on investment as measured in readiness gains with select partners. These exercises increase our lethality as we gain an understanding of where we can strengthen each other's weaknesses.

Despite the challenges facing us in today's strategic environment, our Marine Corps remains the Nation's forward deployed, agile, Expeditionary Force in Readiness. As the service with unique readiness requirements, we require sustained, adequate, and predictable funding to develop the correct mix of advanced capabilities, ensuring a ready force. As we look ahead to the 2019 budget, we have prioritized the modernization of our Corps, the recovery of our current readiness, and investments to resource the next generation of Marines. The continued investment in these priorities will ensure Marines are capable as a high-end, conventional combat deterrent, able to respond to immediate contingencies and conduct crisis response across the continuum of conflict. With the Congress' support and sustained commitment, we can begin to restore our competitive naval advantage, enhance global deterrence, and ensure that we send our sons and daughters into the next fight with every advantage our Nation can provide.

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PB19, *Modernizing for the Future Force*, focuses on three budget priorities – *modernization, readiness, and manpower* – directly aligning with the Secretary of Defense's guidance to improve warfighting readiness, achieve program balance, and increase lethality. Driven by Marine Corps Force 2025 (MCF 2025), the capability investment strategy which modernizes the force toward implementing the Marine Operating Concept (MOC), we plan to rebuild a more lethal, maneuverable, and resilient force able to operate in the emerging strategic environment.

**Modernization – The Foundation of Our Future Readiness:** Our Marine Corps must be modernized to meet the demands of the strategic environment. What we desire to achieve is a Corps capable of exploiting, penetrating, and destroying advanced adversary defenses in all domains in support of naval or Joint Force operations. That modernized force would deter adversaries, prevent conflict, and provide capabilities required to "...suppress or contain international disturbances short of large-scale war;" thus, preventing the consumption of readiness from the larger Joint Force. PB19 is synched with MCF 2025, specifically investing in areas such as: *Information Warfare, long range precision fires, air defense, C2 in a degraded environment, and protected mobility / enhanced maneuver*. These capability areas support building a Next Generation Marine Corps across Active and Reserve components.

**Readiness – The Core of Our Ethos:** The Marine Corps is unique among the Armed Services because your expectations require Marines to be a fight-tonight, forward deployed force, ready and capable of acting with minimal preparatory time. We must address four primary challenge areas:

***Aviation:*** Our priority remains building aviation readiness for combat by balancing modernization with readiness recovery. PB19 supports our aviation recovery plan that, *if sufficiently resourced and supported by our industrial base*, recovers the force to acceptable readiness levels by FY20 with a ready bench by FY22.

***Amphibious, Maritime, and Expeditionary Ships:*** The Joint Force must maintain access to and the ability to maneuver through the global commons, project power, and defeat a competitor attempting to deny freedom of action via the employment of A2AD capabilities. To meet these challenges, the naval force must be distributable, resilient, and tailorable, as well as employed in sufficient scale and for ample duration. Today, the operational availability of the amphibious fleet is insufficient to meet global demands, negatively impacting the unit training necessary to recover full spectrum readiness, and does not support CCDR requirements for power projection. Consequently, the strategic risk to the larger Joint Force and mission is increased.

***Deployment to Dwell:*** A majority of the Active Force is experiencing a deployment to dwell (D2D) ratio that is unsustainable and limits time to train to our full naval mission sets. We must return to a 1:3 D2D force to have the time required to train for the high-end fight and achieve balance with our Marines and their families. High operational tempo is affecting our ability to retain Marines and sustain our career force. PB19 supports an 186,100 Active and 38,500 Reserve component end-strength force while maintaining an approximate 1:2 D2D ratio. Funding at a 1:2 D2D ratio, although not sustainable, is a conscious, short-term decision we must make to balance modernization while meeting current demand and simultaneously recovering our readiness. This must not become the new normal.

***Infrastructure:*** We must prioritize Infrastructure Reset, improve infrastructure lifecycle management, enhance its resilience, and ensure infrastructure investments are aligned with Marine Corps capability-based requirements to support the warfighting mission, contributing directly to current and future Force readiness. PB19 funds the Infrastructure Reset Strategy with realized long-term cost savings through a reduction of 1056 failing structures (14 million square feet) during the FYDP and yield savings in Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization accounts.

**Manpower – Growing and Sustaining Our High Quality People:** Our people – Marines, civilians, and their families – are the foundation of all that we do; they are our center of gravity. PB19 provides \$15.7 billion towards our manpower accounts, over 36% of our total request as it begins to implement MCF 2025. It also supports building a more experienced, better trained, and more capable force by increasing the number of Marines we have with special skills. Our Marines want to deploy, serve our Nation, and protect our country from threats overseas. As Marines, we pride ourselves on being ready and on training for combat in conditions that are as close to reality as possible to enable success when called to fight. To ensure their success in future conflicts, we continue to build upon our lethality as we adapt our training, driving changes in our programs.