

STATEMENT
OF
GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
AS DELIVERED TO CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES
ON
THE POSTURE OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Marines – Vital to our Nation’s Defense

As set forth by the 82nd Congress and reaffirmed by the 114th, the purpose of our Corps is to provide maritime expeditionary combined arms air-ground task forces that are “most ready, when the Nation is least ready.” We are a naval force whose mission requires us to be ready – a fight-tonight, forward deployed, Next Generation force – able to respond immediately to emergent crises around the globe either from the sea, forward bases, or home station. While our organization, training, and equipment must continually adapt to meet changes in the operational environment, this fundamental purpose is unchanging. Our adaptation requires consistent, predictable funding – a reality we haven’t witnessed in nine years. Your Corps continues to be responsible stewards of our Nation’s resources, innovating to meet new challenges and leverage new opportunities to further increase the lethality of our Marines. As our annual requirement to meet before this body and report our status, this statement aims to do three things: Broadly describe how your Marine Corps is adapting to increase its competitive advantage against pacing threats; explain our budget priorities for the President’s Budget Fiscal Year 2019 (PB19) submission; and describe how continued support from Congress will result in a more lethal force, postured to prevent conflict, yet ready to prevail in the next fight.

Our Contribution to National Defense

Combatant Commander (CCDR) demand for Marines and tailored Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) continues to drive an aggressive operational tempo. We consistently maintain about 35,000, or one-third, of our operating forces forward deployed across the globe. Of those forward deployed forces, more than 11,000 served aboard Navy warships last year. Furthermore, our current posture encompasses several global tasks: Marines supporting multiple CCDRs with offensive air support and strikes from our Amphibious Ready Groups / Marine Expeditionary Units (ARG/MEU) afloat; building partner capacity in both Iraqi and Afghan Armies confronting Islamic State and Taliban fighters; providing critical fixed-wing and artillery fire support to coalition-enabled Syrian Democratic Forces as they fought to clear the Islamic State from Raqqa, Syria; providing tailored military combat-skills training and advisor support to foreign forces as part of Marine Corps Forces Special Operation Command (MARSOC); deterring aggressive behavior in the East and South China Seas through the forward posturing of 5th Generation aircraft within the Pacific; providing immediate disaster response from our ARG/MEU and Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) to Americans in the wake of four hurricanes; supporting continued efforts to ensure freedom of navigation through the Bab al-Mandab strait; and enabling full spectrum cyberspace operations while supporting Joint and Coalition Forces as part of Marine Forces Cyber Command (MARFORCYBER).

Marines continue to foster and strengthen relationships with our allies and partners, executing 62 joint, bilateral, and multinational exercises last year. Exercises like Balikatan in the Philippines, Eager Lion in Jordan, and Joint Viking in Norway, increase our effectiveness and help us to gain an understanding of how to best complement one another’s strengths. The Marine Corps also maintains a vital relationship with the State Department, providing security at our Embassies and Consulates worldwide. Today, Marines routinely serve at 178 Embassies and Consulates in 148 countries around the globe. Marine Security Guard Security Augmentation Unit teams deployed 36 times last year at the request of the State Department, executing 17 Embassy / Consulate and 18 VIP (POTUS/VPOTUS/SECSTATE) security missions. In short, as the Nation’s “911 force,” we are forward postured across the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs), engaged daily in deterrence and security cooperation efforts, all while remaining capable of rapidly aggregating Marines from adjacent GCCs and the homeland to effectively respond to national crises.

Adapting to Increase our Competitive Advantage

The strategic environment continues to be complex, uncertain, technologically charged, and dangerous. The proliferation of modern conventional and cyber weapons to a broader range of state and non-state entities, along with the erosion of our competitive advantage in areas where we have long enjoyed relative superiority, is likely to continue as rival states and organizations attempt to contest our influence. Competition for natural resources, violent extremism, natural disasters, social unrest, cyber-attacks, regional conflict, and the proliferation of advanced weaponry and weapons of mass destruction create a wide range of challenges for a globally responsive force. Further, complex terrain, technology proliferation, information as a weapon, the battle of signatures, and contested domains are driving change across the strategic environment. Through the lens of these drivers, your Marines look for ways to adapt and modernize to increase our competitive advantage against pacing threats.

The ascendant threats posed by revisionist powers and rogue states require change – we must become more lethal, resilient and as a consequence, a more capable deterrent. The Navy-Marine Corps team can no longer rely on concepts and capabilities premised on uncontested sea control. We have begun to re-evaluate our capabilities to operate in all domains and conduct sea control, power projection, maritime security, and deterrence knowing that we must consider the tactical and operational details of a contingency – and how our contributions could shape the strategic environment to prevent conflict. Modern sensors and precision weapons with expanding ranges and lethality are redefining how we assess our posture and relative combat power. Advanced defensive networks are forcing us to re-consider the methods of power projection required to compete against rising peers.

We have focused on *preventing* and *detering* conflict by providing combined-arms task forces to theaters either already in crisis or at the risk of crisis to meet the Congress' mandate to be "...ready to suppress or contain international disturbances short of large-scale war." We remain poised to quickly respond within the Contact Layer should deterrence fail to keep local disturbances from cascading into larger contingencies requiring the attention and resources of the larger Joint Force. As stated within the recently released National Defense Strategy (NDS), we must re-posture in a manner consistent with being the Nation's sentinels – preventing large-scale war and managing crises as an extension of the naval force. Steady-state requirements have degraded our readiness to support naval campaigns and degraded our combined-arms training necessary to create credible combat deterrent forces. Two challenges must be addressed to remedy these problems – (1) the resilience of our posture and (2) the pace of our naval force's availability and modernization. We require Congress' assistance with aspects of each.

First, our global posture must adapt. To best adapt we must increase our strategic flexibility and freedom of action. The NDS introduces a Global Operating Model consisting of four layers – Contact, Blunt, Surge, and Homeland Defense – and apportions a combination of U.S.-based forces and theater-based ready forces to provide a method to mitigate the challenges outlined above. Your Marine Corps operates regularly within three of the four layers – Contact, Blunt, and Surge. ARG/MEUs, allocated forces, MARSOC, and MARFORCYBER are part of the Nation's Contact Layer – that competitive space where the military element of national power preserves the alignment of shared interests with our partners and allies. When competition escalates to conflict, these forces must be able to rapidly transition to combat operations. They are more often than not operating within the maritime domain, an area proving to be increasingly contested, compounding the challenges presented by the strategic environment. We must do so while simultaneously preparing to conduct challenging naval campaigns against adaptive competitors such as China and Russia. Despite being responsible and prudent with our Nation's resources, the cost of war and war readiness today is higher than ever. We have been innovative in meeting past challenges and leveraging emergent opportunities,

yet we face ever growing threats from rising peers and irregular foes that require us to take a hard look at our global disposition.

The development and acquisition of long-range precision weapons by our Nation's chief competitors and threats – China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) – have placed many of our forward deployed forces within the effective range of their weapons systems, or “threat rings.” Forward deployed and stationed Marines are now vulnerable to attacks in ways we have not considered for decades. To operate within the Contact and Blunt Layers, Marine forces must be combat-credible and oriented on warfighting to provide credible deterrence. Marines who are stationed at and rotate through III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) in the Pacific are forward postured, providing expeditionary forward presence. The Blunt Layer requires a resilient, dispersed basing posture with sufficient forward stockpiles of logistics items and a reliable command and control (C2) network to delay, degrade, and deny aggression. Conversely, most of our forward bases and stations lack sufficient resilience against long-range kinetic and non-kinetic attacks; thus, jeopardizing our ability to prepare, project, and sustain combat power. Efficiencies in the construction and configuration of these bases made possible by relative security now pose as risks; however, there are remedies to these problems. We need additional hardening of our facilities to include aircraft hangars and command posts, the capability to rapidly repair damage to our air stations, and counter-precision guided munitions and advanced air-defense capabilities.

From our current posture, rapidly aggregating Surge Forces will prove challenging. Responding to global contingencies against peer rivals in an expeditious manner may be contested every step of the way – we are going to have to fight to get to the fight. Surge Forces are those war-winning forces that deliver capable mass to the fight, primarily from the Continental United States, but also from across GCCs. They are highly ready and able to fight in all domains, degrading and penetrating anti-access area denial (A2AD) networks, as well as assuring access and projecting power with C2, fires, maneuver, and logistics. The rapid aggregation of Surge Forces is a problem that is not unique to the Marine Corps. Sea control has become more important now than in past decades, and the Marine Corps must further develop and integrate force capabilities in support of the Navy. This will require measured shifts from a focus on a near symmetric land-based enemy to an asymmetric view in which Marine forces ashore threaten enemy naval and air forces from expeditionary advance bases. There are elements of naval security cooperation concerning maritime security, all domain access, and power projection that could be assumed by the Marine Corps to alleviate pressure on our over-stressed fleets, particularly in the Pacific.

Secondly, the operationally available inventory of amphibious warships and connectors is well below the requirement to satisfy a competitive global strategy. This is forcing CCDRs to rely on shore-based MAGTFs that lack the advantages resident in shipborne formations. 38 L-Class Amphibious warships are required to meet a 2.0 MEB Joint Forcible Entry requirement, and upwards of 50 would be needed to meet CCDR demand. Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) and Expeditionary-class ships offer cost effective alternative platform options to help mitigate a lack of warship capacity and for low-end, low-risk missions in an uncontested maritime domain; however, they do not supplant our L-Class warship requirement.

Ships acting within a networked fleet must contribute to the lethality of the fleet with the ability to protect themselves from air, surface, and sub-surface attack, while also possessing organic ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore strike weapons. Current amphibious ships lack these capabilities and therefore must rely on support from other combatants to perform sea control and power projection missions. This could be remedied by upgrading command and control suites, introducing vertical launch systems and organic air defense, decreasing ship signatures to become less targetable, and installing the ability to launch and capture the MAGTF's growing arrangements of unmanned aerial systems (UAS). Incorporating these capabilities, with the help of Congress, would increase the lethality of our

ARG/MEUs and the entire Joint Force while supporting operations throughout the Range of Military Operations (ROMO).

Increasing the Lethality of Our Corps

Your Marines continue to innovate and build a Next Generation Marine Corps – a lethal, adaptive, and resilient Corps that implements combined arms as a means to conduct maneuver warfare across all domains, no matter the challenge – directly supporting the NDS, ready to fight and win across the ROMO. This transformation began in 2016 with the implementation of the Marine Corps Operating Concept (MOC). The MOC represents our institutional vision for how the Marine Corps will operate, fight, and win despite the challenges described above. As mentioned at the outset of this statement, while the Corps’ fundamental purpose does not change, our concepts – and the organization, training, and equipment changes they drive – must adapt to effectively accomplish it. The MOC provides the foundation and context for subordinate operating and functional concepts – like Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment and Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) – and it guides our analysis, wargaming, and experimentation. Further, the MOC drives the evolution of our Service doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) through a detailed and thorough Capabilities Based Requirements System.

Whereas the MOC provides the concept for how Marines will fight and win, it is through extensive experimentation and wargaming that we validate our capability development choices and inform our investment strategies. Our experimentation and wargaming focuses on designing a balanced MAGTF, optimized for the future that incorporates Marines capable of leveraging cyber, information, and artificial intelligence capabilities. As a driver of innovation to identify these future capabilities, our Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL) completed the first phase of our long-range experimentation plan called Sea Dragon 2025, which focused on augmenting an infantry battalion with experimental equipment, developing an analytically-based wargaming process, and leveraging commercial technological advances through our Advanced Naval Technical Experiment series. Phase two of Sea Dragon 2025 is underway, initiating our Experiment Campaign Plan. This plan spans three years, focusing on MAGTF hybrid logistics, operations in the information environment, and EABO. Through these efforts, the Marine Corps will continue to adapt and refine our capability development, force structure, and investment strategy that modernizes the force.

Our 2019 Budget

Our overall theme for PB19, *Modernizing for the Future Force*, focuses on three key 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 MOC, we plan to rebuild a more lethal, maneuverable, and resilient force able to operate in the emerging strategic environment. To accomplish this goal, we require a budget that is delivered on-time, with consistency – adequate, sustained, and predictable funding is needed to properly plan for and resource a ready, capable force. That said, your Marine Corps remains committed to building the most ready force our Nation can afford, allocating \$40.4 billion to our ground and aviation baseline budget, and an additional \$3.1 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations funding as part of the PB19 submission – a 7% increase over last year’s submission. We plan to use the resources to increase our lethality to maintain our military advantage in a fiscally prudent and executable manner, addressing critical modernization requirements and investing in key warfighting capabilities without sacrificing near term readiness. Additionally, we plan to resource our infrastructure reset, Indo-Pacific strategy, new structure, materiel, munitions, maintenance and training

requirements that together generate the right capability and capacity required. Allocating money across our budget priorities supports Department of Defense (DoD) guidance to restore military readiness and provide solutions that proactively shape the strategic environment.

The Marine Corps is committed to audit readiness and business reform, viewing both as critical enablers to Warfighter readiness. The Marine Corps recently completed the Full Financial Statement Audit for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, the first within the DoD. Although a disclaimer was issued for this first-year effort, the Marine Corps continues to push forward as the lead military service for a full audit of its financial statements. The Marine Corps has a commitment to achieve and sustain favorable audit opinions regarding the presentation of its annual financial statements. The transparency afforded with auditable financial statements demonstrates our commitment to the prudent management of taxpayer provided resources. Efficiencies gained through audit efforts enhance the overall support to the Warfighter and ensure the effective use of funds received. Progress will be measured not by the auditor's opinion in 2017, but by the velocity of corrective action as we continue to improve financial processes, systems, internal controls and accountability of equipment to achieve a clean financial opinion in the years to come. As the rest of the military services commence their full financial statement audits in FY18, the Marine Corps continues to share our lessons learned across the Department.

As part of ongoing business reform initiatives, the Marine Corps has identified more than \$3.6 billion in savings and cost avoidance, \$567 million in FY19 alone, to provide for reinvestment in warfighting readiness. We continue to make strategic choices in the divestiture of certain programs to reallocate funds toward building a more lethal, modern, multi-domain, expeditionary force. This has included reducing depot level maintenance for the legacy Light Armored Vehicle (LAV) and Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAV) as we look to accelerate the replacement of each vehicle. Similarly, the Marine Corps' Infrastructure Reset Strategy seeks to improve infrastructure lifecycle management and ensure infrastructure investments are aligned with Marine Corps installations that are capable, adaptive, and economically sustainable platforms from which to generate readiness and project combat power in a fiscally constrained environment. Implementation of this strategy consolidates and appropriately resets the infrastructure footprint within existing installations to improve operational readiness and generate resources for reinvestment.

Marine Corps business reform initiatives have also included the more effective use of operating resources and force restructuring throughout our military and civilian manpower. An in-depth organizational structure and design review of Marine Corps Systems Command, for instance, led to a reorganization to enhance MAGTF alignment across product lines, maximizing economy of force by reducing overall program office structure, achieving better rank and responsibility alignment, and optimizing alignment with key stakeholders. In another example, a review of our ground conventional ammunition portfolio led to training requirements refinement; the use of new, less-expensive training munitions; and the elimination of duplicative munition requirements. We are focused on continuing business reforms in FY19 that foster effective resource management and streamline the requirements and acquisition process.

Modernization – The Foundation of Our Future Readiness

Our Marine Corps must be modernized to meet the demands of the strategic environment. Given this urgency, we appreciate the Congressional action to improve acquisition through the National Defense Authorization Acts of FY16 and FY17, and we continue to leverage the opportunities provided by this legislation. While we are leveraging technology to advance promising capabilities in a range of information related areas, funding stability and flexibility must be increased to enable us to keep up with the rapid pace at which technology evolves. 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. To do that, we must be afforded the flexibility to experiment with new technologies available on the market, determining what will work best in the future operating environment, and then delivering those capabilities to the force quickly to mitigate the rapid rate of technological change. Our newly chartered Marine Corps Rapid Capabilities Office (MCRCO) accomplishes that end, seeking emergent and disruptive technologies to increase our lethality and resiliency. The MCRCO leverages FY16 and FY17 NDAA provisions and partnerships to accelerate the acquisition process – with the consistent and steadfast support of Congress – we will continue to fund this office. Accelerated modernization is the most effective remedy to our long-term readiness problems and we must abstain from burying our modernization efforts under cumbersome acquisition processes – we have to get this right.

PB19 provides \$13.8 billion towards our investment accounts, nearly 32% of our total request to modernize the force. This represents a 19% increase in investment funding over our FY18 budget submission. The PB19 investment approach is synched with the implementation of MCF 2025, specifically investing in areas such as: Information Warfare (IW), 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 the Active and Reserve components of the force. This approach includes changes to the structure of our Tables of Equipment into equipment sets that balance affordability with the need for a networked, mobile, and expeditionary force. Over the past decade and a half, fiscal instability, funding decreases, and operational demand increases have forced us to take risk in modernization to preserve readiness, deferring critical future aviation and ground programs. PB19 continues the efforts started by the FY17 Request for Additional Appropriations and PB18 to reverse this trend by investing in, and in some cases accelerating, our modernization programs that directly correlate to improved readiness by reducing unit costs, increasing efficiencies, and providing needed operational capabilities sooner.

PB19 invests in our C2 capabilities needed to build a Next Generation Marine Corps that will dominate the information domain. This requires transforming MAGTF C2 through a unified network environment that is ready, responsive, and resilient, with initiatives that integrate Navy and Marine Corps systems. Enhanced C2 and digitally interoperable protected networks are modern capabilities that will facilitate improved battlefield awareness to and from small, dispersed tactical units – achieving this end is my top acquisition priority. Such programs as Tactical Communication Modernization (TCM), Common Aviation Command and Control Systems (CAC2S), and Networking On-the-Move (NOTM) provide significantly increased capabilities associated with maneuver and fires across the battlespace. As warfare evolves into a battle of signatures and detection, these information capabilities are vital to maximize the lethality, maneuverability, resilience, and effectiveness of our multi-domain, naval expeditionary forces.

We continue to prioritize the integration of information capabilities throughout the MAGTF. Within the Command Element, investments in the Marine Intelligence Program allowed the formation of the MEF Information Group (MIG) to establish IW coordination centers for MAGTF Commanders, filling the IW gap at the operational level. Additionally, we have increased funding to MARFORCYBER to man, train, and equip cyber forces and conduct full-spectrum cyberspace operations. The coordination, integration, and employment of information and cyber capabilities will enable the MAGTF Commander to facilitate friendly forces maneuver and deny the enemy freedom of action in the information environment.

The Ground Combat Element (GCE) is likewise being adapted to operate and fight more effectively in the strategic environment through the incorporation of information-related capabilities and the overall modernization of its ground formations. PB19 continues to invest in key ground systems like the ACV 1.1, Ground / Air Task Oriented Radar (G/ATOR), High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), and Increment 1 of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV). Furthermore,

investments are being made to ensure more technological advances are being incorporated into our infantry units. We continue to increase the maneuverability, lethality, and resiliency of our infantry by decreasing loads, enhancing Company Level Operations and Intelligence Centers, increasing small UAS capacity and unmanned teaming with robots, adding engineering capacity to provide direct support to every infantry battalion, and increasing long range fires capacity. It is in areas like these that we need to garner flexibility within our acquisition process to assist in the streamlining of our modernization efforts. We must be able to outfit the individual Marine with the most modern technology and gear as soon as it becomes available. The investments being made across the GCE will result in a more lethal fighting force able to better support the Joint Force across the ROMO.

PB19 invests in our aviation systems to modernize the Aviation Combat Element (ACE) by funding increases in the procurement of 5th Generation aircraft. The Marine Corps is challenged to replace aging aviation platforms that have reached the end of their service lives or suffered accelerated wear in ongoing combat operations. Our aviation modernization plan is a phased multi-year approach to modernization that encompasses aircraft transitions, aircraft inventory shortfalls, manpower challenges, safety and fiscal requirements. Our modern expeditionary force requires fixed-wing aircraft capable of flexible basing ashore or at sea in support of our Marine units. A top priority is the F-35B/C and its future sustainment. This aircraft is not just a replacement for three aging platforms; it provides transformational electronic and information warfighting capabilities for the future naval and Joint Force. Maximizing the potential of this aircraft requires further analysis of our joint training ranges to ensure our aircrews are able to train to its full capability. Other priorities for aviation include investing in lethal, persistent, multi-role intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) UAS like our MAGTF Unmanned Expeditionary (MUX) program; supporting capabilities such as electronic attack; implementing robust strike weapons programs; creating manned-unmanned teaming capabilities; and pursuing other sustainable modern aviation platforms ultimately increasing our competitive advantage against current rivals. Additionally, the CH-53K (Heavy Lift Replacement) remains a critical replacement to the CH-53E, as it has triple the lift capacity and is the only maritime, heavy-lift helicopter capable of supporting current and future warfighting concepts. Much like the MV-22 Osprey, this helicopter will change the scope of our amphibious operations through its increased lift and load capacity.

The Next Generation Logistics Combat Element will optimize tactical distribution with unmanned platforms, flatten the supply chain through additive manufacturing (AM), and enhance preventive and predictive supply / maintenance with sense and respond logistics. Further, state-of-the-art logistics C2 / Information Technology, enabled by artificial intelligence, will extend the operational reach of the MAGTF. Our MCWL and Next Generation Logistics (NexLog) organizations continue to stay at the cutting edge of military innovation. Marines are at the forefront of this effort, optimizing the potential of AM in garrison and overseas in austere environments. Our Marines are the world's military leaders in the realm of 3D printed tactical level unmanned aerial vehicles and using AM to produce time and mission critical components. We have more than 70 3D printers throughout the Marine Corps, and are fostering innovation through the establishment of "makerspaces" (areas where 3D printers are made available for use by Marines) in the operating forces and supporting establishment. Once fully integrated, this capability will enable our Marines to create custom solutions to tactical problems, enhancing flexibility and speed, while fundamentally altering the supply chain and wartime logistics. We are experimenting with various unmanned aerial and surface platforms to increase our ISR and logistical capacity and capability on the modern battlefield. Lastly, we are conducting a series of innovation symposiums and challenges to harness the creative energy of all Marines in the development of Next Generation warfare capabilities for this century's five domain warfighting environment. This is the future and your Marines are working to change the way we conduct logistics in combat.

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 should therefore be resourced accordingly. Our ability to rapidly deploy Marines to support missions across the spectrum of conflict is incompatible with tiered readiness. Marines do not get ready when a crisis occurs; we must be forward deployed and ready to respond immediately from within our rival’s threat rings. PB19 provides \$13.1 billion towards our operation and maintenance accounts, over 30% of our total request, enabling us to meet all of our steady state and contingency requirements within established timelines, while balancing efforts across the force to meet operational demands.

The Marine Corps is committed to building the most ready force “to suppress and contain international disturbances short of large-scale war,” and one capable of gaining and maintaining sea control as required by the larger naval force. Readiness, however, is the product of two metrics. The first is the ability of the force to execute its mission with ready people, ready equipment, and the right training. The second metric compares the force against potential adversaries in various circumstances. Within the context of global competition against rising peers, the scope of the second metric grows dramatically. For instance, if our units are ready (near-term readiness levels), then by the first metric we are ready. If, however, the force is outranged or outpaced by potential adversary capabilities (long-term capability modernization), then by the second metric we are not ready. We either assume risk to mission or modernize our capabilities to mitigate against the second metric.

The Marine Corps is ready to execute missions assigned with deployed and next-to-deploy forces, but maintaining this readiness has come at the expense of the readiness of non-deployed forces, modernization, and infrastructure sustainment. This shortfall in readiness of our non-deployed forces limits our ability to respond to unexpected crises or major contingencies. In the event of a major contingency, degraded units could either be called upon to deploy immediately at increased risk to the force and the mission or require additional time to prepare, thus incurring increased risk to mission by surrendering the initiative to our adversaries. The FY17 RAA provided the investment needed to arrest this decline, and the PB18 and PB19 budget submissions provide the resources needed to accelerate our readiness recovery.

Another aspect of our readiness for major combat operations involves the capacity of our War Reserve Materiel to enable and sustain large-scale force mobilizations for major contingencies against rising peers. Historically, readiness of deployed and next-to-deploy forces also takes precedence over War Reserve Materiel, increasing risk and cost in the event of a major contingency. PB19 invests in our War Reserves in such areas as munitions and emerging starter stocks, maintenance modernization, and our MPF fleet; all vital parts of our Surge Forces. It also invests in our prepositioning programs in Norway, which includes the maintenance of our prepositioned equipment. The security threats to our Nation, as articulated by the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, demand that America has a globally responsive, truly expeditionary, consistently ready, forward-postured naval force. This is beyond dispute. To deliver on that requirement, there are four primary challenge areas within readiness that the FY19 budget addresses: aviation; amphibious, maritime, and expeditionary ships; deployment-to-dwell; and infrastructure.

Aviation

Our most acute readiness issues are in aviation units. A combination of aging aircraft, a lack of ready basic aircraft, an unresponsive supply of parts and spares, and maintenance backlogs at the depots contribute to high over-utilization rates of available aircraft needed for training and certifications. This in turn hastens the induction of these aircraft into maintenance cycles. Lack of predictable and stable funding affects industry. Often when funding becomes available late in the year

through Continuing Resolutions, the industrial base is not energized to meet demand. This negatively influences training and certification opportunities for our maintainers and aircrew.

Our priority remains building aviation readiness for combat by balancing modernization with readiness recovery. PB19 works to assist with this by providing support to our comprehensive aviation recovery plan that, *if sufficiently resourced and supported by our industrial base*, recovers the force to an acceptable readiness level by FY20 with a ready bench by FY22. Further, PB19 plans to fund aviation readiness accounts at maximum levels and spares at 93% of the requirement across both legacy and Next Generation platforms. We are also continuing to fund and support readiness initiatives to the F/A-18, CH-53E, and MV-22B. Budget challenges, production delays, and increasing sustainment costs for aging aircraft place the recovery plan in a fragile state – this readiness goal has already been delayed once. While aviation readiness recovery remains a priority – the introduction of the F-35B/C and accelerated modernization of our Next Generation ACE is just as important. Furthermore, the continued funding of legacy aircraft is a necessary bridge to the future as we continue to increase the size of our Next Generation fleet of aircraft.

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. Due to existing shortfalls within our amphibious, maritime, and expeditionary ship capacity, the naval force currently struggles to satisfy these basic requirements – an issue that will only grow worse over time if we cannot remedy our current budgetary issues. PB19 puts us on a path to address these issues, but we need Congress to act on this in a timely manner, consistent with a return to the regular order of business.

The naval services must have optimally trained and equipped amphibious forces tailored to each theater and threat and ready to deploy with a suitable quantity of forces, on the designated timeline, and with the reservoir of non-deployed yet ready forces that can surge to meet the demands of large-scale operations or unplanned contingencies. The operational availability of the existing amphibious fleet is insufficient to meet global demands, negatively impacts 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. The Navy possessed 62 amphibious ships in 1990, yet possesses only 32 today. Of the 32 amphibious ships, 18 are available to support current or contingency operations. The stated requirement of 38 amphibious warships is the minimum number to fulfill our Title 10 obligation. Resourcing to a lower number puts CCDRs requirements and contingency response timelines at risk. The Navy and Marine Corps are currently operating below the minimum acceptable level and will continue to do so until FY33 when we reach the minimum amphibious ship requirement of 38 per the FY17 30-year shipbuilding plan. That said, we recommend exploring the acceleration of LHA-9 – a project that can begin within the out years of the FYDP, bringing continuity to our industrial base and directly increasing the lethality of our Navy and Marine Corps team.

While some ships in the amphibious inventory have undergone upgrades to support the F-35B and are fundamentally more capable platforms than those they replaced, the naval force lacks the capacity necessary to conduct requisite training to build total force amphibious readiness and simultaneously prevent conflict. The Marine Corps, in coordination with the Navy, is exploring innovative ways to employ alternative platforms for amphibious operations in more permissive environments in order to provide more global coverage in the most resource-appropriate manner. These alternatives are by no means replacements for amphibious warships, but instead provide cheaper, additive alternatives in certain environments. Tailored MAGTFs afloat on these vessels

would replace those on shore due to limited shipping. Regardless of the ship, whether an LHD equipped with F-35Bs and MV-22s or an Expeditionary Sea Base with embarked crisis response forces, Marines require additional maritime expeditionary shipping to satisfy current requirements and the NDS. Congress could help remedy this by supporting the PB19 request.

Ship-to-shore connectors move personnel, equipment and supplies, maneuvering from a sea base to the shoreline. These are critical enablers for any naval force. Modern aerial connectors, such as the MV-22 Osprey and CH-53K, extend operational reach and lift capacity, revolutionizing our ability to operate from the sea, austere locations, and previously damaged airfields within a contested environment. Aerial connectors alone do not suffice; the Navy is in the process of modernizing the surface connector fleet by replacing the aging Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) and the 50-year-old fleet of Landing Craft Utility (LCU). This system of surface and aerial connectors would enable the Joint Force to establish a web of sensor, strike, decoy, and sustainment locations based on land and sea that would complicate the strategic and operational decision making of our most advanced rivals, thus attacking their A2AD strategies. Continued funding of the modernization, maintenance, and service life extension programs of our existing fleet of connectors is critical to enabling our success in future security environments.

Mine Countermeasure (MCM) capabilities are *consistently underfunded*, affecting the Joint Force's ability to operate in the littorals. The assault element of an amphibious task force, as well as any amphibious force maneuvering to establish expeditionary advanced bases, requires assured maneuver through very shallow water, surf zones, and beach zones to inland objectives. The Naval force has a deficiency in MCM capability and capacity in these areas, which has a direct effect on options available to fleet commanders within contested seas. Naval MCM is in a transitional period where legacy systems are reaching the end of service life. Although PB19 extends the service life of four MCM systems, we must accelerate future capability to ensure continuous MCM coverage during the shift from legacy to future MCM systems. Future MCM systems could provide solutions to identified gaps in detection and neutralization in very shallow water, the surf and beach zones. Sufficient, sustained, and focused resourcing for this transition is needed to provide required capabilities and capacities – a critical capability to support amphibious operations. If the naval force possessed the capability to easily overcome layered mine defense in contested near-seas, such as the South and East China Seas, through a more robust MCM capability, then we would in effect be attacking the adversary's A2AD strategy. This would demonstrate our ability to penetrate their defenses at a time and place of our choosing, and force them to revalidate assumptions, change decisions, and invest in other more costly capabilities. Assured naval surface access and assured sea control cannot be achieved without an acceleration of our MCM capabilities.

Deployment to Dwell

The rate by which Marines deploy largely depends upon what unit they are assigned to and the operational demand for those units. Currently, that rate is favorable for Marines assigned to many of our headquarters elements; however, a majority of the Active Force is experiencing a deployment to dwell (D2D) ratio that is unsustainable. We confront this challenge daily. While these demands are clear and unmistakable evidence of the continued relevance of Marines, this tempo is not sustainable as it 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 at home. Continued high operational tempo is affecting our ability to retain Marines and we need to ensure we are doing what we can to sustain our career force.

There are three types of Marines in our Corps: those who are deployed, those getting ready to deploy, and those who just returned. PB19 supports an 186,100 Active and 38,500 Reserve component end-strength force while maintaining an approximate 1:2 D2D ratio in the aggregate. 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. We owe our Marines and their families the necessary time to reset and train for the next deployment or contingency. Historically, Marines have benefited from being a 1:3 D2D force. The Marines that were not deployed, had adequate time to prepare across the full spectrum of conflict and could be counted on to be ready when called upon to reinforce their teammates if a major contingency happened. This would require a substantive increase in supply or decrease in demand – we are not asking for the former in this year’s budget. Consequently, a temporary reduction of our operational tasking is required to improve our D2D ratio. Although accepted in the short-term for the reasons outlined above, we must not accept a 1:2 D2D as the new normal. We routinely talk about our readiness – fixing these dwell challenges will help to better our readiness.

Infrastructure

We must prioritize Infrastructure Reset – we must improve infrastructure lifecycle management and ensure infrastructure investments are aligned with Marine Corps capability-based requirements to support the warfighting mission and contribute 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 Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) and yield savings in Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (FSRM) accounts. Our installations provide three critical force enabling functions. First, they are deployment platforms from which our expeditionary forces fight and win our Nation’s battles; second, they are where our MAGTFs train and hone their combat readiness; and third, they house our Marines and families.

The Marine Corps has historically taken risk in facilities funding to protect near-term readiness and service-level training. While proposed investments in FSRM will allow our facilities to maintain an average condition, if long term underfunding of FSRM requirements continue, the progressive degradation of our infrastructure will result, potentially creating a bow wave of long-term costs and in a manner inconsistent with the National Security Strategy (NSS), NDS, or National Military Strategy (NMS). PB19 begins the work to ensure our infrastructure is resilient against not only long-range precision strike, but also cyber-attacks. The greatest need of enhanced resilience exists on our strategically significant overseas bases in the Pacific on Okinawa and Guam. These locations are vital to reassuring partners and allies in the region.

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 like MARSOC; those required for intelligence operations; and electronic, information, and cyber warfare. Our manning requires leaders with the grade, experience, and technical and tactical qualifications associated with their billets, which is essential to the Marine Corps as a “fight tonight” force. The resources we dedicate to recruiting, retaining, and developing our people directly contribute to the success of our institution. Our commitment to our Marines, their families – and the civilians who support them at bases, stations, and depots across the globe – must never waiver.

Marine recruiters consistently meet our recruiting goals by finding motivated and qualified men and women within our Nation who are willing to raise their hands and volunteer to wear the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. These men and women are smarter and more capable than past generations and we continue to effectively lead them, both at home and in combat. Devoted to upholding our values of honor, courage, and commitment, we are dedicated to holding ourselves to the highest standard of personal conduct. To this end, we have taken an introspective look at our culture in light of social media controversies and have created a task force and permanent office to examine and correct

conditions that enable disrespect or misconduct to exist. We are committed to ensuring Marines treat each other with dignity and respect. As issues arise, our commanders take necessary action to ensure we maintain an organization that values the contributions of all Marines based on their individual merit and commitment to warfighting excellence.

Increasing the effectiveness of our Marines requires constant reflection on how we conduct training; training to prepare for combat and training that sustains the transformation of Marines into resilient leaders who are mentally, morally, and physically fit. That transformation begins with entry-level training, whether it be recruit training or Officer Candidate School, and continues throughout a Marine's service – whether it be a single enlistment or 40 years. We believe in returning quality citizens to society when they leave the Marine Corps – entry-level training is where that begins.

Over the last year, we have examined how we conduct recruit training and made adjustments, while strictly maintaining the standards necessary to ensure all Marines are proficient in the skills required of our Nation's premier warfighting force. We have integrated a majority of the recruit training phases at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island. Additionally, the Recruit Depots have redesigned the last 11 days of entry-level training – as a new, fourth phase – to enhance a recruit's new identity as a Marine. The training focuses on mentorship and leader-led instruction aiming to better prepare the new Marines for the transition to follow-on training and the operating forces. The newly created Transformation Enhancement Program (TEP) improves our existing curriculum at our Formal Schools – reinforcing the values and principles emphasized during the Fourth Phase of recruit training. The TEP has been implemented at our combat training battalions and Schools of Infantry with plans to continue implementation into all formal schools over the next year.

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. Conducting combined arms in multiple domains, counter-unmanned aerial systems, managing signatures, and increasing integration of simulation technologies are all part of the new training regimen. Innovation remains a critical aspect of our Corps as Marines continue learning through the testing and evaluation of new methodologies and technologies to gain advantage over our rivals. Cyber operations, information and electronic warfare, more capable command and control, intelligence, engineering, civil-military operations, manned-unmanned teaming, robotics, AM, and the leveraging of artificial intelligence are critical skills we need for the future fight. Accordingly, we are updating course materials and developing new programs of instruction to ensure the Marine Corps remains a step ahead of our rivals.

Taking care of our Marines, civilians, and their families is a key element of overall readiness, combat effectiveness, and warfighting. Today's requirements mandate that we not only provide equipment, but also focus on other important aspects of readiness, such as family stability, housing, spousal support, behavioral health, education, professional development, transition assistance, financial literacy, and wounded warrior support. Deployment Readiness Coordinators help ensure our families get the support needed before, during, and after their Marines deploy. Additionally, our comprehensive packages of services (Sexual Assault Prevention and Response; Suicide Prevention and Response; Behavioral Health; Wounded Warrior Regiment; Personal and Professional Development; and Transition Assistance) support the complete fitness and readiness of our Marines and their families. The Marine Corps remains focused on solutions to reduce destructive behaviors, particularly sexual assault, suicide, hazing, and excessive alcohol consumption. The abuse of alcohol is a known factor and contributor across the spectrum of force preservation issues and negatively impacts the readiness of our force. We are keenly focused on dramatically reducing these destructive behaviors.

Conclusion

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. For years, the Marine Corps and Navy have taken presumptive sea control for granted, despite warnings. We have focused on power projection and assured access, assuming sea control would remain uncontested. 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, coupled with the evolution of our global posture, will provide our Nation's leaders the right instruments of power and 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 on upgraded amphibious warships postured to respond to conflict or on alternative platforms. This postures us to assure partners and allies, compete with rivals, and defeat VEOs. 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 and ensure 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.