

STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL CARLTON W. FULFORD, JR.
COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES PACIFIC
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
ON
21 APRIL 1999
CONCERNING READINESS

I am Lieutenant General Carlton W. Fulford, Jr., Commander of Marine Forces Pacific. My command comprises two-thirds of the Marine Corps operating forces, and ten of its major bases and air stations. I am extremely proud of the 74,175 Marines and Sailors who comprise the Marine Forces Pacific team. Our team's readiness is my Number One concern, so I am very pleased to talk to you about the combat readiness of our forces and the quality of life of the Marines, Sailors, and families assigned to Marine Forces Pacific.

My Marines and I very much appreciate this committee's support. Your support has been instrumental in preserving our ability to answer our nation's "911" calls. Your support has provided for pay and benefits enhancements that will have a positive impact on the retention of our Marines and the quality of our recruits. Your proposed legislation to improve the financial condition for our Marines has increased morale and given our people a sense that the nation cares about their personal and family sacrifices. Our overall reenlistment rates are on line with goals set for career retention. Your recent increases in funding for family housing have improved the quality of life of our forces, and the large increase in Aviation Career Incentive Pay will help address pilot retention challenges. All of these factors will significantly assist us in attracting quality recruits.

Congressional support has resulted in the purchase of 6870 Medium Truck Vehicle Replacements for our 19 year old 5-ton truck and the accelerated production and purchase of the HMMWV A2 to replace the aging HMMWV A1. More recently, the Presidential Budget request increases our ramp up of HMMWV A2 fielding. In turn, it lessens the effects of the serious funding shortage we face as we begin fielding the Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAAV) in FY 06.

Your continued support is needed to provide your Marine Corps with the revolutionary capabilities required for battlefield success in the 21st Century. The key to our future battlefield supremacy is the timely acquisition of the triad required to execute Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS): MV-22, AAV, and LCAC.

Concurrent with your support for the acquisition of these three essential systems, your continued support is required for extending the service life of equipment such as the CH-46, CH-53D, and the current Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV). This will bridge the gap until follow-on platforms reach initial operational capability. For example, we will replace the current Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) engine and suspension with more advanced derivative components and rebuild the vehicle to "like new" standards. Ultimately, we expect this to save Operational and Maintenance dollars on equipment maintenance and reduce the requirement for depot level repairs. More importantly, Marines will spend less time maintaining aging equipment and more time training.

Finally, our Marines sincerely appreciate your support in the new equipment they have received. Marines make do with less. In fact they are accustomed to receiving old equipment. Thanks to Congress, Marines are receiving the new infantry combat boot, the second generation cold weather clothing system, and the new combat tent. The Marines are thrilled with this new equipment, they know you are responsible, and they thank you.

Now allow me to describe my command, and then address some of my specific readiness concerns.

Fleet Marine Forces Pacific was established in 1944 as a U.S. Navy Type Commander and became Marine Forces Pacific, a Service Component Headquarters in 1992. I report directly to the Commander-in-Chief Pacific and support two other CINCS (Commander in Chief Central

Command and Commander, U.S. Forces Korea, who also serves as the Commander in Chief United Nations Command and the Combined Forces Command).

Marine Forces Pacific is the only deployable service component command in the Pacific, and in the U.S. Marine Corps. In the case of a major theater war (MTW) in Korea, I will deploy to Korea as Commander, Marine Forces Korea, join with ROK Marines, and assume command of Combined Marine Forces Command. If war occurs in Southwest Asia, I will deploy there as the commander of U.S. Marine Forces Central Command.

Our area of responsibility (AOR) in the Pacific (PACOM) contains two-thirds of the world's population. It includes 43 countries, the six largest armed forces in the world, and covers more than half the earth's surface. Our AOR in the Central Command (CENTCOM) includes 25 nations of diverse political, economic, and cultural structure. It contains over 70% of the world's proven oil reserves.

Marine Forces Pacific has a major role in shaping our nation's relationships throughout the world. Our peacetime engagement strategies emphasize individual nations so we can develop a "custom approach" to the engagement plan. These efforts include exercises, senior officer visits, humanitarian and civic action, service exchange programs, training initiatives, and conferences. The Humanitarian Assistance our forces provided in support of Indonesia during their period of economic and civic unrest is just one example of our theater engagement. On any day, you can find Marines working side by side with other militaries from countries such as Thailand, Korea, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Relationships built during these visits serve our nation well.

We have a special relationship with the countries and military forces of Japan, Singapore, and Australia. Japan, especially Okinawa, provides us with the forward basing infrastructure required to maintain a combat ready Marine Expeditionary Force, III MEF. This forward basing

allows us to meet our responsibilities outlined within the U.S. - Japan Mutual Cooperation and Security Treaty and those outlined within our Major Theater War Plans. Additionally, as the counterpart of the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force, we routinely plan and conduct training to enhance interoperability and understanding.

Singapore, long a staunch supporter of U.S. military presence in the region, provides critical support to our Amphibious Ready Groups/Marine Expeditionary Units (ARG/MEUs) as they transit to the Central Command's Area of Responsibility. They have opened up training areas and facilities that allow our Marines to conduct essential sustainment training.

Australia continues to be our key ally in the South Pacific/Southeast Asia. Our historic and special relationship with the Australian Defense Force is underpinned by the ANZUS Treaty which guides our combined training and operational planning. We are enhancing this already strong relationship with an increased range of training activities, exchanges and consultations. We are also seeking to increase access to combined training ranges and facilities in northern Australia.

As the Commander, Marine Forces Pacific I have two warfighting commanders: LtGen Knutson, Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEF) in California, and LtGen Libutti, Commanding General, III MEF in Okinawa, Japan. They join me today on this panel. My most important task as a Service component commander is to support these MEF commanders by "setting the conditions" for their success on the battlefield. I do this by advising the joint force commander on the most effective employment of Marine forces, by directing and coordinating the movement and sustainment of Marine forces to and within the theater, and coordinating actions with other Service components to achieve unity of effort of the joint force.

Additionally, I am the Commander, Marine Bases Pacific. There are ten major supporting Marine Corps installations--in essence, small communities that support our operating forces--from Arizona to California, through Hawaii, and in Okinawa and mainland Japan.

The Marines and Sailors assigned to Marine Forces Pacific are truly "tip of the spear". At a minimum, Marine Forces Pacific has two Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) forward deployed at all times. One MEU provides coverage for the CENTCOM AOR and one covers the PACOM AOR. The 31st MEU is based in Okinawa and recently deployed to CENTCOM in support of Operation Desert Thunder. The 13TH MEU deployed from Southern California has made preparations for possible Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Recent exercises for the 13th MEU include Edged Mallet in Kenya and Eager Mace in Kuwait.

On a typical day, Marine Forces Pacific has approximately thirteen thousand Marines and Sailors participating in numerous operations and exercises throughout the globe, as depicted Figure 1.

MARFORPAC DEPLOYMENT SUMMARY

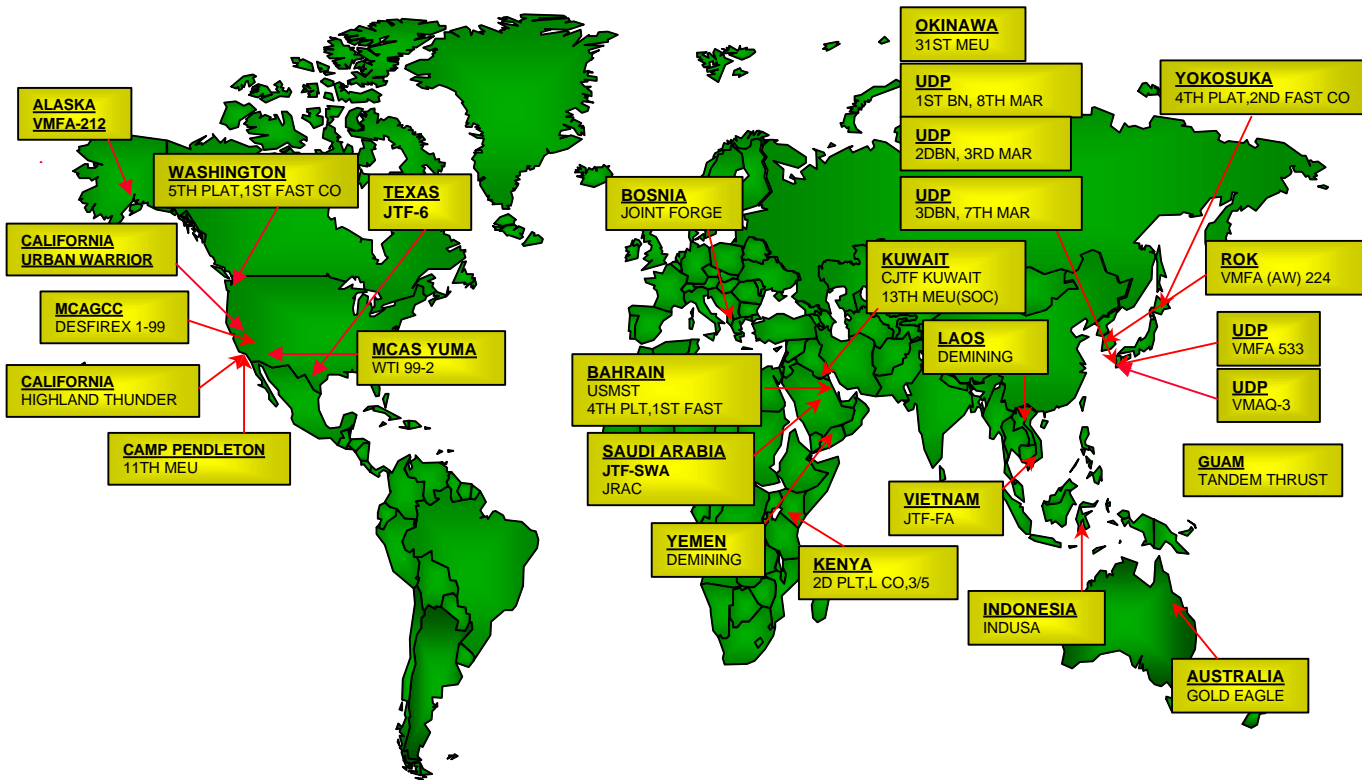


Figure 1

Marine Forces Pacific is committed to the Total Force Policy because without full Reserve integration we would not be able to accomplish our peacetime and wartime missions. Our Marine reserves relieve the operational tempo of our active duty forces by providing individual augmentation, day to day relief for their active duty counterparts, exercise participation, and contingency operations. For example, Headquarters, 24th Marine Regiment, a Reserve unit in Kansas City, MO has been designated as the Marine Rear Area Operations Group (MROAG) for

our Major Theater War operations plans and they have been integrated into exercises in both the PACOM and CENTCOM Theaters. Another example is Headquarters, 14th Marine Regiment, who regularly provides the personnel and expertise to support MEF level targeting and fire support coordination and performed invaluable service during Desert Shield/Storm. Individual reservists and reserve units supported over 14 major service, joint, and combined exercises during fiscal year 1998 and supported two Southwest Asia contingencies (Desert Thunder and Desert Fox). Members of the 4th Force Service Support Group (FSSG) provide their active duty counterparts in Okinawa and Hawaii with vital maintenance and supply augmentation (more than 540 personnel and 8,100 man-days during FY98), particularly during peak exercise periods.

Reserves are important to the accomplishment of the Marine Forces Pacific Headquarters mission. Approximately 240 Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs) are integrated into Headquarters, Marine Forces Pacific during garrison operations and while deployed during exercises or contingencies. Reserve man-day support to Marine Forces Pacific has increased by about 19% between FY97 and FY98, and I see this trend continuing in FY99.

As I said earlier, readiness is my number one priority. We have made considerable strides in enhancing the link between readiness and fiscal decisions. Every fiscal decision I make is couched in terms of the impact to readiness. While I am very confident in our ability to assess and report readiness, current readiness metrics present only a snapshot of today or a look back view of our readiness. The way ahead must include identifying predictive readiness tools, which will include focusing on readiness drivers--the factors that most influence our state of readiness. This will allow us to make appropriate adjustments to preclude a readiness deficiency. I am working with my respective unified commands and with my service headquarters to better define this predictive readiness requirement.

Today our equipment readiness rates remain high throughout the Force, but this has been at the expense of modernization, base infrastructure, and the living conditions of our Marines, Sailors, and families. Our Marines must spend too much time and money maintaining our aging equipment. This requirement draws valuable time and resources away from our fundamental responsibility for training Marines to fight and win our Nation's battles. Each year we spend more of our Operations & Maintenance funds on maintenance costs. Parts are becoming more and more expensive. The combination of high optempo and aging equipment has stretched our capability to maintain high equipment readiness to the limit. Without timely fielding of new equipment, I believe the costs of maintaining our current inventory of equipment will increase and become cost prohibitive within the next decade.

Our pilots are flying aircraft that are, in many cases, older than they are. The KC-130F aircraft is 37 years old, the CH-46 helicopter is 30 years old, and the CH-53D helicopter is 28 years old. Replacement of these aircraft is not scheduled to be completed for 14 to 20 years. Marines are using AAV (Amphibious Assault Vehicles) that are 28 years old, 5-ton trucks that are 19 years old, HMMWVs that are 13 years old, and M198 Howitzers that are 17 years old. Planned replacement of this ground equipment will be completed in 5 to 12 years. In the interim, finding parts for this old equipment is difficult and when found, often times from a single source provider, is very expensive.

I cannot over emphasize the commitment, talent, and ingenuity of our Marines who on a daily basis ensure that this old equipment is ready. They maintain a degree of enthusiasm and esprit that will warm your heart and your soul as they find a way to keep their equipment rolling. However, as they work long hours maintaining aged equipment, they are sacrificing time that

should be spent training in their warrior skills or the quality time that should be spent with their families and loved ones.

To truly fix any readiness deficiencies at Marine Forces Pacific we must focus on the long-term modernization of equipment. It has become part of the Marine ethos to make do with less, existing by scavenging parts and money from any available source. Through prolonged funding shortages we have found ourselves pouring scarce resources into maintaining old equipment. In short, we have been forced to make withdrawals from our modernization and infrastructure accounts to maintain our near-term readiness. Money that should be used for procurement is now going into maintenance and spares for our old equipment, much of which has already exceeded its service life.

A number of our most critical equipment programs for the future revolve around force mobility and sustainment capabilities. The HMMWV replacement program, 5-ton truck replacement program, and the AAV program are examples of our efforts to enhance our mobility on future battlefields. Aviation equipment such as the MV-22 Osprey and the four-bladed Huey and Cobra helicopter upgrades will make us the preeminent warfighter on tomorrow's battlefield. Just as LCAC technology would have markedly enhanced ship-to-shore movement during our amphibious landing at Tarawa, the MV-22 Osprey will provide a quantum leap in tactical maneuver capability over our current rotary wing assets.

Your Marine Corps is revolutionizing our equipment and doctrine to meet the uncertain requirements of the 21st Century. This revolution is called Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS). OMFTS describes a new form of littoral power projection in which Sailors and Marines will apply the tenets of maneuver warfare -- at the operational level of war -- in the context of amphibious operations.

To ensure the success of our revolution, we require revolutionary capabilities such as the leap-ahead technology provided by the AAV, the MV-22, and the Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC). This technology will provide the Corps an unprecedented capability to project forces from over the horizon. The AAV--the Marine Corps number one ground acquisition priority--will allow naval expeditionary forces to eliminate the battlefield mobility gap. Specifically, it will provide for immediate, high-speed maneuver of Marines from ships 25 miles offshore to objectives inland. Ashore, the AAV will be able to speed alongside the M1A1 tank. New tactics will allow forces to exploit the intervening sea and land terrain to achieve surprise and rapidly penetrate weak points in the enemy's defenses.

Modernization funding is also required for several Navy programs as we pursue OMFTS. For example, we require continued procurement of the LPD-17. The LPD-17 is a new class of amphibious ship designed to replace the lift provided by four current ship classes (LPD-4, LSD-36, LKA, LST). It will allow us to transport troops, aircraft, and LCACs with one vessel that is optimized to meet our surge lift requirement. The conceptual DD 21 program with its long range land-attack capability will greatly enhance the Navy's ability to provide fire support to amphibious forces.

We also require your continued support to develop effective mine countermeasure (MCM) technology. We are pleased that advances in airborne and surface MCM are being combined with experimental programs such as the Very Shallow Water (VSW) MCM Detachment to develop superb mine detecting, destroying, and breaching capabilities. We need to continue to develop even greater capabilities for both water-borne and land mines.

Our Force Warfighting Lab is helping us identify technologies needed to equip the 21st century Marine. For example, we have been experimenting with concepts which will enhance

the ability to link our sensors to the decision makers, either at sea or on the ground and in tough urban areas. By providing the on-scene commander with dominant knowledge of the battlespace, we are improving our ability to accomplish the mission.

We are testing the limits of database applications to support readiness. Marine Aircraft Group 13 in Yuma, Arizona, will be the testbed for an Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration that will merge volumes of information from disparate sources into a single intelligent database, then provide "alerts" to safety and maintenance personnel when appropriate. Similarly, the 1st FSSG Forward, in Camp Pendleton, is revolutionizing logistics support to the warfighters by applying commercial-off-the-shelf technologies. They are matching an industry model of inventory control and delivery that can be accessed by the warfighters through a simple web browser. Successful efforts in both of these initiatives will lead to increased readiness and reduced lifecycle costs.

More important than the technology we provide to our Marines, though, is the process of innovation. We are challenging every Marine, Sailor and civilian in Marine Forces Pacific to be an innovator, to question the status quo, and to consider the impossible in order to make a capable, relevant and ready fighting force for the 21st century.

Our bases and stations play a major role in force readiness. These installations are the aircraft carriers from which we train, sustain, and launch our operational forces. They are the homes and support centers for the families of our Marines and sailors who are often deployed 50 percent or more of the year. And, in disasters and emergencies, they are the operations and logistics centers for Marine Corps assistance for our fellow Americans.

The greatest challenge our bases and stations face results from their having been major bill payers in years past to maintain our military force readiness. Although we have significantly

increased our installation efficiency and effectiveness through aggressive measures such as our "Business Reform Initiative," reform alone is not enough. Continued funding shortfalls will mean our bases and stations will be hard pressed to provide even minimal levels of support. If not properly funded, our installation infrastructure will continue to deteriorate. The result of this deterioration will be inadequate training ranges and airfields, substandard maintenance and administrative work spaces for our Marines, disruption in utility service, unserviceable personnel support equipment in barracks spaces, reduction in communication support, and inadequate housing and decreased quality of life for our Marines and Sailors and their families.

Our installations' Backlog of Maintenance and Repair (BMAR) remains a great concern. Overall BMAR has more than doubled from \$167M in FY92 to \$345M in FY98. With the addition of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in 29 Palms, California, to my command last October, our total BMAR shortfall is now \$403M. I am pleased to report POM 00 will stem the growth of BMAR, but it will not reduce it. A sufficient level of funding must be reinvested into our infrastructure to ensure our facilities can support our operational forces.

I am concerned our austere Military Construction Program remains seriously under funded. Currently the Marine Corps replacement rate is approximately 200 years; that is, we only have funding to replace our buildings on an average of just less than every two centuries. While we cannot expect to ever achieve industry standards for plant replacement, we must work to significantly reduce this unrealistic cycle.

As the highest command priority within the MILCON program, we must fulfill our commitment to improving the substandard Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQs) for our junior single Marines. This is a commitment that will require approximately \$50M per year through FY 2005 to complete. We ask for great sacrifices from the young, single men and women of our

Corps; we must provide them adequate living spaces. Fulfilling this commitment to these Marines will consume approximately one-fifth of the Marine Corps total MILCON budget through FY 2005. This will further reduce available funds for direct support of operational program initiatives such as simulation centers, training ranges and facilities, tactical vehicle maintenance facilities, jet engine test cell facilities, taxiway improvements, utility infrastructure upgrades, and integrated communications centers.

Related to the military construction program and quality of life in the Marine Corps is the high cost of civilian housing in the Miramar, CA, community. The relocation of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing from El Toro and Tustin to Miramar resulted in our young enlisted Sailors and Marines being forced to seek housing in the high cost area surrounding Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. I have highlighted this issue to Congress since 1997 when the consequences of moving from El Toro to Miramar became clear. Today many of these families are paying a significant amount of their income for housing. Or they are residing in lower cost housing, long distances from their place of work. I renew my call for attention and action to improve their circumstances. The proposed increases in pay and benefits are welcomed and I request your continued support to recognize the contributions of these military families to our nation.

When you consider the costs borne by Marines to live near our installations, please remain aware of the rising costs environmental compliance introduces to our installations and training areas. As we perform our duties, like the other service components of the U.S. Pacific Command, fulfilling our responsibility to protect the environment is a priority.

A visible result of this stewardship is the recognition our Marine Corps bases and stations in California, Arizona, and the Pacific have gained for our environmental programs that preserve

and protect natural resources. This success has raised expectations and created additional demands. This is especially true in Southern California and Hawaii.

In Southern California, for example, under the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to designate "critical habitats" for the threatened coastal bird, the California gnatcatcher. Aboard Camp Pendleton and MCAS Miramar the Coastal Sage Scrub abundantly grows and the gnatcatcher makes her nest. If this designation occurs, it certainly would require additional resources to be directed towards ensuring our compliance with this determination.

There will come a time, however, in the near future when providing additional resources may not be enough to manage our responsibilities under the Endangered Species Act. When adjacent off-base development is allowed to drive all remaining endangered species onto our training ranges, or the last remaining designated habitat can only be found on-base, there will be significant impacts to our readiness and ability to prepare for war. The Endangered Species Act can stop effective training and force the military by operation of law to prioritize environmental conservation over military readiness training. While we are currently providing effective endangered Species Act management and proper stewardship of Federal lands entrusted to us, there will come a time in the near future where we will have no more options or resources available and necessary training will have to give way to the legal demands of the endangered Species Act.

Preparing for 21st Century warfare may require our forces to train outside the boundaries of existing installations due to the decreasing availability of training space and the increasing demand for training in a greater variety of realistic geographical and political situations. The requirements for environmental compliance are often greater for training conducted off

installation and have a greater potential to impact training and readiness. These requirements are not limited to the Endangered Species Act. Let me provide two examples.

A patriotic landowner and former Marine in Maui recently offered to permit the free use of his ranch for small unit training. He withdrew this offer when we told him it would take 12-18 months to conduct the environmental assessment, cost the government \$300,000, and might result in his loss of the use of portions of his property if endangered species were discovered.

Another environmental effort affecting Marine Corps training is last year's Executive Order (EO) protecting coral reefs. In Hawaii, after several years of negotiation, the Marine Corps is preparing to acquire the Bellows training area from the Air Force near our base at Kaneohe Bay. We need this acquisition to gain more space aboard the island of Oahu to practice amphibious tactics. Bellows is surrounded by coral reefs and, we must now determine how training will comply with this 1998 EO.

I raise these issues for your consideration to illustrate the degree of difficulty in accomplishing both goals of environmental compliance and combat readiness. While the focus of MARFORPAC forces will lean towards stewardship beyond mere compliance, the complexities of meeting that worthwhile goal are usually in conflict with the need for the varied and realistic training requirements of the next century. I ask that Congress continue to support us and seek creative solutions to enable us to meet both goals.

It is the Marine tradition to help ourselves whenever we can to solve our own problems. We do not passively let the enemy nor adverse circumstances overwhelm us. Accordingly, our command has risen to meet the challenges of the fiscal constraints that face the military today. Specifically, we have instituted the Marine Forces Pacific Business Reform Initiative (BRI). The objective of the BRI is to develop efficient, effective business processes to help us reduce costs

and to free up funding for readiness and other requirements. The primary tool we are using to implement the BRI is called business process reengineering. This reengineering will save money by such means as standardizing processes and by competing functions, under OMB Circular A-76, to achieve the most cost-effective, best value service. I am implementing the BRI throughout our bases and operating forces. The BRI savings will help pay the Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps modernization wedge mandated by the Secretary of Defense. In addition, some of these savings will be used as incentives for commands to cover expected funding shortfalls.

In the final analysis, our people are the most important aspect of readiness. Quality of Life for our military is a readiness issue. We must ensure we recruit and retain quality young men and women who will meet the military challenges of the 21st century. If we do not provide these patriotic men and women with quality homes to live in, adequate pay to feed their families, and the equipment and training necessary to win the next battle, then we will lose them.

Your support in the FY99 Readiness Supplemental was vital in addressing some of our most immediate readiness concerns. Marine Forces Pacific share was \$6.1M, and we used it to purchase or repair depot level reparable, to pay increasing theater lift costs for exercise support, to buy consumable repair parts, to purchase network security systems, and to support a Joint Users Switch exercise. We sincerely appreciate this support, but we all realize this was stop-gap funding that focused on addressing the immediate threats to maintaining our readiness. Longer term, the issues I have addressed today remain before us, and they will require a long-term commitment from you and me to ensure our Marines have the training and equipment they need to achieve success in whatever mission they are assigned by their nation.

I am heartened by the Administration's recent budget submission and appreciate your support in this effort to begin rejuvenating defense investment and reverse modernization trends.

Your endorsement of these budget increases will facilitate building the force our nation needs in the next century and stem the rising backlog of BMAR.

In closing, your Marine Corps is a good news story. It is an organization of professionals staffed by dedicated men and women intent upon honorably serving their country. Your Marines are intelligent warfighters and tacticians who are willing to work long hours and accept that family sacrifice is a way of life for them. Our challenge is to retain the quality of Marine required to operate, fight, and win using the technology of the 21st century.

I want to reiterate that the readiness of our forces is my number one concern. Readiness is a function of people, equipment, modernization, maintenance, and training. We can meet the challenges of today while building the defense capabilities our nation will require tomorrow. Modernizing aviation and ground equipment will allow our Marines to shift time and resources to training, which will result in a more confident and ready force. It will achieve better quality of life for our Marines and their families. Your continued support will keep us the nation's "expeditionary force in readiness" into the new millennium. Thank you again for the opportunity to address this committee.