



February 8, 2017

Current Readiness of U.S. Forces

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, Committee on
Armed Services, United States Senate, One Hundred Fifteenth Congress,
First Session

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RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**GENERAL DANIEL ALLYN
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF UNITED STATES ARMY**

BEFORE THE

**SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT**

FIRST SESSION, 115TH CONGRESS

CURRENT STATE OF READINESS OF THE U.S. FORCES

FEBRUARY 8TH, 2017

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

INTRODUCTION:

Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Kaine, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the readiness of your United States Army. On behalf of our Acting Secretary, the Honorable Robert Speer, and our Chief of Staff, General Mark Milley, thank you for your support and demonstrated commitment to our Soldiers, Army Civilians, Families, and Veterans.

To meet the demands of today's unstable global security environment and maintain the trust placed in us by the American people, our Army requires sustained, long term, and predictable funding. Absent additional legislation, the caps set by the Budget Control Act of 2011 will return in FY18, forcing the Army to once again draw down end strength, reduce funding for readiness, and increase the risk of sending under-trained and poorly equipped Soldiers into harm's way - a preventable risk our Nation must not accept. We all thank you for recognizing that plans to reduce the Army to 980,000 Soldiers would threaten our national security, and we appreciate all your work to stem the drawdown. Nevertheless, the most important actions you can take – steps that will have both positive and lasting impact – will be to immediately repeal the 2011 Budget Control Act and ensure sufficient funding to train, man and equip the FY17 NDAA authorized force. Unless this is done, additional top-line and OCO funding, though nice in the short-term, will prove unsustainable, rendering all your hard work for naught.

This is a challenging time for our Nation and certainly for our Army. The unipolar moment is over, and replacing it is a multi-polar world characterized by competition and uncertainty. Today, the Army is globally engaged with more than 182,000 Soldiers supporting Combatant Commanders in over 140 worldwide locations. To break this down a bit: Over 5,000 Soldiers are in the Middle East supporting the fight against ISIL, a barbaric enemy intent on destabilizing the region and the globe. Nearly 8,000 more remain in Afghanistan, providing critical enabling support to Afghan National Security forces fighting a persistent insurgent threat. Over 33,000 are assigned or allocated to Europe to assure our Allies and deter a potentially grave threat to freedom. Nearly 80,000 are assigned to PACOM, including nearly 20,000 Soldiers on the Korean peninsula, prepared to respond tonight with our ROK allies. At the same time thousands of Soldiers are operating across Africa and Central and South America, along with thousands more preparing right here in the United States. At home and around the world, your Army

stands ready.

My recent travel – I have visited our Soldiers in 15 countries since Veterans Day – reinforces that all this is not about programs... it is about people... our people executing security missions for all of us around the globe. In fact, the strength of the All Volunteer Force truly remains our Soldiers. These young men and women are trained, ready and inspired. We must be similarly inspired to provide for them commensurate with their extraordinary service and sacrifice.

Readiness: Manning, Training, Equipping/Sustaining and Leader Development

Readiness remains our number one priority. Sufficient and consistent funding is essential to build and sustain current readiness, progress towards a more modern, capable force sized to reduce risk for contingencies, and recruit and retain the best talent within our ranks. A ready Army enables the Joint Force to protect our Nation and win decisively in combat. Unfortunately, fifteen years of sustained counter-insurgency operations have degraded the Army's ability to conduct operations across the spectrum of conflict and narrowed the experience base of our leaders. The current global security environment demands a shift in focus to support Joint operations against a broader range of threats. In this uncertain world, combined arms maneuver, which enables the Joint Force to deter, deny, compel, and defeat peer competitors and execute hybrid warfare, represents the benchmark by which we measure our future readiness.

Manning:

The Total Force remains globally engaged with the Army set to meet nearly half – 48% - of Combatant Command base demand and forecast to meet over two-thirds – 70% - of emergent demand for forces in FY17. This trend, exacerbated by end strength reductions and increasing global requirements, has been consistent for the past three years and promises to continue. Looking ahead, any potential future manpower increases to reduce military risk related to Defense Planning Guidance and National Military Strategy requirements, must be coupled with commensurate funding to ensure the long-term strength of the force.

At today's end-strength, the Army risks consuming readiness as fast as we build it. To alleviate some of the burden, we are reallocating and reorganizing existing force

structure and leveraging the Total Force to meet operational demand. For example, recognizing the importance of assuring our Allies and deterring our adversaries, last month 3/4 Armor Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) began heel-to-toe rotations in Europe. This unit, representing a permanent armored presence, enables our forces to exercise deployment systems and processes while simultaneously demonstrating the United States' commitment to the region. This ABCT deployment will be followed shortly by a rotational heel-to-toe Combat Aviation Brigade to Europe to provide aviation capacity and capability in that important part of the world. We will also begin Heavy Aviation Reconnaissance Squadron rotations to Korea, reestablishing full Combat Aviation Brigade capacity and capability on the peninsula.

In FY18 we will adjust our brigade combat team force mix by converting an Active Army Infantry Brigade Combat Team into an Armor Brigade Combat Team, marking the creation of our 15th ABCT. This increased armor capacity will provide much needed flexibility to meet extant threats around the globe. We will also build two Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs), one in the Active Army and one in the Army National Guard in FY18 followed by another Active Component SFAB in FY19 to better support our partners and preserve BCT readiness. These SFABs will also serve as the backbone of new brigades if the Army is ever called to rapidly expand.

To address mounting challenges in the cyber domain, the Army is building 41 Cyber Mission Force teams. Currently, 30 of the Army's 41 teams are at full operating capability (FOC), and 11 more will achieve FOC by FY18. In addition, the Reserve Component is building 21 Cyber Protection Teams, with 11 teams in the Army National Guard and 10 teams in the Army Reserve.

The Army has increased operational use of the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve to support Joint Force requirements around the globe, and this trend will continue. Today, three Army National Guard Division Headquarters, along with numerous other formations, are supporting geographic combatant commanders here at home and around the world. With the support of Congress, the Army can maintain the appropriate force mix and Total Force readiness to sustain these vital operations worldwide.

Again, we appreciate the Congress' efforts to stem the continued decrease in force structure, and we are underway to regrow the Army in accordance with NDAA

prescribed end strength. As we grow, however, we will focus first on filling the holes in our existing units as our top priority.

Training:

Training is the bedrock of readiness. The Army must continue to conduct realistic and rigorous training across multiple echelons to provide trained and ready forces, and this realistic training regimen is dependent upon predictable and sustained resources, both time and money.

To maximize our resources, the Army has made significant progress implementing the Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM) and restoring core warfighting skills, and we remain focused on achieving full spectrum readiness for combined arms maneuver proficiency against peer competitors. SRM, the Army's solution to manage risk and fight and win when called, is a Total Force effort to define readiness objectives for current demand while mitigating risk for contingency requirements. Because readiness objectives inform programmatic decisions, a key SRM benefit is prevention of the "readiness cliff" as units redeploy from named operations.

To ensure a trained and ready Army, the Army accepted considerable risk by reducing end-strength while deferring modernization programs and infrastructure investments. These trade-offs reflect constrained resources, not strategic insight. Again, we appreciate your support in helping stem the tide of force structure reductions, and our restored strength must be coupled with sufficient and sustained funding to avoid creating a hollow force.

Today, only about 1/3 of our BCTs, 1/4 of our Combat Aviation Brigades and half of our Division Headquarters are ready. Of the BCTs that are ready, only three could be called upon to fight tonight in the event of a crisis. In total, only about 2/3 of the Army's initial critical formations – the formations we would need at the outset of a major conflict – are at acceptable levels of readiness to conduct sustained ground combat in a full spectrum environment against a highly lethal hybrid threat or near-peer adversary. Stated more strategically, based on current readiness levels, the Army can only accomplish Defense Planning Guidance Requirements at high military risk. To address this vital readiness issue, the Army continues to fully fund Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations, establish objective training standards, reduce non-essential training

requirements, and protect home station training to increase training rigor and readiness in our formations.

A ready Army requires highly trained units across all components. To build sufficient operational and strategic depth, the Army continues to explore ways to build increased readiness in our Reserve Component units. This includes increasing the number of annual training days for early deployers to provide sufficient repetition in core tasks; building multi-component and round-out units to enhance Total Force integration; and expanding Army National Guard BCT's CTC rotations from two to four in FY18. These initiatives, providing readiness for current operations and ensuring strategic depth required for future campaigns, will require sufficient resources.

Looking to the future, the Army continues to work with our Joint Force partners to develop the multi-domain battle concept. This emerging concept, though in the early stages of development, will enable the Joint force to create temporary windows of opportunity across multiple domains – air, land, sea, space and cyberspace – to seize, retain and exploit the initiative, defeat enemies and achieve military objectives. The Army is developing a Multi-Domain Task Force to evolve and refine the concept, based on operational lessons and experimentation that will ultimately inform future training.

Equipping/Sustaining:

Our Army requires modernized equipment to win decisively, but today we are outranged, outgunned and outdated. We have prioritized our near-term readiness to the detriment of equipment modernization and infrastructure upgrades, assuming risk and mortgaging our future readiness. Looking ahead, the Army will prioritize critical equipment modernization and infrastructure upgrades while proceeding with acquisition reform initiatives to deliver optimal readiness with apportioned resources.

An unintended consequence of current fiscal constraints is that the Army can no longer afford the most modern equipment, and we risk falling behind near-peers in critical capabilities. Decreases to the Army budget over the past several years significantly impacted Army modernization. Given these trends, and to preserve readiness in the short term, the Army has been forced to selectively modernize equipment to counter our adversary's most pressing technological advances and capabilities. At the same time, we have not modernized for warfare against peer

competitors, and today we risk losing overmatch in every domain.

The Army developed the Army Equipment Modernization Strategy to preserve readiness in the short term and manage risk in the mid- to long-term. The strategy reflects those areas in which the Army will focus its limited investments for future Army readiness. We request the support of Congress to provide flexibility in current procurement methods and to fund five capability areas — Long Range Precision Fires, Cyber/Electronic Warfare, Integrated Air and Missile Defense, Active Protection Systems for combat vehicles and aircraft and Stryker Lethality Upgrades — to provide the equipment the Army requires to fight and win our Nation's wars.

Prioritizing readiness, given current fiscal constraints the Army must assume risk in installation modernization and infrastructure improvement. Installations are the Army's power projection platforms and a key component in generating readiness. To build readiness, however, the Army has been forced to cancel or delay military construction, sustainment, restoration and modernization across our posts, camps and stations. Right now 22%, or 33,000 Army facilities require significant investment to address critical infrastructure deficiencies. Additionally, the Army reduced key installation services, individual training programs, and modernization to a level that impacts future readiness and quality of life. The deliberate decision to prioritize readiness over Army modernization and installation improvement, though necessary, is an unfavorable one.

Leader Development:

The single most important factor in delivering Army readiness, both now and in the future, is the development of decisive leaders of character at every echelon. Our deep bench of combat experienced leaders remain our asymmetric advantage. To that end, the Army will continue to develop leader competencies for the breadth of missions across the Total Force.

In a complex and uncertain world, the Army will cultivate leaders who thrive in uncertainty and chaos. To ensure the Army retains this decisive advantage, we continue to prioritize leader development across the force... from the individual and unit to the institution level. In FY16, the Army trained over 500,000 Soldiers and leaders from all three components in its Professional Military Education programs, along with nearly 30,000 more from our Joint Force teammates. Despite budget constraints, we will

continue to fund these priority programs, targeted to develop Soldiers and leaders who demonstrate the necessary competence, commitment and character to win in a complex world.

Decisive leaders strengthen the bond between our Army and the Nation and preserve our All-Volunteer Force. As Army leaders, we continue to express our enduring commitment to those who serve, recognizing that attracting and retaining high quality individuals in all three components is critical to readiness. The Army is expanding our Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) to drive cultural change. Our Soldiers will receive the tools, leveraging resources from their time in service, to succeed in the civilian sector. As they return to civilian life, Soldiers will continue to serve as ambassadors for the Army and, along with retired Soldiers and Veterans, remain the vital link with our Nation's communities. We owe it to our Soldiers and their Families to ensure our Veterans strengthen the prosperity of our Nation through rewarding and meaningful civilian careers and service to their communities.

Committed and engaged leadership is the focal point of our Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) efforts. To that end, we recently fielded the Emergent Leader Immersive Training Environment (ELITE) Command Team Trainer and the Prevention and Outreach Simulation Trainer to train Army SHARP professionals on how to support command teams and units. The Army is also helping shape the Department's Installation Prevention Project by sharing best practices on case management methodology, Community Health Promotion Councils and collaboration efforts. These holistic prevention and response efforts strengthen our Army culture, enrich Army readiness and support Department of Defense efforts.

Army leaders remain committed to building diverse teams. We continue to fully integrate women into all combat roles throughout the operational force and remain committed to a standards-based process to maintain readiness. The Army's deliberate process validated standards, grounded in real-world operational requirements, and will provide our integrated professional force the highest level of readiness and potential for mission success.

In this increasingly complex world, decisive leaders are essential to maintaining a ready Army, composed of resilient individuals and cohesive teams, capable of accomplishing a range of missions amidst uncertainty and persistent danger.

Closing:

Today, our Army stands ready to defend the United States and its interests. This requires sustained, predictable funding. To rebuild readiness today and prepare for tomorrow's challenges, the Army has prioritized combined arms maneuver readiness against a peer competitor as we prepare to respond to our Nation's security challenges. The difficult trade-offs in modernization and installation improvements reflect the hard realities of today's fiscal constraints.

In the immediate future, the Army looks forward to providing input to the Department of Defense's 30-day Readiness Review, an important document that will inform a new National Defense Strategy. More long term and with your assistance, the Army will continue to resource the best-trained, best-equipped and best-led fighting force in the world. We thank Congress for the steadfast support of our outstanding men and women in uniform. The Army is all about people... our Soldiers, Families, Civilians... and they deserve our best effort.

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

STATEMENT OF

ADMIRAL WILLIAM F. MORAN

U.S. NAVY

VICE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

BEFORE THE

SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

ON

CURRENT READINESS OF U.S. FORCES

FEBRUARY 8, 2017

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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished members of the Sub-Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the current state of Navy readiness and the challenges we face today and in the future.

Before we discuss Navy's readiness challenges and our plans to address them, it is important to understand our present situation. Globally present and modern, our Navy provides timely, agile, and effective options to national leaders as they seek to advance American security and prosperity. Today, however, the ongoing demand for naval forces continues to grow, which will require the Navy to continue to make tough choices. In the classic trade space for any service (readiness, modernization and force structure), readiness has become the bill payer in an increasingly complex and fast-paced security environment. To address these realities, the Navy has identified investments to restore the readiness of the fleet today to shore up what we have. At the same time, we cannot restore the fleet to full health without also updating our platforms and weapons to better address current and future threats, and evaluating the right size of the Navy so that it can sustain the tempo of operations that has become the norm. The Navy is actively working on plans for the future fleet with Secretary Mattis and his team, and we look forward to discussing those plans with you when they are approved.

To characterize where we are today, I would say it's a tale of two navies. As I travel to see our sailors in the United States and overseas, it is clear to me that our deployed units are operationally ready to respond to any challenge. They understand their role in our nation's security and the security of our allies, and they have the training and resources they need to win any fight that might arise. Unfortunately, my visits to units and installations back home in the United States paint a different picture. As our Sailors and Navy civilians, who are just as committed as their colleagues afloat, prepare to ensure our next ships and aircraft squadrons deploy with all that they need, the strain is significant and growing. For a variety of reasons, our shipyards and aviation depots are struggling to get our ships and airplanes through maintenance periods on time. In turn, these delays directly impact the time Sailors have to train and hone their skills prior to deployment. These challenges are further exacerbated by low stocks of critical parts and fleet-wide shortfalls in ordnance, and an aging shore infrastructure. So while our first team on deployment is ready, our bench – the depth of our forces at home – is thin. It has become clear to me that the Navy's overall readiness has reached its lowest level in many years.

There are three main drivers of our readiness problems: 1) persistent, high operational demand for naval forces; 2) funding reductions; and 3) consistent uncertainty about when those reduced budgets will be approved.

The operational demand for our Navy continues to be high, while the fleet has gotten smaller. Between 2001 and 2015, the Navy was able to keep an average of 100 ships at sea each day, despite a 14 percent decrease in the size of the battle force. The Navy is smaller today than it has been in the last 99 years. Maintaining these deployment levels as ships have been retired has taken a significant toll on our Sailors and their families, as well as on our equipment.

The second factor degrading Navy readiness is the result of several years of constrained funding levels for our major readiness accounts, largely due to fiscal pressures imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011. Although the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 provided temporary relief, in FY 2017 the Navy budget was \$5 billion lower than in FY 2016. This major reduction drove very hard choices, including the difficult decision to reduce readiness accounts by over \$2 billion this year.

The third primary driver of reduced readiness is the inefficiency imposed by the uncertainty around when budgets will actually be approved. The inability to adjust funding levels as planned, or to commit to longer-term contracts, creates additional work and drives up costs. This results in even less capability for any given dollar we invest, and represents yet another tax on our readiness. We are paying more money and spending more time to maintain a less capable Navy.

We have testified before about the maintenance and training backlogs that result from high operational tempo, and how addressing those backlogs has been further set back by budget cuts and fiscal uncertainty. Our attempts to restore stability and predictability to our deployment cycles have been challenged both by constrained funding levels and by operational demands that remain unabated.

Although we remain committed to return to a seven month deployment cycle as the norm, the need to support the fight against ISIS in 2016 led us to extend the deployments of the *Harry S Truman* and *Theodore Roosevelt* Carrier Strike Groups to eight and eight and a half months, respectively. Similar extensions apply to the Amphibious Ready Groups which support Marine Expeditionary Units. This collective pace of operations has increased wear and tear on ships, aircraft and crews and, adding to the downward readiness spiral, has decreased the time available for maintenance and modernization. Deferred maintenance

has led to equipment failures, and to larger-than-projected work packages for our shipyards and aviation depots. This has forced us to remove ships and aircraft from service for extended periods, which in turn increases the tempo for the rest of the fleet, which causes the fleets to utilize their ships and airframes at higher-than-projected rates, which increases the maintenance work, which adds to the backlogs, and so on.

Reversing this vicious cycle and restoring the short-term readiness of the fleet will require sufficient and predictable funding. This funding would allow our pilots to fly the hours they need to remain proficient, and ensure that we can conduct the required maintenance on our ships. It would also enable the Navy to restore stocks of necessary parts, getting more ships to sea and better preparing them to stay deployed as required.

Our readiness challenges go deeper than ship and aircraft maintenance, directly affecting our ability to care for the Navy Team. Our people are what make the U.S. Navy the best in the world, but our actions do not reflect that reality. To meet the constraints of the Balanced Budget Act, the Navy's FY 2017 budget request was forced to reduce funding for Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves. These reductions have been compounded by the Continuing Resolution, which imposed even further reductions on that account. Without sufficient PCS funding, the Navy will be unable to move Sailors to replace ship and squadron crewmembers leaving service, increasing the strain on those who remain. This is an area in which timing also matters greatly. Even if the money comes eventually, if it is too late, necessary moves will be delayed until the beginning of the new fiscal year. That means our Sailors with children will be forced to relocate their children in the middle of a school year. And because we don't know if and when additional PCS funding may come, we cannot give our Sailors and their families much time to prepare, often leaving them with weeks, rather than months, to prepare for and conduct a move, often from one coast, or even one country, to another.

Meanwhile, our shore infrastructure has become severely degraded and is getting worse because it has been a repeated bill payer for other readiness accounts in an effort to maintain afloat readiness. Consequently, we continue to carry a substantial backlog of facilities maintenance and replacement, approaching \$8 billion.

Summary

Time is running out. Years of sustained deployments and constrained and uncertain funding have resulted in a readiness debt that will take years to pay down. If the slow pace of readiness recovery continues, unnecessary equipment damage, poorly trained operators at sea, and a force improperly trained and equipped to sustain itself will result. Absent sufficient funding for readiness, modernization and force structure, the Navy cannot return to full health, where it can continue to meet its mission on a sustainable basis. And even if additional resources are made available, if they continue to be provided in a way that cannot be counted on and planned for, some will be wasted. As we strive to improve efficiency in our own internal business practices, those efforts are being actively undermined by the absence of regular budgets. Although we face many readiness challenges, your Navy remains the finest Navy in the world. We are committed to maintaining that position. That commitment will require constant vigilance and a dedication to readiness recovery, in full partnership with the Congress. On behalf of our Sailors and civilians, thank you for your continued support.

STATEMENT
OF
GENERAL GLENN WALTERS
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
ON
MARINE CORPS READINESS
8 FEBRUARY 2017
RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

General Glenn M. Walters
Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps

General Walters was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on 12 May 1979, after graduating from The Citadel with a degree in Electrical Engineering. Upon completion of the Officers Basic Course in November of 1979, he was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines at Camp Lejeune as a Platoon Commander in Weapons Company. He attended flight training in Pensacola, Florida and was designated a Naval Aviator in March of 1981.

After receiving his wings, General Walters was assigned to Marine Aircraft Group-39 for training in the AH-1T, subsequently transferring to HMA-169 as the Flight Line Officer, Flight Scheduler and Adjutant. He completed two WESTPAC cruises in 1983 and 1984 with HMM-265.

During June of 1986, General Walters was assigned to 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton for duty as Air Officer and Operations Officer. In July of 1987 he was assigned to HMT-303 for refresher training in the AH-1J and subsequent transition to the AH-1W. In July 1987 he deployed on MAGTF 1-88 in support of Operation Earnest Will in the Arabian Gulf on the USS Okinawa. After returning to the United States he was assigned as the Assistant Operations Officer and S-4 in HMLA-169.

Departing MAG-39 in September of 1989, General Walters attended Multi-Engine Transition Training at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas. He then attended the United States Naval Test Pilot School in 1990. After graduation from Test Pilot School, General Walters was assigned to the Attack/Assault Department of the Rotary Wing Aircraft Test Directorate at Naval Air Station, Patuxent River. His duties included Flight Test lead for the AH-1W Night Targeting System, Integrated Body and Head Restraint System and AH-1W Maverick Missile feasibility testing. He was elected to the Society of Experimental Test Pilots in October of 1994.

In April of 1994, after his tour in Flight Test, General Walters was assigned duties in the Fleet Introduction Team for the AH-1W Night Targeting System at MAG-39, Camp Pendleton, CA. Upon completion of Fleet Introduction of the NTS system, General Walters assumed the duties as Operations Officer for HMLA-369, deploying to Okinawa in November of 1995. Returning from Okinawa in May of 1996, General Walters assumed the duties as XO of HMLA-369.

General Walters took command of HMT-303 on 4 June 1997, and relinquished command 21 months later on 2 March 1999, where he was subsequently assigned the duties of XO, MAG-39. During April of 1999, General Walters was transferred to the Aviation Branch, Headquarters Marine Corps, for service as the Head, APP-2 in the Aviation Plans and Programs Division. In March of 2001 was transferred to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology & Logistics, Defense System, Land Warfare, where he was an Aviation Staff Specialist.

General Walters assumed command of VMX-22 on 28 August 2003, becoming the first Commanding Officer of the Squadron. In August of 2006 General Walters was assigned as head of the Aviation Requirements Branch (APW) in the Department of Aviation at HQMC. From

January 2007 to April 2008, he served as head of the Plans, Policy and Budget Branch (APP). In March of 2008 he assumed the duties of Assistant Deputy Commandant for Aviation. After his promotion to Brigadier General in August of 2008, he was assigned to the Joint Staff as Deputy Director J-8, DDRA. General Walters came to 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing in July of 2010, and assumed command of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward) in November of 2010. He was promoted to the rank of Major General while deployed in August of 2011, and returned in March of 2012. General Walters assumed command of 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing in May of 2012 and relinquished command in May of 2013. General Walters was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General on 7 June 2013 and was assigned as the Deputy Commandant of Programs and Resources. On August 2, 2016 General Walters was promoted to his current rank and began serving as the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Introduction

Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Kaine, and distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the current state of Marine Corps readiness. The Marine Corps remains dedicated to our essential role as our Nation's expeditionary force in readiness, chartered by the 82nd Congress and reaffirmed by the 114th Congress. During 15 years of conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, we focused investment on ensuring Marines were prepared for the fight, and they were. This was our task and our focus. Those 15 years of conflict consumed much of the useful life of many of our legacy systems while delaying replacement with new equipment. A focus on those operations, the decrease in funding levels from Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, fiscal instability and the lack of an inter-war period have left your Marine Corps insufficiently manned, trained and equipped across the depth of the force to operate in an evolving operational environment. Under the current funding levels and those we stand to face in the near future - the current Continuing Resolution and the Budget Control Act (BCA) - your Marine Corps will experience increasingly significant challenges to the institutional readiness required to deter aggression and, when necessary, fight and win our Nation's battles. Rebuilding the Marine Corps will require near term actions that can be implemented in FY17 and FY18 as well as longer term efforts in the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP). I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the accomplishments of your Marine Corps, provide our vision for the Marine Corps of tomorrow, and to articulate the readiness challenges we face as we strive to reach that vision. With the support of the 115th Congress, we can begin the deliberate journey to overcome these difficulties and rebuild your Marine Corps for the 21st century.

Your Marine Corps Today

In 2016, your Marine Corps remained in high demand, forward deployed, and at the same operational tempo as the past 15 years. With an increasingly challenging and complex global security environment, the Joint Force continues to require and actively employs our expeditionary capabilities. During the past year, your Marines executed approximately 185 operations, 140 security cooperation events with our partners and allies and participated in 65 major exercises.

Nearly 23,000 Marines remain stationed or deployed west of the International Date Line to maintain regional stability and deterrence in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Our Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) continue their support of Joint Force requirements around the globe. Our MEUs have supported counterterrorism (CT) operations in Iraq and North Africa, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) in Japan and Haiti, and remain forward deployed to respond to the next crisis. In partnership with the State Department, we employed Marine Security Guards at 176 embassies and consulates in 146 countries. Altogether, over 66% our operating forces have been deployed or stationed overseas during calendar year 2016.

Since 2013, Marines have increasingly deployed to land-based locations due to the limited inventory of operationally available amphibious ships. Joint Force requirements remain high, and the number of available amphibious ships remains below the requirement. Despite the limitations in available amphibious shipping, your Marine Corps adapted to meet these requirements through land-based Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (SPMAGTFs). In 2016, we sourced SPMAGTFs to Central Command, Africa Command and Southern Command. Our Black Sea Rotational Force remains forward deployed in Europe. Although SPMAGTFs have met a limited requirement for the Joint Force, they lack the full capability, capacity and strategic and operational agility that results when Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) are embarked aboard Navy amphibious ships.

What Tomorrow's Marine Corps Requires

Marine Corps institutional readiness is built upon five pillars: Unit Readiness; Capability and Capacity to Meet Joint Force Requirements; High Quality People; Installation Capability; and Equipment Modernization. First, unit readiness is always our most immediate concern. Cohesive unit teams are the instruments that accomplish national security objectives, and we must ensure our ability to successfully accomplish any mission when called. Second, when the Joint Force requires naval expeditionary capabilities, we must answer with both the capabilities and capacity necessary to meet their needs. The third, most important pillar of our readiness remains our Marines, the product of a time-tested yet evolving transformation process beginning with our Recruiting and Training Commands. The fourth, often understated, pillar of our readiness is our infrastructure. Our bases, stations, and installations, not only serve as locations where we train our Marines, but also where we sustain their equipment and support their

families. We have a backlog of \$9 billion in deferred infrastructure sustainment requirements. We require up-to-date training systems, ranges and facilities. We need resources to sustain our installation capabilities at a higher level than we have been able to reach for the last five years. Fifth and finally, we must accelerate equipment modernization, as it is essential in our transformation to a 21st century, 5th generation Marine Corps.

We require proper balance across these pillars to achieve a force capable not only of assuring allies and deterring threats, but able to rapidly respond to crises and contingencies, while remaining good stewards of the Nation's limited resources. Currently, readiness is not where it needs to be. Resources that would have otherwise been applied to installation capabilities and modernization were re-prioritized to support deployed and next-to-deploy units to safeguard near-term operational unit readiness. We are not only out of balance but are also short of the resources required to rebalance.

We require a more stable and predictable fiscal planning horizon to support increased end strength, equipment recapitalization and modernization, amphibious ship capability and capacity, and the modern infrastructure required to rebuild and sustain balanced readiness across the depth of the force. Looming BCA implementation continues to disrupt our planning and directly threatens our current and future readiness.

Unit Readiness

Despite the existing fiscal constraints, we will continue to ensure deployed units possess mission critical resources to the greatest extent possible – trained personnel, operational equipment and vital spare parts – required to accomplish their mission. Deployed and next-to-deploy units will remain our priority in the current fiscally-constrained environment while we increasingly experience risk to non-deployed unit readiness.

The most acute readiness concerns are found in our aviation units. Approximately 80% of our aviation units lack the minimum number of ready basic aircraft (RBA) for training, and we are significantly short ready aircraft for wartime requirements. Recapitalization of attack helicopters and reset of heavy lift helicopters are two examples of ways we are addressing RBA shortfalls. Our tactical fighter and attack squadrons suffer from shortages in aircraft availability due to increased wear on aging airframes subjected to continuing modernization delays. The impact of reduced funding levels on our depot level maintenance capacity still resonates today.

We have temporarily reduced the number of aircraft assigned to our fighter-attack and heavy lift squadrons. We simply do not have the available aircraft to meet our squadrons' requirements. This means that flight hour averages per crew per month are below the minimum standards required to achieve and maintain adequate flight time and training and readiness levels. Although deployed squadrons remain trained for their assigned mission, next-to-deploy squadrons are often achieving the minimum readiness goals just prior to deployment. Reduced acquisition rates for the F-35 and the CH-53K require the Marine Corps to continue to operate legacy aircraft well beyond their planned lifespan. Every dollar decremented from our procurement of future systems increases both the cost and complexity of maintaining our aged legacy systems beyond their projected life. Every dollar spent on aviation modernization now has a direct positive effect on current and future aviation readiness.

We currently maintain higher ground equipment readiness than what we experience within our aviation community, but that is small consolation given the age of most of this ground equipment. With Congress' sustained support of our reset effort, the Marine Corps has reset over 90 percent of its legacy ground equipment. Despite this effort, underlying readiness issues exist. Non-deployed forces experience supply degradation as they source low density equipment requirements in support of deployed, task organized units such as our SPMAGTFs. These equipment shortfalls create training gaps for non-deployed units preparing for their next deployment. Our most important ground legacy capabilities continue to age as modernization efforts are at minimum production rates due to limited available resources. Our Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAVs) are a prime example. Our AAVs are now more than four decades old. Our AAV Survivability Upgrade (SU) Program will sustain and marginally enhance the capability of the legacy AAV, but will not replace any of these nearly obsolete legacy vehicles. The average age of our Light Armored Vehicle (LAV) fleet is 26 years; our oldest vehicle is 34 years old. There is currently no program identified to replace this capable but outdated platform, and yet we continue to incur increased costs with the LAV Obsolescence Program to extend its life. Our AAVs and LAVs are two of the four systems that consume 50 percent of the Marine Corps' annual depot maintenance budget. There is significant cost associated with maintaining and sustaining any legacy systems without a proportional capability increase associated with that investment. As we continue to spend limited fiscal resources to sustain legacy systems as a

result of deferred modernization, we risk steadily losing our capability advantage against potential adversaries.

Current readiness shortfalls require additional operations and maintenance resources, and we have exhausted our internal options. Additional resources would facilitate exercises and training and correct repair parts shortfalls, while specifically addressing aviation specific operations and maintenance funding. In sum, the Marine Corps has a plan to regain and sustain unit readiness. With your support, we can execute our plan to achieve required organizational readiness.

Joint Force Requirements and Capacity to Respond

The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and fiscal constraints directed the Marine Corps to decrease its end strength from 202,000 to 182,000. 2014 QDR assessments and assumptions identified limited global security challenges compared to what we face today. We must continue to counter violent extremist organizations and deter both an emboldened China and a more aggressive Russia. As a result, the need for deployed and forward stationed Marines has not diminished while the size of the force has decreased. Our current end strength challenges our ability to support Joint Force requirements while simultaneously maintaining the minimum adequate time at home stations and bases to reconstitute our units and train for the full range of military operations prior to next deployment. At our current end strength, the operational tempo is creating significant and unsustainable strain on the force.

Increased support for both equipment readiness and force structure levels remain critical requirements to improve our readiness. Time is equally as vital as funding to generate required readiness levels. Our sustainable deployment to dwell (D2D) ratio is 1:3, which means a deployment of six months is followed by a period of 18 months at home station. Units require adequate home station time to conduct personnel turnover; equipment reset and maintenance; and complete a comprehensive individual, collective, and cohesive unit training program. Units need this period to ensure they are ready to meet all core and assigned Mission Essential Tasks (METs) prior to re-deploying.

These challenges are compounded by the requirements on today's force. Those requirements place a 1:2 D2D ratio on many of our units and capabilities. The current ratio equates to a home station training period one third less than what our best military judgment and experience tells us is necessary and sustainable. Some units and personnel that possess critical high demand, low

density capabilities and skill sets currently operate below a 1:2 D2D ratio. Portions of Marine aviation experience operational tempo below a 1:2 D2D ratio. Our tiltrotor MV-22 Ospreys, deployed in conjunction with KC-130J aerial refueling aircraft, provide previously unthinkable reach and flexibility to the Joint Force. Deployment requirements have also brought both communities to unsustainable D2D ratios. We recently reduced the number of those aircraft assigned to our SPMAGTFs in order to move these communities closer to a sustainable path. The capabilities provided to the Joint Force will not change; however, capacity will decrease. With increasing demand, resource limitations will further reduce Joint Force capacity and/or incur risk for home station units required for major combat operations. Some of our formations lack the requisite days of supply to sustain a major conflict beyond the initial weeks. The Marine Corps continues to support existing operational requirements, but we may not have the required capacity – the “ready bench” - to respond to larger crises at the readiness levels and timelines required.

High Quality People

The success of our Marine Corps relies upon the high quality, character, and capabilities of our individual Marines and civilians; they are the cornerstone of our readiness. Since the establishment of the All-Volunteer Force over 40 years ago through the millennial generation of today, we have successfully recruited and retained the high caliber men and women we need to operate effectively in the global security environment. Nearly 70 percent of our Marines are serving in their first enlistment, and approximately 35,000 Marines leave the Marine Corps each year. They must be replaced with the same high quality men and women. Our recruiting efforts continue to succeed in providing highly talented, patriotic men and women to replace those Marines who loyally served before. 99.89% of our newest Marines and recruits are high school graduates. This speaks to the quality of the Marines that make up our force. Despite our continued successes, we must continue to seek ways to maintain the high quality people who will comprise tomorrow’s Marine Corps. We must closely track our ability to recruit and retain our most highly qualified and skilled Marines. In order to retain Marines on our team, we require the resources to offer incentives to Marines with experience, critical skills and valuable specialties.

Marine Corps Force 2025, a year-long, comprehensive, bottom-up review of the force identified various end-strengths and the associated capabilities and modernization required to

operate in the future security environment. Through this process, we determined that we need to increase active component end strength to at least 194,000, to build new capabilities that will deter, defeat and deny adversaries and meet future Joint Force requirements. An increase of 3,000 Marines per year maintains a rate of growth consistent with effective recruiting and accession while maintaining our high standards and ensuring a balanced force. We thank you for passing the 2017 NDAA that authorizes 185,000 active component Marines. Your authorization, combined with the appropriations we still require, puts your Marine Corps on the right path to realize necessary growth that will enhance readiness.

Installation Capability

Marine Corps installations are the power projection platforms that generate our readiness; they build, train and launch combat-ready forces. Our installations provide the capability and capacity we need to support the force. This includes our two depot maintenance facilities, which provide responsive and scalable depot maintenance support. While prioritizing deployed readiness, we defer infrastructure and facility investments and modernization necessary to sustain and train our Marine Corps for the 21st century. The continued deferment of Facility Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (FSRM) requires increased infrastructure investment now to ensure that future FSRM requirements costs do not increase. We ask for your continued support to restore and modernize our facilities.

In addition to facilities sustainment and recapitalization, we require investment in military construction (MILCON). Those investments will support the fielding of new equipment and simulation systems that facilitate improved training standards and operational readiness enhancements. Improvements in training areas, to include aerial and ground ranges, require your support for special use airspace and additional land to replace inadequate facilities.

Modernization

Modernization is the foundation of our future readiness to deter and counter growing threats. Investing in and accelerating our modernization programs directly correlate to improved overall readiness. Previous decrements to our modernization efforts deferred and delayed our critical future programs and forced us to continue investment in aged legacy systems that lack the capabilities required for the 21st century. Over time, legacy systems continue to cost more to

repair and sustain. Simultaneously, we incur the opportunity costs associated with the delayed fielding of replacement systems and the increased capabilities they will provide. When we accelerate modernization, we reduce unit costs, achieve efficiencies and save taxpayer money.

Our Aviation Modernization Plan requires acceleration after suffering recent delays, many attributed to funding deficiencies. This modernization plan has proven its worth. Our MV-22 Ospreys expand the operational reach of Marines supporting Joint Force requirements. Increasing the procurement of the F-35 and CH-53K will result in similar and greater Marine aviation capability improvements. Our first operational F-35 squadron relocated to Iwakuni, Japan last month. The squadron will deploy the F-35B as part of a MEU for the first time in 2018. We look forward to the stand-up of our first F-35C squadron, further enhancing the 5th generation capabilities of our Navy-Marine Corps Team. The CH-53K Heavy Lift Replacement remains critical to maintaining the battlefield mobility our force requires. It will nearly triple the lift capacity of the aircraft it is replacing. The acceleration of these key modernization programs will directly improve our readiness and allow us to retire aircraft that have reached or exceeded their intended life.

To modernize our ground combat element and ensure success against increasingly capable 21st century threats, we need to accelerate investments in our ground systems. We need to replace our 40-year old AAV fleet soonest. The procurement of Joint Light Tactical Vehicles as planned will incrementally replace our High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles that we began operating over 30 years ago and that are still in use today. This needs to be accelerated. There is currently no replacement program for our legacy LAV fleet. We need to develop and invest in a next generation replacement for this system. Additionally, we need to establish programs that develop, procure and deliver active protection systems, counter-UAS and increased long-range precision fires capabilities. The Marine Corps will need your support to recapitalize and modernize these key ground capabilities required for the future operating environment.

Amphibious platforms provide the sovereignty, strategic mobility, unmatched logistical support, operational reach, and forcible entry capability required to deter and, when necessary, defeat our Nation's adversaries. Our amphibious capability is a centerpiece to the operational success of the Navy-Marine Corps Team. Our amphibious concepts - our Naval character and expeditionary mindset - have been validated by history, and we will remain agents of change in

the future. As the operating environment changes, the Marine Corps will continue to innovate as we implement our new Marine Corps Operating Concept (MOC). The availability of amphibious shipping remains paramount to our readiness, responsiveness and the MOC. The Nation's amphibious warship requirement remains at 38. The current inventory of 31 vessels falls well short of this requirement. Recurrent maintenance challenges in the aging amphibious fleet significantly exacerbate that shortfall. The current and enduring gap of amphibious warships to requirements inhibits our Navy-Marine Corps Team from training to our full capabilities, impedes our shared ability to respond to an emergent crisis, and increases the strain on our current readiness. We will explore procurement strategies including the possibility of block buys and accelerating schedules that offer the best value for the taxpayer and allow us to retain skilled artisans in our shipyards. Along with increased amphibious ship capacity and modernization, we require the funding for the associated surface connectors that transport our Marines from ship-to-shore, including the programmed replacement of the Landing Craft Air Cushioned and Landing Craft Utility platforms. These investments will improve our overall amphibious capability and capacity.

The 5th generation Marine Corps for the 21st century must dominate the information domain. We must both enable and protect our ability to command and control (C2) Marines distributed across an area of operations. This requires transforming MAGTF C2 capabilities through a unified network environment that is ready, responsive and resilient. Recently fielded C2 systems provide a significantly increased capability associated with maneuver across the battlespace. We require support from the Congress to fully field these capabilities to the tactical edge, both in our ground and aviation platforms. These are examples of modern capabilities that will facilitate improved battlefield awareness to and from small, dispersed tactical units. As warfare evolves into a battle of signatures and detection, improvements such as these are vital to maximize our Marines' protection and effectiveness.

For too long, we have balanced the cost of our modernization efforts against our current readiness by extending and refreshing many of our legacy systems. While we judge these risks to be at manageable levels today, those risks are increasing and they are yet more examples of the trade-offs we are required to make due to fiscal reductions that accompany operational demand increases. The continued support of this Congress can mitigate and reverse these risks.

Conclusion

On behalf of all of our Marines, Sailors - many deployed and in harm's way today - and their families and the civilians that support their service, we thank the Congress and this subcommittee for this opportunity to discuss the key challenges your Marine Corps faces. I thank you for your support as articulated in the recent 2017 NDAA. While much work needs to be done, the authorizations within, coupled with sufficient funding and the repeal of the BCA, will begin to put us on a path to rebuild and sustain your Marine Corps for the 21st century. Our FY18 plan will require adjustment for decisions in FY17 NDAA authorizations. We need to carry over decisions for FY17 and FY18 into our FYDP planning. Along with your authorization, we ask for the continued support of this Congress to appropriate the funds required to rebuild your Marine Corps. Additional end strength authorized by the Congress will help put us on the path to generate both the capabilities and capacity required in the complex operating environment our Nation faces. Additional funds will provide the "ready bench" our Nation requires and the infrastructure the force needs to train and sustain itself. Our future readiness relies upon increased procurement and modernization funding that will facilitate amphibious ship capacity and allow us to off ramp the continued funding for sustaining legacy systems. We have a plan to reset, recapitalize and modernize your Marine Corps into a 5th generation force for the 21st century. With fiscal stability and predictability and increased resources, we will provide the Expeditionary Force in Readiness our Nation requires to protect its interests and security. With the support of the 115th Congress, we will move forward with our plan and vision to ensure your Marine Corps is organized, manned, trained and equipped to assure our allies, deter and, when necessary, defeat our adversaries.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON
READINESS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

SUBJECT: CURRENT READINESS OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

**STATEMENT OF: GENERAL STEPHEN W. WILSON
VICE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AIR FORCE**

FEBRUARY 8, 2017

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED
BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT
UNITED STATES SENATE**

INTRODUCTION

Since our establishment 70 years ago, the United States Air Force has secured peace throughout the full spectrum of hostilities with a decisive warfighting advantage in, through, and from air, space, and cyberspace. Without pause, we deliver global combat power by deterring and defeating our nation's enemies, while supporting joint and coalition forces at the beginning, the middle, and end of every operation. Though the intrinsic nature of warfare remains unchanged, the character of war—and the approach joint forces must take to address new and changing threats—must continually evolve.

As the nation plans to counter the national security challenges posed by Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and Violent Extremist Organizations, controlling and exploiting air, space, and cyberspace remains foundational to joint and coalition success. Today's 660,000 active duty, guard, reserve, and civilian Airmen meet these challenges by deterring threats to the U.S., assuring our allies, and defeating our adversaries 24/7/365. We provide unwavering homeland defense and operate a robust, reliable, flexible, and survivable nuclear enterprise, as the bedrock of our national security.

This steadfast watch, however, comes at a price. Conducting continuous, worldwide combat operations since 1991 has placed a dangerous toll on our Airmen, equipment, and infrastructure. Sustained global commitments and funding reductions have eroded our Air Force to be one of the smallest, oldest-equipped, and least ready forces across the full-spectrum of operations, in our service history. The uncertainty and reduction in military funding resulting from Budget Control Act of 2011 (BCA)

further degraded our readiness. Such fiscal uncertainty critically challenges our ability to sustain warfighting capacity, improve readiness, modernize our force, and invest in research and development to maintain our advantages over near-peer competitors.

While the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2015 provided some space to improve readiness and continue modernization efforts, your Air Force needs further Congressional support to ensure we continue to strengthen America's military to win today's fight, while building the Air Force our nation needs to meet tomorrow's challenges.

ALWAYS THERE

Your Air Force has been globally engaged for the last 26 years of combat operations. We relentlessly provide **Global Vigilance**, **Global Reach**, and **Global Power** for the nation...we're always in demand...and we're always there. Though our end strength has decreased by 38% since 1991, we have experienced significant growth across several mission areas.

Our Airmen provide joint forces with **Global Vigilance** using real-time multi-domain platforms and sensors integrated across our global intelligence and command and control networks to find, fix, and finish a range of hostile targets simultaneously across the globe. Without fail, the Air Force flies 60 combat lines of persistent attack remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) per day...the unblinking eye that supports combatant commander around the globe. Through our Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, we provided warfighters over 6,000 intelligence products per day used to identify enemy targets and trigger 70% of Special Operations Forces assaults on terrorists.

Additionally, the Air Force conducted 4,000 cyber missions against more than 100,000 targets, disrupting adversaries and enabling over 200 High Value Individual kill/capture missions. In securing our networks and digital infrastructure, 2016 saw Air Force cyber operators block more than 1.3 billion malicious connections – an average of more than 40 per second. Meanwhile, our space operators provide relentless and reliable interconnectedness, global positional awareness, global missile warning, and battlefield situational awareness for our joint forces.

Nearly every three minutes a mobility aircraft departs on a mission, providing **Global Reach** and access, projecting power through a network of airfields in 23 countries and 77 locations, while providing critical aerial refueling capability. In 2016, our aeromedical professionals evacuated over 5,700 patients and provided emergency medical care resulting in a 98% survival rate. Your Air Force provides unrelenting ability to maneuver, sustain, and recover personnel and assets...at home, abroad, and with our allies and partners.

With American fighters, bombers, RPAs, and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), the Air Force provides conventional and nuclear **Global Power** that can strike an enemy on short notice anywhere in the world. In Iraq and Syria, the Air Force has led 65% of the more than 17,000 coalition airstrikes since 2014, to deliver decisive firepower supporting joint, special operations, and coalition ground forces to defeat and degrade ISIS and regain critical territory. All while our Airmen continue to provide two legs of the nuclear triad, resource 75% of the Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications framework, deter our adversaries, and connect the President to strategic options.

Stitched together, the fabric of our Air Force weaves multi-domain effects and provides U.S. service men and women the strongest blanket of protection and the ability to power project American's full range of combat capabilities. Make no mistake, your Air Force is always there.

READINESS IN A CHANGING WORLD

However, being "always there" comes at a cost to our Airmen, equipment, and infrastructure, and we are now at a tipping point. Sustained global commitments and recent funding cuts eroded Air Force readiness, capacity, and capability for a full-spectrum fight against a near-peer adversary. Our force structure and our platforms now represent one of the smallest, oldest-equipped, and least ready forces in our service history. In 2013, sequestration abruptly delayed modernization and reduced both readiness and the size of the Total Force.

Our readiness decline began as we entered FY14 expecting a corresponding decrease in both operations and overall funding. Instead, FY14 began with a government shutdown and fiscal planning focused on a second year of sequestration. Compounding the fiscal austerity, 2014 presented enormous geopolitical challenges to America. Challenges included Russia's annexing of Crimea, Chinese island-building in the South China Seas, the rapid rise of ISIS, and ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, instead of reducing commitments, we entered into a new era of great power competition coupled with persistent war against violent extremism. The combination of decreased funding and increased military operations required the Air Force to make tradeoffs that adversely affected readiness. In short, our force is stressed to meet ever-growing mission demands.

In FY16 and FY17 budgets, we made necessary adjustments to balance near-term readiness with future modernization, but our readiness remains at a near all-time low due to continuous combat operations, reduced manpower, an aging fleet, and inconsistent funding. Instead of rebuilding readiness for near-peer conflicts, your Air Force is globally engaged in operations against lesser-equipped, but still highly lethal, enemies. This requires Airmen to serve at home and abroad to underpin joint force success, but at the expense of full-spectrum readiness. In contrast to our joint teammates, your Airmen do not reset or regroup...they are either deployed abroad, deployed in place, or training for their next deployment.

Your Air Force needs permanent relief from the BCA caps, increased funding, flexible execution authority, and manpower to recover full-spectrum readiness. We will continue to do all we can to innovate, transform, and improve how we maximize our resources. However, we still need your help in providing funding stability with the ability to modernize our capabilities, at the pace required to fight and win against any emerging threat.

STATE OF AIR FORCE READINESS

During WWII, General MacArthur's Airman, General George Kenney, said it best, "Airpower is like poker. A second-best hand is like none at all—it will cost you dough and win you nothing." Today's Air Force is at risk of becoming a second-best hand with readiness hovering near 50 percent.

We remain America's first and most agile responder to crisis and conflict, underwriting every joint operation...however, the demand for your Air Force, exceeds the supply.

To meet the full requirements of our Defense Strategic Guidance and current operation plans, we require 80 percent of our combat squadrons to be full-spectrum ready. We define full-spectrum readiness as the right number of Airmen, properly led, trained and equipped, to accomplish our Air Force mission in support of joint forces in both contested and uncontested environments.

We measure full-spectrum readiness through our five levers of readiness: critical skills availability, weapons system sustainment, training resource availability, flying hour program, and operational tempo. If Airmen are not ready for all possible scenarios, especially a high-end fight against a near-peer adversary, it will take longer to get to the fight; it will take longer to win; and it will cost more lives. The following sections highlight key areas where Congressional support is needed in order to balance our five levers of readiness.

PEOPLE

Airmen are our greatest resource and our Air Force need to increase end strength to meet national security requirements. Manpower shortfalls in key areas remain the number one issue limiting readiness and is our top priority. At the start of 2016, our end strength stood at 311,000 active duty Airmen, down from more than 500,000 during Desert Storm—a 38 percent decrease. Though we appreciate your support to build the force up to about 321,000 in 2017, we will still be stretched to meet national security requirements. To quote Senator McCain, we need to “dig out” more than “build up.”

To improve readiness and attain manning levels matching our mission requirements, we are considering an increase to our active-duty, Guard, and Reserve

end strength and will work with the Secretary of Defense to develop the FY 2018 President's Budget to address personnel shortages. Our Total Force model (incorporating our active duty, guard, reserve, civilians, and our contracted capabilities), not only recognizes the value of an integrated team, but helps guarantee today's and tomorrow's capability. We will develop plans to address shortfalls in a number of key areas, including critical career fields such as aircraft maintenance, pilots, NC3, intelligence, cyber, and battlefield Airmen.

As we drew down active duty manpower in recent years, we have relied more heavily on our civilian Airmen. Our civilians make up 26% of our Total Force—of which, 94% are in the field, providing vital mission support through weapons system maintenance, sustainment, engineering, logistics, security, intelligence, and medical functions. Currently, our civilian workforce is 96% manned. At the historical attrition rate, the civilian workforce will shrink to a 93% manning level over the next four months.

In the aircraft maintenance field, we were short approximately 3,400 aircraft maintainers at the close of 2016. Because of this shortage, we cannot generate the training sorties needed for our aircrews. The same pool of maintainers that keep our existing aircraft flying at home and in combat, must simultaneously support fielding new platforms. Due to an ongoing shortage of active duty aircraft maintainers, we will continue to fund contractors to fill the gap at select non-combat A-10, F-16, and C-130 units as our active duty maintainers transition to the F-35. This allows us to strike a balance between meeting today's demand while modernizing for the future, but masks the insufficient size of the force.

We also face a pilot shortage crisis across all disciplines, most acutely in the

fighter community. The Air Force has the world's finest pilots who enable an incomparable duality of global mobility and combat lethality. As airlines continue hiring at unprecedented rates, they draw away experienced pilots. Without a healthy pool of pilots, we risk the ability to provide airpower to the nation.

Pilots are strategic national assets and the pilot crisis extends beyond the Air Force and military. It is a national problem which requires senior-level attention in Congress, the Commercial Industry, and the DoD. To address this national challenge, since 2014 the 'Air Force -Airline Collaboration', formally known as the National Pilot Sourcing Forum has increased efforts to effectively utilize and train an adequate number of pilots to meet our nation's pilot demand signal.

However, pilot retention has declined for five straight years. We ended FY16 at 723 *fighter* pilots below requirement and 1,555 *total* pilots short across all mission areas. Pilot training and retention are priorities. The increased end-strength provided in the FY17 NDAA will allow us to maximize the training pipeline and fill out under-manned units, which are vital to our recovery. We are grateful for your support to increase the pilot bonus, and we will continue to ensure our retention programs are appropriately sized and utilized.

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE OPERATIONS

We require additional resources to invest in our nuclear capabilities and infrastructure that are the bedrock of our national security. While our nuclear forces remain safe, secure, and effective, we require significant investment to ensure robust, reliable, flexible, and survivable nuclear readiness and deterrence well into the future.

On average, our B-52 bombers are 55 years old and our nuclear facilities are

now over 50 years old, with many facility systems operating well past their 20-year designed life span. Currently, all of our weapons storage areas are operating with waivers and deviations from our high standards. Although these storage areas are uncompromised—they remain safe and secure—we must recapitalize this infrastructure to address the recommendations identified in our Nuclear Enterprise Reviews for facility and weapons sustainment.

Meanwhile, we must continue to invest in modernization of our air- and ground-based nuclear weapons systems. The B-2 and B-52 require upgrades, and we must ensure one of our main acquisitions priorities, the B-21 bomber, proceeds on schedule. In addition, our ICBMs, which provide the US with a stabilizing and responsive strategic deterrent capability, are being maintained and operated well beyond their planned operational life-cycles and face significant sustainment challenges. The Ground-based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) recapitalization program, which will replace the ICBM fleet, must proceed as planned in order to ensure the ground leg of the nuclear triad remains credible and effective in the decades ahead. Connecting the nuclear triad is our nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) system. Accordingly, NC3 must be modernized to support accompanying nuclear capabilities.

Finally, we must modernize our nuclear stockpile, by continuing to support the B-61 modernization program, while investing in the development of the Long-Range Standoff weapon as a survivable air-launched weapon capable of destroying otherwise inaccessible targets in any conflict zone. Though we are grateful for modest relief of spending limitations that allowed us to address a scrutinized priority list of

nuclear modernization efforts, we require additional resources to invest in foundational nuclear capabilities and infrastructure.

SPACE

Underwriting every joint operation across the globe is our ability to use the space domain at the time and place of our choosing. But our freedom of action in, through and from space can no longer be taken for granted. Our potential adversaries have had a front row seat to the many successes achieved by space integration into joint warfighting and, unfortunately, they are rapidly developing capabilities to deny us space superiority. In the not too distant future, our potential adversaries will have the capability to hold all of our military space capabilities at risk.

Space is a warfighting domain. The paradigm for space operations has shifted from a force enabler/enhancer to an integrated warfighting capability. As the Nation's lead service for space, we require additional support to build Air Force space systems, that are more resilient and agile. This means investment in capabilities to defend our space assets, while maintaining a cycle of continuous upgrades in each generation of spacecraft to ensure that systems are fully ready when called upon by the joint warfighter and can continue to operate in an increasingly contested environment.

Maintaining assured access to space remains one of our top priorities. We are working to mature and advance our Launch Service Agreement strategy to develop affordable, sustainable launch capabilities that will eliminate dependence on foreign rocket propulsion systems. Second, we are developing Space Situational Awareness and Battle Management Command and Control (BMC2) capabilities, which underpin

our efforts to integrate space into full spectrum joint operations. Investments in space situational awareness capabilities, such as Space Fence, ground-based radar and optical systems and on-orbit surveillance capabilities, like the Geosynchronous Space Situational Awareness Program (GSSAP) [our geosynchronous orbit “neighborhood watch”], enables critical battlespace awareness in space and the unprecedented ability to characterize the space operational environment.

Similarly, investments in the Joint Interagency Coalition Space Operations Center (JICSpOC) and the Joint Space Operation Center (JSpOC) Mission System (JMS) provide the decision superiority and data we need to deter attack, and, if necessary, defend our capabilities and freedom to operate in space. Lastly, space systems provide mission-critical services and capabilities to support our Joint Forces in theater and around the globe, every day. Continuing to modernize and replenish our missile warning, nuclear command and control, satellite communication and Global Positioning System constellations ensures we will have resilient, mission-assured capability to support daily joint operations.

Finally, we need to continue integrating our organizations and capabilities across both the DoD and the Intelligence Community, while improving training for our space force and cultivating an enduring cadre of space operators and acquirers. We must normalize and operationalize the space domain by maturing our tactics, techniques and procedures and “train like we fight,” in space, just as we would in any other domain to ensure we are fully prepared to deal with today’s adversaries and emerging technology.

CYBERSPACE

Cyberspace capabilities are essential to joint operations. The Air Force remains committed to providing 39 fully operational Cyber Mission teams by the end of FY18. Today's cyber teams are conducting ongoing offensive and defensive cyber operations in support of combatant commanders daily, therefore we must commit to a robust and resilient cyber enterprise.

Today, the Air Force cyber enterprise lacks sufficient numbers of trained cyber forces to meet the ever-increasing demands. Additionally, the increasing numbers of attacks on our cyber infrastructure and weapon systems, from state and non-state actors, continue to tax the limited personnel and tools to effectively defend critical assets and preserve freedom of movement in a domain where actions happen at the speed of light. Adequate and consistent resourcing over time will enable us to obtain and maintain cyber superiority in this highly dynamic warfighting domain.

Additional investments in cyberspace capabilities are required. We need to continue modernizing and developing offensive and defensive tools and measures to harden current infrastructures while baking cyber security into every new capability to counter cyberspace adversaries. This will ensure Air Force and joint force mission assurance—command and control, weapon system cyberspace defense, information dominance, and integrating offensive cyberspace effects into multi-domain operations.

COMBAT AIR FORCES

The average age of Air Force aircraft is 27 years. This is the oldest in our 70-year history. If aircraft required license plates, 54% of our platforms would qualify for antique designation in the state of Virginia. The ability to fly, fight, and win with aging

aircraft is made possible by remarkable Airmen in an all-volunteer force.

Modernization can no longer be delayed...it is the capability and capacity for a high-end fight. Today's modernization is tomorrow's readiness.

To continue to provide unrelenting air superiority and global precision strike, we cannot accept a less than ready force. With current combat readiness falling below 50% and an ever-growing demand signal, our Air Force requires an increase in combat air forces capacity. The more diminished our combat-coded fighter squadrons, the more degraded our ability to posture and project global power for America. At our current fighter procurement rate, it will take 45 years to recapitalize our full fighter force. We must also continue to procure the F-35 to counter rapidly advancing near-peer threats.

To ensure our Airmen are ready to face any emerging or future threat, we need to provide our Airmen with advanced threat testing, training, and associated technology. Our forces must have access to realistic test and training ranges and investment in computer-aided live, virtual, and constructive (LVC) infrastructure. LVC capability provides opportunities to test and train against the world's most capable threats, reduces costs, and supports full-spectrum readiness. Finally, we must have sufficient munitions to counter current threats, while developing advanced munitions to counter future threats.

INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE, AND RECONNAISSANCE (ISR)

The Air Force ISR enterprise is often the first in the fight and the last to leave...providing continuous coverage of global threats and targets...from the earliest surveillance of the battlespace, to after weapon impact. However, the demand for

continuous ISR presence is insatiable and ever growing, and our ISR enterprise is strained.

Over the past 15 years we grew the RPA enterprise 1200%...and today we support 60 continual combat lines of persistent attack RPAs. Within current constraints, we are committed to improving quality of life and work for our Airmen, and are prioritizing investments to create a dedicated launch and recovery MQ-1/9 squadron, increase training, and restore two MQ-9 operations squadrons. Additionally, we are training enlisted operators to fly the RQ-4 Global Hawk and funding a strategic basing initiative to eventually fly RPAs at new locations on schedule.

However, our ISR enterprise still needs help. More than 7,000 Airmen working in our Distributed Common Ground System are over-stressed and undermanned. These Airmen supported over 29,000 ISR missions, analyzed more than 380,000 hours of full motion video and disseminated 2.6 million images to our warfighters in the last year alone, attempting to quench the insatiable demand for ISR. They have operated at these surge levels for over a decade.

To meet the needs of combatant commanders, the RPA force may require additional Airmen to achieve a healthy and sustainable force. Moreover, we continue to pursue emerging ISR Cyber and Space capabilities. We must also recapitalize our C2ISR platforms, such as our E-8C JSTARS aircraft, which provides a unique combination of airborne C2, communications, and high-fidelity moving-target surveillance capability. These capabilities are essential to finding and tracking our adversaries, conducting non-kinetic targeting, and ensuring Air Force weapon systems cyber mission assurance.

INFRASTRUCTURE

We project airpower from a network of globally positioned bases, and we must focus on maintaining these bases as part of our strategic force posture. However, our infrastructure, particularly our installations in the continental U.S., are in excess of our operational needs. This is an inefficient arrangement with aging and underused facilities consuming funds that should be prioritized for readiness and modernization.

Budget pressures have repeatedly delayed investments in aging infrastructure such as test and training ranges, airfields, facilities, and even basic infrastructure like power and drainage systems. Our infrastructure problem has only been exacerbated by the funding caps imposed under the BCA. Every year that we delay infrastructure repairs affects operations and substantially increases improvement costs. It is time for another round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) to allow us to reinvest funds in higher priority areas across the Air Force.

CONCLUSION

Since 1947, the Air Force has relentlessly provided America with credible deterrence and decisive combat power in times of peace, crisis, contingency, and conflict. However, our relative advantage over potential adversaries is shrinking and we must be prepared to win decisively against any adversary. We owe this to our nation, our joint teammates, and our allies. The nation requires full-spectrum ready air, space, and cyber power, now more than ever. America expects it; combatant commanders require it; and with your support, Airmen will deliver it.