

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS &
CAPABILITIES**

STATEMENT OF

**BRIGADIER GENERAL DANIEL J. O'DONOHUE
DIRECTOR, CAPABILITIES DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE
COMBAT DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATION**

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

CONCERNING

INSTITUTIONALIZING IRREGULAR WARFARE CAPABILITIES

ON

NOVEMBER 3, 2011

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES**

Introduction

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Langevin, and distinguished members of this Subcommittee, it is an honor to appear before you today. On behalf of all Marines and their families, I thank you for your continued support. I also appreciate the opportunity to discuss irregular warfare with you.

Today's testimony will answer the three questions that this Subcommittee posed:

- Has the Marine Corps fully recognized that irregular warfare is as strategically important as traditional warfare and are current directives, doctrine, and frameworks developed, in place and aligned?
- What institutional and policy challenges remain given future operating environments and fiscal constraints?
- Are our forces properly postured to deal with future irregular warfare challenges?

The bottom line is that the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Amos, has given clear guidance on the vital importance of irregular warfare that guides our combat development. Irregular warfare is woven deeply into Marine Corps past, current and future capability.

Overview

The Marine Corps is the nation's expeditionary force in readiness. As such it is prepared for all manner of crises and contingencies. In the broadest sense, irregular warfare is warfare without pattern. It recognizes the complex, highly adaptive threats that we face. In the future, as in the past, multiple regional powers and a host of lethal groups will exploit numerous seeds of instability, proliferating increasingly lethal technology and extremist ideology while leveraging the advantages of networks hidden amongst the population. Marines are prepared to meet that challenge with our Navy, Special Operations, Army, Air Force and interagency partners.

In an unpredictable, unstable and uncertain future security environment, there is an emphatic trend in warfare--the dynamic combination of conventional and irregular warfare by state, non-state and criminal threats. The Marine Corps is manned, trained and equipped to continuously adapt to, deter and defeat these adversaries with increasingly discriminating and precise full spectrum operations. Through a comprehensive force structure review, we designed a post-Operation Enduring Freedom force in readiness that mitigates this hybrid threat, creates options and provides decision space for senior leadership while, when necessary, setting the conditions for a comprehensive joint, interagency and allied response.

As we look to the future, the post-Operation Enduring Freedom Marine Corps is fundamentally different from the current and pre-9/11 force. It draws on a rich history of innovations in irregular warfare but is recast as a scalable crisis response force ready to counter complex irregular, conventional and hybrid threats--and the gray areas in between. We have substantially invested in relevant organizations such as Marine Special Operations, intelligence,

surveillance, reconnaissance, communications, partnering, civil affairs, electronic warfare, cyber, regionally oriented command and control, and information operations. Tasked organized with our highly trained line units, these enablers provide versatile, scalable capability for a broad range of missions to include deterrence, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation, partnering, reinforcement to our allies, humanitarian assistance, and assured access for the joint force under any condition our national interests require.

Above all we prepare to operate in and adapt to unpredictable, uncertain, complex environments at a moment's notice. In doing so, we adapt from considerable operational experience.

- In 2001, just one month after the horrific events of 9/11, 4,400 combat ready Marines launched 400 miles from a naval amphibious task force of six ships and conducted decisive counter-terror operations with our Special Operations and Navy partners.
- Since 1990, as a matter of course, Marines have conducted 137 separate operations of which 113 were irregular in nature. Most of these were conducted as a Navy and Marine Team that exploited the versatility and strategic reach of amphibious ships by projecting power without forward basing or potentially destabilizing presence ashore. For the last ten years Marines have engaged in counterinsurgency, stability operations and foreign internal defense in both Iraq and Afghanistan.
- In just the past five months, amphibious forces conducted strikes against terrorist targets in Afghanistan and loyalist forces in Libya; conducted counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden; responded to national disasters in Japan; conducted numerous security cooperation activities with the forces of our partner nations; reinforced combat operations in Afghanistan; and stood off the coasts of several countries in crisis - ready to rescue American citizens if called upon to do so.

In the sections below we describe the strategic importance of irregular warfare for the Marine Corps and how we will meet future demands for a stabilizing forward presence and scalable crisis response in an irregular environment.

Strategic Importance of Irregular Warfare

As demonstrated by our rich history and doctrine, there is nothing new about an irregular warfare focus for the Marine Corps. Our still referenced Small Wars Manual of 1940, is a notable example of Marine Corps participation in both regular and irregular conflicts and reflects a time in our Nation's history, similar to today, when the Marine Corps codified its experience in the current conflict while preparing for the future. Our recent doctrine continues that theme.

Irregular warfare is defined as: *“A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.”*

The Marine Corps emphasizes the focus on the “relevant population” and has developed the capabilities necessary to influence that critical popular support. The Small Wars Manual states: *“In a major war, the mission assigned to the armed forces is usually unequivocal—the defeat and destruction of the hostile forces. This is seldom true in small wars. More often than not, the mission will be to establish and maintain law and order by supporting or replacing the civil government in countries or areas in which the interests of the United States have been placed in jeopardy.”*

As a highly trained, infantry centric force, supported by the broad capabilities of the Marine Air Ground Task Force, the Marine Corps is ideally suited for interacting with the relevant population.

Current Directives, Doctrine, and Frameworks

The Marine Corps acknowledged the importance of irregular warfare long before the Department of Defense began to codify the elements of irregular warfare in 2008. Our Center for Operational Culture and Learning was established in 2005 and our Center for Irregular Warfare was established in 2007. Our doctrine already includes 24 current or draft publications that directly address topics of an irregular warfare nature. Additional Marine Corps irregular warfare initiatives include:

- Led the development of Tri-Service Maritime Stability Doctrine in coordination with the U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard.
- Institutionalized law enforcement professionals to assist in host nation police training, identifying dominance/biometrics efforts, and increasing capability to systematically attack insurgent networks.
- Streamlined security cooperation components into a single organization - the Marine Corps Security Cooperation Group – to improve capability and capacity of security cooperation activities across the Marine Corps.
- Expanded the Foreign Area Officer/Regional Area Officer program by increasing the number of opportunities, as well as adding enlisted personnel to serve as Foreign Area Specialist/Regional Area Specialist.

In his 2010 planning guidance, General James Amos, provided specific guidance for strengthening and consolidating irregular warfare functions. We have increased the size of the Center for Irregular Warfare Integration Division and tasked them to deliberately assess our capabilities for future irregular warfare. This is intended to integrate joint and interagency practices with our current guidance and insights in order to ensure a holistic approach to identifying and implementing necessary changes.

Institutional and Policy Challenges

Above all, regardless of fiscal constraints, the Marine Corps must meet the challenge to be ready and adapt to a dynamically changing irregular threat. Investments in training, education

and experimentation will complement our prioritized forward engagement so that we can shape, deter and defend at a moment's notice. Irregular warfare is fluid by nature, so as Marines and as an institution we must operate and rapidly adapt across all domains and with a broad array of combined arms as an integrated force.

We are also increasing unit manning above pre-9/11 levels to increase unit readiness, cohesion and the time to train for a broad range of irregular missions. Our excellence in small unit leadership is a continued focus with many initiatives to include the development of a more experienced and highly trained squad leader. We also require Defense Officer Personnel Management Act relief and increased senior enlisted leaders to provide for the higher proportion of more experienced leaders demanded by irregular operations.

We will also work closely to integrate our complementary capability with special operations, other joint forces, interagency and partnered nations.

We must continue to modernize and maintain a technological advantage within a responsive and streamlined acquisition process.

Finally, increased access to our combat experienced, reserve forces will enable us to leverage a talent pool with capabilities rich in relevance to irregular warfare.

Posturing for the Future

Marines are trained to operate in ambiguity and achieve dominance across multiple dimensions: air, sea, land, cyber, and the electronic spectrum. We provide lethal and non-lethal combined arms to increasingly smaller tactical units that operate on an increasingly distributed battlefield.

The Marine Corps Force Structure Review plan positions the Marine Corps to respond to the most likely missions while preserving the capability to project punishing combat power when required. The cornerstone of the future Marine Corps rests on the quality and flexibility of our Marines, which allow us to support the joint force commanders' diverse requirements. The future force will include enhanced irregular warfare capabilities enabled by:

- Reorganizing our intelligence collection and exploitation capabilities to enhance readiness by directly linking deployed forces, garrison support, and the intelligence community;
- Increasing capacity for cyber network defense, exploitation and attack operations by augmenting our communication and radio battalions, and by increasing the structure of Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command;
- Enhancing capabilities to conduct and manage battlefield biometric, forensic, and law enforcement operations by creating a law enforcement support battalion within each Marine Expeditionary Force;

- Retaining and better integrating the training, advising, and assistance organizations designed to enable and enhance irregular warfare capabilities, partner-nation engagement, and cultural understanding; and
- Strengthening the capabilities of Marine Special Operations Command through a 44% increase in critical combat support and combat service support Marines.

Training and Education

Key to adaptation are our training and educational initiatives that affect every grade and unit. Platoons now operate over 30 miles from their closest units in a fight for influence and legitimacy or concentrate when required to meet a more conventional threat. In doing so, today's sergeants and lieutenants operate at the level of pre-2001 lieutenants and majors in enabling the employment of the full range of our nation's power. Our training and education will continue to reinforce this capability to operate in a distributed environment against a hybrid threat at every level of the Marine Air Ground Task Force.

Marine training and education reflects both the Service's historical ability to conduct irregular warfare and recent operational experience. Marines are specifically trained and broadly educated to understand cultures and populations, to thrive in chaotic environments, and to recognize and respond creatively to demanding situations. The Marine Corps realizes that as forces transition out of Afghanistan, training will become less theater and threat specific. However, the Marine Corps is dedicated to retaining the irregular warfare skills and experience within the Service. Though future training will develop a wider range of capabilities to conduct operations across the military range, counterinsurgency and stability operations will continue to be an integral part of a Marine's training and education. A few of the training and education initiatives include:

- The Basic School, Expeditionary Warfare School, Command and Staff College and the War College incorporated key elements of irregular warfare into the training and curriculum. During the irregular warfare training, students explore the theory and principles of counterinsurgency, transnational threats, stability operations and reconstruction, policing in irregular operations and future war during the instruction. In addition, Marine officers receive instruction in operational culture, language, and interagency issues.
- The Marine Corps Operations and Tactics Instructors Course is heavily focused on stability operations. The curriculum includes irregular warfare, human terrain, interagency, nongovernmental organizations, civil affairs, information operations and counterinsurgency.
- The Combat Hunter leader courses cultivate tactical skills to enable Marines to be more effective in the challenges faced in irregular operating environments. In addition, the program teaches law enforcement skill sets which enable Marines to better exploit information obtained on the battlefield.

Conclusion

To meet the demands of the national interest in the future, increasingly irregular, security environment, the Marine Corps will: ***engage forward*** to forge partnerships, prevent crises, promote diplomatic access, reassuring allies and friends of our commitment, build partner capacity, and facilitate the security and stability of our allies; ***respond*** rapidly and effectively to protect national interest, contain disruptions to global stability, overcome access challenges by operating from the sea base, reinforce U.S. credibility, solidify relationships with international partners and forge new ones; and ***project*** power in order to assure access and deny sanctuary to our adversaries. As appropriate we can rapidly transition across the “three block war” from the open hand of humanitarian assistance, to peacekeeping, and to the closed fist of versatile power projection to impose our nation’s will, reinforce our partners and defeat our adversaries.

With the support of the Congress and the American people we can ensure our Navy and Marine Corps team is ready for the current fight and is well prepared to secure our Nation and national interests in an uncertain future. Again, I thank you for the opportunity to discuss irregular warfare.