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STATEMENT OF
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COMMANDER
U.S. MARINE FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS
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Introduction

Chairman Jackson, Ranking Member Crow, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to update you on the status and posture of Marine Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC). I am honored to testify alongside my fellow Special Operations Forces (SOF) Component Commanders and extremely proud to be in command as MARSOC moves into its 20th year. You have my gratitude for the exceptional support for our warfighters from this committee and the rest of Congress. We continue to build upon the Marine Corps legacy of those warriors that have gone before us and are evolving back to our World War II Raider roots in the great power competition of the Pacific Island-Hopping Campaign but in a 21st Century way and in every domain. This is our most important role in manning, training, and equipping MARSOF to be employed by our Theater Special Operations Components (TSOCs) to deter and when necessary, win wars.

At MARSOC, "The Marine Raider is our platform." This is not just a bumper sticker for us. Our people give us a comparative and competitive advantage from other Service components and adversaries. Raider and Special Operations Capability Specialists (SOCS) training pipelines are stronger than ever and have evolved to match our other modernization efforts. Deployed forces have developed generational relationships with key allies and partners in strategically valuable theaters consistently creating advantage.

With global trends shifting and the geo-political environment creating challenges for our Nation, we have clarity on the threats and the modern operating environment. The shift from counterterrorism to global competition in the operational environment requires a change in MARSOC capability development and force application. Fiscal realities continue to force hard

choices as we seek to balance steady-state readiness with the resources necessary to modernize for future operational challenges. We are taking full advantage of the opportunities our positioning, access and placement with key allies and partners, and close relationship with the Marine Corps Force Design efforts provide.

Inside Forces must be ready to “fight tonight” while continuing to build capacity and improve capability, with an acute focus on acknowledged time horizons. Balanced investment will ensure the apportionment of resources to win the “fight tonight” does not incur downstream risk for our modernization efforts to win the fight tomorrow. As a key part of the Stand-in Force, MARSOC formations persist in their forward positions continuing to develop and leverage the multi-generational relationships with allies and partners that deter aggression and set the conditions for success in times of conflict. Critical to these efforts, Raiders are innovating at the tactical edge and helping set the theater by introducing the rapidly increasing benefits of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and cooperative autonomous robotics to the primary theater before our adversaries can. With these technologies, we are enabling key allies to deter malign activity, increase their maritime domain awareness, and ready to begin targeting immediately in crisis or conflict. Simultaneously we are integrating these critical capabilities through continuous experimentation in theater to increase Joint Force lethality and survivability particularly focused on enabling Joint Fires and Enhance Maneuver.

Our efforts at MARSOC are providing special operations capabilities to solve key operational challenges that provide the Joint Force advantage in competition and conflict. We have been focusing on capabilities and force development, continuous forward deployment in priority theaters, and strong integration with our service, the joint force, and partners.

How We Win

Leveraging our deep background in Counter-Violent Extremist Organizations (C-VEO), whether it be our significant work in Afghanistan where small, disaggregated Raider formations significantly suppressed and reduced insurgent activity to MARSOC's role in the defeat of ISIS in Iraq or enabling the Philippines to nearly eliminate a once thriving terrorism challenge. MARSOF are now finding efficiencies and opportunities to shape and influence the environment for joint force advantage in great power conflict. C-VEO and strategic competition operations, activities and investments are not mutually exclusive. MARSOC and SOCOM writ large have been innovatively leveraging the placement, access, and partnership C-VEO grants us to compete globally against peer adversaries.

MARSOC maintains a persistent forward deployed presence in support of operations across the globe, with over 400 personnel deployed in 17 countries. Our comparative small size allows us to be agile but forces us to exercise strategic discipline in our employment strategy. We deploy for purpose to bolster security, build capacity, and prevent wider conflict. Hyper-enabled Marine Special Operations Companies (MSOCs) remain deployed to conduct operations in the Indo-Pacific Command, Central Command, and Africa Command, with elements episodically deployed in support of the European and Southern Commands. MARSOC generates a persistently deployed Special Operations Task Force (SOTF), and an episodically employed Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF).

Our organically capable, targeting focused MARSOC units excel at collecting and fusing information that illuminates adversary actions and networks. Making that information available

to the Joint Force and allies and partners at “machine speed” which is critical to closing Kill Chains. MARSOF’s ability to operate proximate to targets can provide vital, track-quality data to enable Joint Fires. MARSOF are establishing resilient, multi-domain Kill Webs that facilitate the connection of any sensor to any shooter by SOF, General Purpose Forces, allies and partners to find, fix, and characterize an adversaries’ critical capabilities. Our ability to collect data in competition helps us understand an adversaries’ patterns of life and methods, which allows us to deter adversary actions or more rapidly hold their strategic capabilities at risk if conflict arises. If necessary, fused data becomes the information necessary to close a kill chain – matching a weapon to a target - at a pace and intensity an adversary cannot match. MARSOC is focused on developing, evaluating, and exercising these multi-domain Kill Webs in competition to enable decisive targeting at the onset of crisis or conflict.

MARSOC units continuously conduct activities to shape and influence the environment, from expanding partner capability and capacity through training, advising, and assisting to supporting combat operations with the lethality to overwhelm an enemy’s ability to seize and maintain the initiative to win. As seen with MARSOC’s efforts alongside the Armed forces of Philippines against terrorist threats and now Maritime Domain Awareness activities. We pursue missions in strategically important regions that facilitate close ties to the Naval Forces, including Fleet Marine Forces. Our core maritime characteristic makes us an impactful part of the Inside Force necessary at the persistent forward edge of deterrence to generate multi-domain options for the Joint Force.

How We Transform

We are well positioned for rapid modernization and force transformation. The operations and activities our force elements are conducting now align with the future vision of MARSOC we articulated in 2018 and began pursuing shortly thereafter via concept development, requirements definition, experimentation, and test and evaluation. Our disciplined approach to capability development is focused on solving Joint Force key operational challenges against near-peer adversaries that also increase our capabilities in low-intensity conflict. Our goal is to hyper-enable the Raider via creation of an augmented reality that expands their ability to sense, make sense, and provide multi-domain effects decisively. Further, the hyper-enablement at the tactical edge will be sharable and usable at machine speed by the Joint Force to enable operational-level decision making. We make every effort to build capability that meets our requirements by, with, and through our Service and will continue to serve as the connector between Joint SOF and the Marine Corps. We have never been more closely aligned to our Service in terms of concepts, capability development, and operational integration.

MAROSC is leading the development of sense capabilities within USMC and SOCOM that include a suite of air, ground, and maritime robots that can operate cooperatively and autonomously to reduce the cognitive load on operators. They will carry multi-domain sensors that can better characterize the adversary than current high-cost, and limited-survivable intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) can. High-capacity edge compute capability employing Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning tools will ingest and fuse the massive amount of data from our sensors into coherent and digestible information for the tactical

commanders. Simultaneously, we will export that data out of the tactical bubble via resilient means of transport in formats that enable Joint Force targeting and Kill Chain closure.

Organic finish solutions include survivable kinetic weapons like precision strike systems. We recently completed operational testing on our first precision strike munition is on track to field this year. Non-kinetic multi-domain solutions will provide SOF-peculiar means to deny, degrade, or disrupt adversary systems. They are less provocative and expand our flexible deterrence options in competition or response options in conflict.

Our People

MARSOC maintains a high, but sustainable, operational tempo in support of our nation's strategic priorities. We pride ourselves on being the example of an effective and efficient force, providing continuous returns on investment across the competition continuum. For almost 20 years, we have continually calculated the effectiveness of our force design and employment, assuring the nation that the Marine Corps provides a SOF built upon the unique character and traditions of the Service that capitalizes upon those valued resources provided to the command.

To generate the highly trained Raiders required to execute these missions, the Marine Raider Training Center (MRTC) conducted three Assessment and Selection courses and graduated two Individual Training Course (ITC) classes that produced our Special Operations Officers (SOO) and Critical Skills Operators (CSO). MRTC also conducted advanced skills courses which enhances our direct operations skills, intelligence collection capabilities, discreet capabilities in technical surveillance, cyber-enabling skills, advanced Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE), Survival Escape Resistance and Evasion (SERE),

and advanced communications. This instruction provided by MRTC evolved with the incorporation of lessons learned from the operating forces, experimentation, wargames, and the MARSOC Unit Readiness Exercise (URX) called RAVEN.

MARSOC's RAVEN exercise maintains pace with the changing global operating environment by incorporating elements of strategic threats capable of trans-regional effects in its design. These threats, often asymmetric, are encountered across multiple domains by U.S. power projection in highly contested spaces. Through steady engagement with GCCs and TSOs, RAVEN provides relevant pre-deployment training (and unit certification) for on-going operations in support of multiple Combatant Command Operation Plans and Theater Security Cooperation Plan requirements. The exercise iteratively improves by including operational commands' guidance, After Action Reviews, and joint lessons learned to implement the latest trends, threats, and tactics. We hold this exercise twice annually and invite members of the subcommittee to attend, at your convenience.

Closing

In closing, we remain committed to providing our Nation with Marine Raiders that possess superior special operations capabilities, who understand the demanding requirements to seamlessly operate across the competition continuum, and whose actions continually demonstrate the motto *Spiritus Invictus*, or 'unconquerable spirit.' Your Marine Raiders will remain always faithful, always forward, and on behalf of the men and women of MARSOC, I thank the Sub-Committee for your leadership, commitment to national security, and continued support to those in uniform and their families. Semper Fidelis.