

STATEMENT OF

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REGARDING THE POSTURE OF THE UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND

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I. Introduction

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the men and women of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), I thank you for this opportunity to testify on the posture of our command, and to provide an assessment of security and stability in our Area of Responsibility.

CENTCOM is in its sixth consecutive year of combat operations and our region continues to be challenged with insecurity complicated by violent extremism. Operations in Iraq are focused on providing security for the population while increasing the capacity of the Government and Iraqi Security Forces to defend and secure their people. In Afghanistan, efforts continue to assist the young representative government with mentoring, training, and governance, as well as counter terrorist and security support. Pursuing stability and security in the region requires the focused, coordinated application of military power and a robust interagency effort. By helping people manage social, political, and economic change, we can further the interests of peace and representative government.

In my first six weeks as CENTCOM Commander, I have traveled to many countries and met face-to-face with leaders to discuss the situation in the region and to enlist support for our

efforts. A number of impressions frame my overall assessment, which is one of guarded optimism.

Our top priority is achieving stability and security in Iraq. The ongoing sectarian violence threatens Iraq as well as the region, and inhibits essential economic progress. Both security and economic opportunity are necessary to convince the Iraqi people that a better life is possible. The Iraqi leaders in Baghdad understand that their ability to provide confidence to the population is key to success in stabilizing the country, and that they must make decisions on governance that are representative of the whole population. Though sectarian interests are working overtime to try to divide them, large numbers of Iraqi people are indicating they are tired of the violence and willing to cooperate with Iraqi and coalition security forces.

In Afghanistan, I believe that the foundation of security and governance is in place. The vast majority of people are in favor of representative government and prosperity, not Taliban brutality, and they are standing up and fighting for their country's future. Capacity of the Afghan Security Forces, particularly the Afghan National Army (ANA), is growing and the ANA is eager and well led. However, many parts of the country have never known centralized governance, lack basic social services and infrastructure, and desperately require expanded

capacity to meet the needs of a populace under pressure from the Taliban.

Though Iraq and Afghanistan need their neighbors to help them, Iran and Syria have not cooperated with efforts to combat terrorism and promote reconciliation. Their policies and actions threaten the internal security of their neighbors and the collective stability of the region.

The Iranian regime provides material support to violent extremists in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Palestine. It supplies Shi'a militia groups in Iraq with training, funding, and weapons, including particularly lethal Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). It also continues to provide money and weapons to Hizballah, which threatens the legitimate government of Lebanon.

Iran's most destabilizing activity has been the pursuit of nuclear weapons technology in defiance of the international community, International Atomic Energy Agency, and United Nations Security Council. A nuclear-armed Iran would further threaten regional stability, potentially trigger an arms race, and increase the potential for extremists to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The Syrian government continues to meddle in Lebanon. Its support for Hizballah is destabilizing the country and it

stonewalls the investigation into the Rafik Hariri assassination.

Over the past five years, terrorists, suicide bombers, and foreign fighters have traveled through Syria to attack Iraqi and Coalition forces. The government in Damascus has tolerated the presence and operations of Iraqi Sunni insurgents who have fueled the fighting in Baghdad and elsewhere in the country.

Participation by Iran and Syria in the Iraq Neighbors Conference in Egypt this week offers an opportunity to make positive contributions to regional stability.

In Lebanon, the government is confronted by opposition groups and violent protests, but the Lebanese Armed Forces are maintaining a fragile order. Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese have stood up publicly against assassination and terror, and for their elected government and a peaceful, prosperous future. The international community continues to support the popularly elected government in Beirut and its legitimately constituted and disciplined security forces.

In the Horn of Africa, Sudan continues to defy the international community and resist the deployment of an effective United Nations peacekeeping force to Darfur. Ethiopia and Eritrea have yet to agree on terms to demarcate their common border, and Eritrea has imposed restrictions on the operations of the United Nations mission there. Ethiopia has accused

President Isaias Afwerki's government of sponsoring insurgent groups and violent extremists in Somalia, where the situation remains volatile. The African Union mission to Somalia is unable to provide security beyond its garrisons, resulting in a country vulnerable to the return of al-Qaida and associated movements.

These impressions highlight both the challenges and opportunities in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility. We are heavily engaged in several areas but have in place key elements to succeed in advancing US security interests and enhance regional stability. Committed Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, working with interagency and Coalition partners, lead the way. Staunch allies work with us, and strong partnerships with friendly nations facilitate our endeavors. More than 800,000 people of the region serve in their nations' security forces, risking their lives to combat terror. They are casting a powerful vote for hope, and ultimately victory, by fighting, and often dying, to ensure their countries do not succumb to extremism and terror.

As we move forward, our initiatives are organized into five focus areas: setting conditions for stability in Iraq; expanding governance and security in Afghanistan; degrading violent extremist networks and operations; strengthening relationships and influencing states to contribute to regional stability; and

posturing the force to build and sustain joint and combined war fighting capabilities and readiness.

II. Setting Conditions for Stability in Iraq.

CENTCOM's Multi-National Force - Iraq (MNF-I) leads nearly 145,000 US and 12,600 Coalition personnel from 26 countries who are working to develop critical security and governance capabilities. Our shared goal is a representative government in Iraq that upholds the rule of law, respects the rights of its people, provides security, and is an ally in the War on Terror.

Accomplishing these objectives requires the focused attention of all elements of the US Government. The explosion of sectarian violence, highlighted by the February 22, 2006, al-Qaida bombing of the al-Askariya Mosque in Samarra, has dramatically changed the security and political situation. After enduring almost three years of attacks conducted primarily by terrorists and foreign fighters, Shi'a militants retaliated with a sustained campaign of kidnapping, torture, and murder. The ongoing sectarian violence became self-sustaining and threatened economic and political progress.

With the ongoing surge of Iraqi and US security forces and renewed interagency commitment, I believe we can establish greater security in support of the emerging Iraqi political process. The surge of additional military forces into Baghdad

in Operation Fardh al-Qanoon (Law and Order) has disrupted extremist elements, at least temporarily reduced ethnic violence, and has been welcomed by the majority of the city's people. The establishment of Joint Security Stations offers some enduring promise of improved Iraqi and Coalition force coordination and presence in neighborhoods. I believe these posts will also improve our access to information about insurgent activities.

That said, I recognize that we have a limited opportunity in which to capitalize on the potential offered by the surge. The local populace must see tangible results to gain a sense of a more hopeful future, and as a result, come to believe in alternatives to extremism.

Insurgent groups in Iraq have multiple and often competing motivations for perpetuating violence. However, a common thread is their opposition to US and Coalition presence and refusal to accept the legitimacy of an inclusive, representative government. Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) seeks to incite a sectarian war between Sunni and Shi'a Arabs through despicable and highly visible attacks on civilians. There is very little popular support for these groups. Some Sunni communities appear to be resisting al-Qaida in Iraq's intimidation. Several local leaders and their supporters have begun to actively support the regular Iraqi Police and Army forces against extremist threats.

Some Shi'a militias, especially Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM), seek to increase their political influence and to expand illegitimate activities under the guise of protecting their communities. These groups threaten stability and undermine confidence in the Iraqi Security Forces and the central government. Their death squads are responsible for the majority of the sectarian violence against Sunnis in Baghdad. Infiltration of the police by their members is especially problematic, as it undermines faith in fledgling Iraqi institutions.

Neutralizing these groups depends in part on disrupting the support they receive through neighboring countries. The transfer of lethal technology, weapons, and money from elements in Iran to Shi'a militias threatens stability. Similarly, Sunni Arab extremists continue to receive external moral, material, and logistical assistance from private supporters in Syria and elsewhere. To counter these influences and take bold steps to bridge factional divides, the Government of Iraq needs steadfast support from the international community and its neighbors.

I do not believe these differing factions in Iraq share a similar vision of an inclusive political middle ground, nor do they agree how to get there. The Government of Iraq must move toward inclusion by passing legislation on reconciliation, sharing of oil and gas revenues, and provincial powers. Furthermore, holding timely provincial elections and passing

constitutional amendments on the matters agreed upon last year would reduce incentives for violence.

I also found that poor budget execution has inhibited infrastructure development and the provision of basic services to Iraq's citizens. While the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) are helping improve local government performance and capacity, it will take considerable time to institute long term good governance. In the near-term, communities would benefit from job creation programs, a significant expansion of micro-credits, and rehabilitation of viable state owned enterprises that can open for business quickly.

Development of an effective and self-sufficient Iraqi Security Force (ISF) continues to be a top priority. In January 2006, there were 230,000 members in the combined security forces. Today there are more than 330,000 soldiers and policemen who have received training and equipment. Although overall logistics capabilities are underdeveloped, the ISF is able to sustain units below the division level.

The ISF is improving in capability, expanding command and control of operations, and taking an increasing role in confronting extremists and criminals. The Police still lag behind the Army in terms of individual and unit proficiency and reliability. In both forces, the units with strong leadership perform most effectively in combat operations.

As we look to the future, we will continue the transition of responsibilities to Iraq's government as conditions allow. This should give its people additional confidence to build and sustain their institutions.

Achieving our strategic goals in Iraq will require the focused efforts of our government's capabilities, the participation of key Iraqi factions, a reduction in external destabilizing influences, and most importantly, courageous and consistent good leadership by the Government of Iraq.

III. Expanding Governance and Security in Afghanistan

Afghanistan's primary insurgent threat, the Taliban, operate mostly in the southern and eastern provinces of the country. While they remain unpopular in most districts, small pockets of hard-core extremists are intent on asserting control and undermining the reform-minded government. As the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) expanded operations last year into previously uncontested areas, insurgent attacks increased to their highest levels since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Violence did, however, level-off in October and remained lower throughout most of the winter.

We expect Taliban activities to increase from now through the summer but believe that predictions of a major Taliban offensive are overstated. Despite the ability to instigate

increased levels of localized violence, they are not able to militarily defeat the Afghan National Army and Coalition forces. While continuing to counter the insurgent threat militarily, we will work with other agencies and a broadly based international effort to assist the Afghans to expand governance and promote economic development.

Improving Afghan governance, infrastructure, and the economy requires a concerted effort. The priorities are roads and electricity, followed by agricultural development, micro-credit, job skills, and education. ISAF is actively pursuing initiatives in these areas, from building schools and providing them with supplies to encouraging and stimulating the growth of small businesses.

Until there are sustainable governmental institutions and a viable replacement for the Afghan poppy crop, opium trafficking will be a significant part of this country's future. In the interim, CENTCOM supports US government and United Kingdom lead nation counter-narcotics activities. These efforts include building infrastructure, training border forces and the Counter-Narcotics Police National Interdiction Unit (CNPA), and developing a CNPA aviation capability.

In addition to reconstruction and development activities, efforts have focused on the Afghan National Army. Now at fifty percent of desired end strength, its 35,000 soldiers enjoy a

high level of support from the populace, and are growing steadily in competence, effectiveness, and professionalism. Though we have made progress in manning the Afghan National Police and Border Patrol, currently consisting of approximately 46,000 officers, these forces remain several steps behind the Army. As the Afghan Security Forces become capable of sustaining security and force development, we will hand responsibilities over to them and transition to a long-term security relationship.

Despite positive developments in the Afghan National Security Forces, long-term security requires the effective disruption of cross-border extremist operations. Essential security cooperation with Pakistan is increasing and more needs to be done. While the issues of border security and militant safe havens are difficult problems, coordination at tactical levels in both countries and with ISAF is increasing. This should lead to further confidence building measures and more robust joint efforts. Tri-lateral cooperation between ISAF, Pakistan and Afghanistan to improve governance, the rule of law, and trade in the border regions can also help eliminate extremist sanctuaries. Meanwhile, ISAF has retained the initiative, clearing and isolating enemy sanctuaries in places like Helmand Province since last autumn. In ongoing operations, MEDUSA and ACHILLES, ISAF forces have undertaken a multifaceted

approach to clearing, holding, and building. They have killed and captured several hard core Taliban leaders and cut their lines of communications, while aggressively pursuing development projects in the surrounding districts. This not only encourages the population in these areas to reject the insurgents, it vividly demonstrates the contrast between the grim reality of Taliban rule and the health and prosperity of government-controlled areas.

There is a general sense of optimism and determination among the Afghan leaders and people. They regularly voice their appreciation for our assistance, and believe things have improved since last year. We must help them succeed.

IV. Degrading Violent Extremist Networks and Operations

Whether sponsored by Iran, enabled by Syrian destabilizing efforts, or motivated by networks such as al-Qaida and its associated movements, violent extremism is a serious danger to regional and global security. We must identify, mobilize against, and confront this menace as its anachronistic world view and murderous tactics threaten people and stability worldwide. While our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan continue, we will use all available methods to build regional and international momentum for moderate behavior while eroding support for violent extremist ideology.

The highest priority in our counter-terror efforts is to defeat al-Qaida. Part of this effort, but not an end to itself, is the destruction of senior al-Qaida leaders. Since the September 11th attacks, we and our partners have captured or killed terrorists, diminished safe havens, driven leaders underground, and restricted operating space. Despite these efforts, challenges continue as our enemies work to reconstitute their networks. Critical to countering these violent extremists is the denial of their sanctuaries, nation-state support, and the lines of communication that sustain them. These militant Islamist terrorists attract recruits from a large, worldwide pool of disaffected young people. Unfortunately, their tactics and radical ideology remain almost unchallenged by voices of moderation. In response, we will enhance our intelligence capabilities, develop partner nation capacities, strengthen information sharing, disrupt illicit lines of communication, and work to prevent terrorist organizations from acquiring and using Weapons of Mass Destruction. All of these actions will require inter-agency and international coordination and cooperation.

Equally important to defeating al-Qaida and other extremist groups is de-legitimizing the underlying social and political movements that support them. To diminish the radical social movements from which our enemies derive their strength, we must maintain operational pressure on their networks while building

capacity in governance and security that help at-risk societies address problems that foster internal and local grievances. This work requires empowering credible experts to expose the flaws and internal contradictions of the enemy's ideology; provide viable, competing alternative worldviews; and contest the intellectual "safe harbors" where extremist ideas incubate.

V. Strengthening Relationships and Influencing States and Organizations

To increase prospects for long term stability and security in the region, we are working to strengthen relationships between and among regional nations and the United States. We are also trying to influence states and organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council and operational constructs to contribute to regional stability and work to ensure the free flow of commerce and positive economic growth.

The Central Command theater security cooperation program is built on a foundation of enduring relationships, and to that end, I support the Middle East Peace Process. The synchronized efforts of all the elements of US and international power are key. We are fortunate to have a large number of close, reliable partner nations. Five of these countries, **Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Pakistan**, are Major non-NATO Allies, and of those, **Jordan and Bahrain** are Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

partners. Our Theater Security Cooperation Strategy enables regional stability and advances security efforts that protect vital US national interests, and helps partners build capacities to combat terror and become self-reliant.

Theater Security Cooperation programs and combined military training exercises strengthen partner military capabilities, increase interoperability with US forces, encourage professional development, ensure access, and enhance intelligence and information sharing. Most importantly, these efforts cultivate personal relationships and build mutual trust and confidence between US and partner military personnel.

We continue to support these programs as a matter of high priority. Whether they are Department of Defense activities, or paid for with Department of State resources, such as Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and International Military Education and Training (IMET), the assistance we provide to our friends in the region is fundamental to building long-term security partnerships.

FMS is particularly useful in helping our partners build modern, capable forces that can more easily integrate into Coalition operations. However, long administrative delays and procurement lead times undermine responsiveness to emerging threats. 1206 funding is helping to address this problem by allowing the Department of Defense to directly fund security

cooperation activities. However, expanded dollar amounts of 1206 funding and including partner security forces engaged in fighting terror would be helpful.

I will work to strengthen relationships with our international partners and allies who are contributing in many important ways to building a better future for people in the region. I would now like to give examples that illustrate the criticality of our own relationships in the region.

Arabian Gulf States. Gulf Cooperation Council members **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,** and the **United Arab Emirates** are important partners in maintaining stability in the Gulf. We will work closely with these governments and their security forces to develop solid bilateral security cooperation programs and build confidence and capacity in their forces.

Each of these states has been a valuable partner in our mutual security efforts. The **Bahraini** Joint Counter-Terrorism Center has helped several agencies of its government to prepare for potential terrorist attacks. At its Gulf Air Warfare Center, the **United Arab Emirates** host air exercises that build multilateral cooperation and interoperability among the Gulf Cooperation Council, **Egypt,** and **Jordan.** **Qatar** provides excellent host nation support to our air operations center and the CENTCOM forward headquarters. In 2006, it again hosted the multinational crisis response exercise EAGLE RESOLVE, and

successfully planned, coordinated, and supervised security for the Doha Asian Games. **Oman**, a strategically situated state in the region, partners with US forces in exercises and other activities to help keep global commerce flowing and secure its extensive coastline and borders. In 2006, CENTCOM conducted 38 combined military exercises in the Arabian Gulf with these countries.

Saudi Arabia remains a vital partner, and its campaign against terrorists has significantly degraded al-Qaida operations on the Arabian Peninsula. Central Command will closely link its initiatives to broader US Government efforts to work with the Saudis in their efforts to defeat threats and promote reform. Eight combined military exercises are scheduled for 2007, all designed to increase cooperation and to develop the Kingdom's security capabilities. Our security cooperation efforts will prove increasingly important as we promote multilateral security efforts and counter-proliferation initiatives in the Arabian Gulf area. These are aimed at deterring destabilizing influences and protecting our friends and US interests from aggression.

Our partnerships with these states also provide essential basing and port access, overflight rights, and additional force protection for US units in the region. Our strong partnership with **Kuwait** has been in place for nearly 20 years. **Kuwait**

remains a steady supporter of Coalition efforts, hosts the Combined Forces Land Component Command, and serves as the primary staging point for forces and equipment rotating into and out of Iraq. I cannot imagine operations in Iraq without the vast support of **Kuwait**. **Bahrain** is one of our longest-standing partners and it has welcomed the US Navy for sixty years. It is also home to US Naval Forces Central Command and the United States Fifth Fleet. Though not large countries, each contributes greatly to a better future for all the peoples of the Arabian Gulf.

Egypt. The **Arab Republic of Egypt** remains a key US ally in the fight against extremism in the region. It strongly supports the Middle East Peace Process and has deployed forces to preserve stability in the aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. **Egypt** has been a moderating voice in discussions with **Syria**, **Lebanon**, Fatah, and HAMAS, and was among the first regional countries to send humanitarian supplies to Lebanon and to volunteer assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces. Its position as protector of the Suez Canal and gateway to the Middle East has contributed greatly to Coalition efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hundreds of Suez Canal transits and thousands of overflights have expedited US military operations in CENTCOM's Area of Responsibility.

This year, **Egypt** will again host the biennial BRIGHT STAR combined military exercise, Central Command's largest training event. In 2005, BRIGHT STAR included twelve participating nations and more than 30,000 troops. This year it will include air, naval, ground, and simulated training events that incorporate post-9/11 operational themes designed to improve interoperability.

Unfortunately, **Egypt** has suffered numerous terrorist attacks, including one aimed at the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai. Egyptian security forces have been diligent partners in combating extremist networks. Continued Foreign Military Financing, Foreign Military Sales and International Military Education and Training funding are needed to develop and modernize forces that contribute significantly to stability in the critical Suez Canal area and the Levant.

Horn of Africa and Yemen. The nations of the Horn of Africa **Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya,** and the **Seychelles**, are plagued by border tension, insurgencies, corruption, terrorist infiltrations, and poverty. Moreover, Coalition pressure on al-Qaida and other extremist networks in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere increases the potential for some of these terrorists to migrate to the Horn as a place to plan, conduct, and coordinate terror attacks.

CENTCOM's Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), with nearly 1,300 US personnel, works closely with US Embassies in the region. It conducts operations, training, and humanitarian missions in the Horn and in Yemen to help nations build capacity to combat terrorism and prepare for other challenges including natural disasters. Activities that it undertakes include training local security forces as well as assisting with civic projects such as wells, schools, and clinics, and providing medical and veterinary services in remote villages. Security capabilities and civil affairs training gained by local forces, coupled with the goodwill engendered by numerous humanitarian operations, increase the regions' resistance to the spread of extremist ideology and fortifies local desires to defeat terrorism before it becomes entrenched.

Jordan. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan remains a key and valuable partner in the fight against violent extremists and contributes significantly to regional stability. Threatened by internal terrorist activities, it has led significant counter-terror efforts.

Jordan is a regional leader in security and counter-terror training, and hosts major initiatives for developing security capabilities. The Peace Operations Training Center has provided more than 1,100 US military leaders and soldiers with valuable cultural awareness and language training. Meanwhile, the

Jordanian International Police Training Center has provided training for over 50,000 Iraqi police officers, and other Jordanian schools train Iraqi military forces, air traffic controllers, and aviation inspectors. Upon completion in 2009, the King Abdullah Special Operations Training Center will provide a regional capability to train special operations forces. These programs are building competent and capable Iraqi security forces and will help other regional security services improve their effectiveness.

Jordan's other contributions are also important. Its highly trained and disciplined armed forces are a positive example for other militaries with high levels of professionalism and combat effectiveness. Additionally, I would like to recognize the Jordanian doctors and nurses who have established a hospital in Afghanistan and treated over 550,000 Afghans and 1,900 coalition members.

Jordan's strategic location, balanced vision of modernization, and well-developed security establishment give it a regional role and influence that exceed its size. Our programs of military and economic assistance remain vital to encouraging Jordan's continued modernization and leadership in the region.

Pakistan. Pakistani security forces have captured and killed significant numbers of violent extremists, to include

high-ranking leaders of al-Qaida and the Taliban. They have also suffered extensive casualties. Our long-term partnership with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is central to defeating extremist groups in the region, and it is difficult to imagine success in that struggle without its support and cooperation. We are working together to reduce the tensions stemming from the radical and violent presence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Useful initiatives include regular meetings with Pakistan's military leaders, and more robust liaison and communications among our units operating along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. While President Musharraf is working to moderate groups within Pakistan and to prevent militants using the FATA for sanctuary, he is faced with a backdrop of potent political, social, and ethnic forces within his country.

Pakistan remains a strong partner of the United States, and our support for its counter-terror efforts will continue with a variety of focused programs. Our security cooperation funding and bilateral exercise programs help the country's government conduct counter-terror operations and enhance its internal stability. Our goal is for Pakistan to view the US as a long-term, preferred international partner, particularly in our efforts to defeat our common enemies.

Central Asian States. Situated at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, the Central Asian States of **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan** are playing an increased role in global energy markets. They are also strong partners in the struggle against militant Islamist movements and their Islamic scholars have taken the lead in publicly countering extremist propaganda. However, as with other areas of the CENTCOM region, the Central Asian States contend with a number of threats to stability and security. Restricted oil and gas export options limit their income, geography makes border security especially difficult, and organized crime, narcotics trafficking, and political instability are preeminent concerns. Though local perceptions of US involvement in the region are complex, our access to government officials is strong.

Despite the challenges, there are signs of progress in Central Asia. **Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan** have negotiated a series of agreements that should improve trilateral border security. Over the coming year, Central Command will prioritize engagements that sustain logistics chains for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, reform regional defense institutions, enhance organic counterterrorist and counter-narcotics capabilities, further improve border security and

disaster preparedness, and prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

VI. Posturing the Force to Build and Sustain Joint and Combined Warfighting Capabilities and Readiness

Joint and combined war fighting capability and readiness are fundamental in our ability to prosecute ongoing military operations, maintain a credible presence to deter aggression, and respond effectively to contingencies. Because we execute nearly all of our activities jointly and in concert with allies, we must cultivate effective inter-service and multinational ways of doing business. Additionally, because our region is filled with uncertainty, we must maintain a full spectrum of responsive capabilities through an effective forward deployed force structure, thorough planning, and realistic combined training exercises. Other critical capabilities include the following:

A Strong Coalition. At present, we have over 40 partner nations with troops in Afghanistan and 26 with personnel in Iraq. They bring important mission capabilities, but also significant integration challenges. Blending capabilities of these countries into effective action requires, among other factors, a command and control infrastructure that accounts for remote locations, multiple languages, cultural differences, and challenging force protection issues. Our Coalition must share

classified and sensitive information when appropriate, and have the networks and infrastructure to facilitate such exchanges.

Interagency Coordination. Establishment of security and stability in our region requires the application of all elements of national power: military, diplomatic, economic, and information. The military instruments can set conditions for security but other agencies foster lasting change.

We are fortunate to have several US Government entities engaged in the Central Command AOR. The Departments of State, Treasury, Justice, and Homeland Security, as well as subordinate agencies including the US Agency for International Development, Diplomatic Security Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and United States Coast Guard, are actively engaged in our theater. Their efforts are helping to protect critical infrastructure, prevent terrorist attacks on our homeland, train fledgling law enforcement organizations, and rebuild damaged or aging infrastructure. There is clearly a need for better integration and more comprehensive application of all the elements of national power.

Flexible Logistics. Strategic airlift, rapid sealift, pre-positioned inventories, and access to bases with critical infrastructure are the key logistics components which support operational flexibility. Our primary focus in this area remains the timely deployment, equipping, and sustainment of units

engaged in combat operations. There is no better example of the importance and flexibility of our contingency air and sealift capabilities than the evacuation of over 14,000 Americans from Lebanon during last summer's conflict between Israel and Hizballah. We will continue working with the Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of State, and partner nations to ensure access to the infrastructure we need to support ongoing and future operations.

Adaptable Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR)

Capabilities. Interoperable, high-volume communications systems are essential to conducting operations across a dispersed command space. Our systems operate near full capacity daily with little surge capability. Because many of our needs must be satisfied by commercial providers, access to them is critical. The largest challenge we face is integration of disparate systems into interoperable and reliable networks. We must embrace policies that enable successful integration and technologies that result in effective interoperability and efficient information-sharing.

Ultimately our ability to target violent extremists depends on precise and actionable intelligence. We continue to evolve our techniques and procedures to optimize efforts to "find, fix, finish, and exploit" targets. Our adversaries have been agile

in adapting to our operations. We continue to improve battle space awareness, seeking greater specificity, detail, and timeliness of intelligence whenever possible. We are aggressively seeking ways to manage shortfalls or capability gaps in imagery intelligence, wide area coverage, sensor integration, signals intelligence, moving target indicators, layered Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance architecture, biometrics, counterintelligence, and human collectors.

Responsive Counter Improvised Explosive Device Program.

Insurgents' weapon of choice will likely continue to be the Improvised Explosive Device, or road-side bomb. They are cheap, effective, anonymous, and have been adapted to include toxic industrial chemicals such as chlorine. While some are crude, our adversaries increasingly use sophisticated technology, including Iranian-supplied Explosively Formed Penetrators. These weapons have killed or wounded 15,000 military and civilian personnel in Iraq, and IEDs are becoming increasingly prevalent in Afghanistan.

To counter this threat, and working with the interagency and our Coalition partners, we are fielding jammers, specialized route clearance vehicles and equipment, and improved vehicle and personnel protective armor. These initiatives have reduced IED effectiveness. We must continue to develop new technologies,

tactics, techniques, and procedures. Of particular importance to CENTCOM is rapid fielding of Mine Resistant Armor Protected vehicles, and further research and development to improve the detection of mines, IEDs, and unexploded ordnance.

Personnel. Sustained operations in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility depend on personnel who have foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness competency in addition to military skills. Retention is a critical issue, and we depend heavily on quality of life enhancements such as Combat Zone Tax Relief, Imminent Danger Pay, and Special Leave Accrual. The Rest and Recuperation program continues to be a success, serving more than 470,000 troops to date. Over the past year, we have conducted a comprehensive review of the manning of our headquarters, which, after five years of war, is still highly reliant on temporary individual augmentation personnel. My subordinate war fighting headquarters are also heavily manned with individual augmentees. I am committed to working with the Services and the Joint Staff to properly size and resource all of these headquarters.

CENTCOM is also working to address requirements for low density skills. Our present inventory of language and intelligence specialists (especially human intelligence) and counterintelligence agents does not support current requirements. Language expertise is crucial in

counterinsurgency, counterterrorist, and counterintelligence operations, and will continue in high demand. Contracting language expertise provides interim capability, but in the long run, we need service members and career civilians with the requisite language and cultural skills.

VII. Conclusion

Despite difficult and often dangerous conditions and lengthy absences from home and family, our military men and women in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility persevere in their efforts and demonstrate courage, professional skill and uncommon dedication to duty. Whether engaged in combat, providing humanitarian relief, or supporting operations, they represent Americans at their very best. While we fight tirelessly against those who would do us harm, we also stand equally ready to assist those who would help bring peace to this region. The American people and the Congress have provided staunch and steady support, and we sincerely appreciate your advocacy and assistance. I am proud and honored to represent the men, women, and supporting families of CENTCOM. On their behalf, I thank you for your support, and for this opportunity to testify regarding our defense posture.