

STATEMENT OF  
MAJOR GENERAL JAMES F. GLYNN, U.S. MARINE CORPS  
COMMANDER  
U.S. MARINE FORCES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND  
BEFORE THE  
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

April 27, 2022

## Introduction

Chairman Kelly, Ranking Member Ernst, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to update you on the status and posture of the 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 we celebrate the 16th anniversary of MARSOC.

You have my gratitude for the exceptional support for our warfighters from this committee and from the rest of Congress. We continue to uphold the Marine legacy and forge the path of Marine Raiders providing the nation and Geographic Combatant Commanders a Marine Special Operations Force capable of strategic impact that is dynamically shifting to meet the demands of the future. As you have heard from the Geographic Combatant Commanders, they are increasingly challenged in the uncertainty of semi-permissive environments as our adversaries seek to gain and maintain influence. MARSOC concurrently seeks opportunities to leverage our organizational agility to maximize the effectiveness of the force and provide immense benefit to the SOF enterprise and our parent Service. Global engagement amongst Great Powers requires Special Operations Forces that can be active across the continuum of cooperation, competition, and conflict, for which your Marine Raiders are postured and focused. In essence, those who seek to compete with us want to avoid direct confrontation and have created a 'gray zone' that MARSOC intends to help make less opaque.

Over the past year we have advanced our development of an innovative operating concept that provides the nation with a unique capability. Strategic Shaping and Reconnaissance (SSR) encompasses a wide array of capabilities to deter, disrupt, deny,

adversaries' activities, or increase their incurred costs. These operations, activities, and investments (OAI) provide shaping and influence effects to increase Joint Force awareness of adversarial interest and influence. We are prepared to challenge adversaries in critical geographical regions across the globe, and your Marine Raiders are expanding this capability now and continue to compete through an all-domain approach that preserves U.S. influence and keeps our adversaries on their back foot.

### **Enduring Mission**

Since we met last year, MARSOC maintains a persistent forward deployed presence in support of six named operations across the globe. Reinforced Marine Special Operations Companies (MSOC), remain deployed to conduct full spectrum operations in the Indo-Pacific Command, Central Command, and Africa Command, with elements also episodically deployed in support of the European and Southern Commands. Additionally, MARSOC maintains a LtCol-led headquarters, Special Operations Task Force (SOTF), ready to deploy and, when required, can repeatedly generate an O-6 level headquarters as a Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF).

Inherent in all deployable MARSOC formations is the ability to collect and fuse information that illuminates adversary actions and networks. Further, each formation can conduct activities to shape and influence the environment, from expanding partner resilience through training, advising, and assisting, to supporting combat operations when needed. These units also connect the larger Joint Force to interagency partners, designed to utilize their organic capabilities and leverage unique or exquisite capabilities that make forces more

effective in counter violent extremist organization (C-VEO) operations and bolster our approach to integrated deterrence.

As we experiment with next-generation capabilities, we continue operations against C-VEO networks that provide our forces the placement and access against priority threats. We pursue missions in littoral regions that facilitate close ties to the Naval Forces, to include Fleet Marine Forces. Our ability to leverage these characteristics makes us an impactful part of the 'Stand in Force' necessary at the persistent forward edge of deterrence.

### **Enduring Support to the Force**

MARSOC maintains a high, but sustainable, operational tempo in support of our nation's global initiatives. We pride ourselves on being a premier example of an effective and efficient force, providing outsized return on investment. Over the past 16 years, the continual assessing of the effectiveness and efficiencies of our structure, employment, development, and design, led us to remain good stewards of the resources provided to the command. MARSOC continues to account for approximately 1.6% of the Marine Corps end-strength, utilizing approximately 0.6% of the Service's annual budget (MFP-2). Similarly, MARSOC accounts for 4.5% of USSOCOM's manpower, operating on less than 2% of the MFP-11 budget, while executing approximately 10% of USSOCOM's missions.

To generate the highly trained Raiders required to execute these missions, over the last year, the Marine Raider Training Center (MRTC) conducted three Assessment and Selection courses and graduated two Individual Training Course (ITC) classes that produce our Special Operations Officers (SOO) and Critical Skills Operators (CSO). MRTC conducted fifteen advanced skills courses which enhanced 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. MRTC has evolved its instruction by incorporating lessons learned from the operating forces, experimentation, wargames, and the Unit Readiness Exercise (URX) known as RAVEN.

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

### **A Modern Operating Concept**

The operational art of Strategic Shaping and Reconnaissance (SSR) connects the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational communities to develop persistent networks that enhance strategic intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. The concept supports campaigning with long-term shaping and influence in support of SOCOM, the Marine Corps, and the nation in strategically critical regions. We are currently competing with

adversaries in new domains, both geographic and virtual. All-domain targeting and influence campaigns will illuminate and inform the national security enterprise.

SSR operationalizes the tasks and requirements found in the national strategy, Higher Headquarters Guidance, and an analysis of the pacing threat. This approach provides the Joint Force a Special Operations capability by evolving a traditional tactical activity, Special Reconnaissance, and transforming it into a strategic capability that can scale as events and the environment requires.

At its core, SSR is the fusing of special operations with intelligence across all domains. Strategic shaping takes place during all phases of an operation and throughout, cooperation, competition, crisis, and conflict. It is conducted through a variety of options that may range from security cooperation relationship building to precision direct action against strategic and priority targets. These actions are carefully crafted to achieve the desired effects while managing escalation, and provide policy makers with a wider range of options. Through globally synchronized special operations, SSR is applied against the threat threads of an adversary that cross traditional boundaries and borders. This approach supports the Joint Force to maintain deterrence and preserve access to key areas of interest.

Over the past two decades, national priorities required us to focus on the global counterterrorism fight. As a result, we concentrated our efforts on the skills required to be successful in the military fight against VEOs. As a result, we will continue to maintain this prominent capability to fight tonight and win in these arenas, and we will also harness this competency to further our development of SSR to address current and emerging challenges.

In our role as a connector between United States Special Operations Command and the Marine Corps, MARSOC remains prepared to leverage its small size and agility to create conditions that enable our SOF sister services and the Marine Corps in competition and conflict. As a complementary force in the contact layer, Marine Special Operations Forces are poised to assess strategic locations and operational imperatives, while also working as part of the Stand-In Force to trade time and space for Joint Force maneuver in all domains. All aspects of multi-domain operations will require enablement by SOF, which MARSOC is prepared to support. These capabilities, integrated into our operations, facilitate actions SOF can take to support the resilience of our partners, support resistance movements against adversaries, influence populations to align with U.S. ideals, and conduct precision direct operations as required.

### **Transformative Support**

SOCOM outlines areas that the SOF enterprise will focus its modernization efforts. Working within this guidance, our Combat Development and Integration directorate continues to aggressively pursue modernization. Our efforts define the investment resources required to lead enterprise development and employment of irregular warfare and special reconnaissance capabilities while highlighting the operation and maintenance (O&M) resources to adapt our force and accelerate the realization of a new operating concept. Our submissions account for risk to current readiness and take a measured approach to near-term risk tolerance by recognizing opportunities to divest to invest in modernization. However, people remain our critical platform. As such, we have made noteworthy investment in exercises and training to develop new and refined capabilities.

Moreover, MRTC is also adjusting to the needs of Marine Raiders. As the SOCOM proponent for littoral Special Reconnaissance, new training requirements are emerging, and we continue to adapt our courses of instruction to excel in the contemporary operating environment. For example, this past year MRTC added a new course, MARSOF ISR Tactical Controller, to the Special Operations Capability Specialist (SOCS) formal training pipeline to organically certify our Geospatial Intelligence Marines. Later this year, MRTC will conduct an additional Multi-discipline Intelligence Operator Course (MDIOC) to increase the production of Intelligence SOCS, a Maritime Mobility Course to increase organic maritime capabilities, finally with Marine Corps Education Command's support, Special Operations Officers will all be completing Captain (O-3)-level Service PME immediately following ITC alongside their Marine Air-Ground Task Force peers.

Outside of personal development, and in partnership with other SOF elements, the Service, and a broad array of government and industry partners, MARSOC Combat Development and Integration directorate continues to pursue intelligent unmanned, automated, and robotic technologies across the force. At the forefront of these development efforts is the pursuit of a technological fusion of unmanned systems technologies with advancing cognitive Raiders, Broadband Tactical Edge Communications, and Organic Precision Strike efforts. Further, we have submitted requests for transformative investments in our force tied to each capability area that will ensure we are properly resourced to certify, validate, and verify SSR required capabilities across the force generation cycle. One such example is our Cloud, Machine Learning, and Artificial Intelligence capabilities. These tools support operations



in the information environment, increase battlespace awareness and strengthen C2 through enterprise-level data management and governance.

### **Taking Care of our Raiders**

In the spirit of the first SOF Truth, we embrace the concept of “Who First, then What.” We know Raiders can expertly develop, adopt, and implement innovative operational concepts that serve National Security requirements. Given the changing operating environment, protecting Raiders requires continued analysis and adjustment. While conducting operations, we are professionally capable of traditional risk mitigation and force protection, but new risks have emerged as we pursue innovative doctrine and operations.

New environments and operations require that we adjust our posture. As an example of innovative protection, our communications directorate has pioneered the deployment of spectrum guard protection, which uses commercial off-the-shelf technology to monitor our electronic signature and devise methods to preclude adversarial collection. We remain active in pursuit of excellence in cyber operations in accordance with designated coordinating authorities, while assessing new avenues of both offense and defense in an all-domain approach. Protecting the force abroad and at home remains a top priority.

We clearly recognize that current and future operational capabilities rest upon a foundation of outstanding Raiders and their families. To maximize capabilities and readiness to enact new operational concepts and continued excellence, we must continue to safeguard and sustain our most valuable resource. The MARSOC Preservation of the Force and Families (MPOTFF) program continually delivers responsive and effective support, and remarkably

continues to evolve with the changing demands and needs of our force. The MPOTFF program provides resourcing that facilitate holistic physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Fully utilized, the MPOTFF lines of effort of Human Performance, Medical Care, Spiritual Fitness, and Readiness (Unit, Personal, Family), coalesce and optimize physical and cognitive performance, and increase the resiliency of our families. This strategy, as part of a greater USSOCOM effort to capture longitudinal exposures, aims to proactively sustain and extend the longevity of the force and ensure optimal healthcare during, and after, service.

We are currently expanding the SOCOM Assessment Baseline Readiness Evaluation System (SABRES). The comprehensive assessment and monitoring protocol assists leaders with decision making by providing data for the early assessment and treatment of cognitive performance. With your continued support, MPOTFF will remain the standard for improving the endurance, effectiveness, and resilience of the force by using best practices across SOCOM, the Marine Corps, and Naval medical community. The result is a command-driven, organizational culture of physical, mental, spiritual, and family excellence to enhance mission success in career, family, and other life areas.

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At the same time, we continue to expand inclusion and diversity. MARSOC is more than managing diversity; we are leveraging diverse backgrounds to build integrated teams capable of broader and deeper problem solving. We appreciate that diversity and inclusivity are operational imperatives, and we are engaged at all levels to expanding inclusivity across the force. We are proud of advancements in the past year and continue to recruit, assess, select, and train this elite force, cognizant that it is representative of the best of our Service.

Concurrently we remain consistent, effective, and improving in the Sexual Assault and Prevention Response program, as well as the Suicide Prevention Program. We continue to work within the guidelines set forth by Congress and the Department of Defense regarding prevention, and consistently support victims while lawfully prosecuting cases. Leadership,

training, information, and consistency are paramount in eliminating sexual assaults within our ranks, and these efforts remain critical to retention and recruiting.

From the perspective of deployment-to-dwell, the force continues to get healthier due to internal recruiting efforts and the modernization initiative you have supported over the past few years to better balance our force ratios, specifically our Special Operations Capabilities Specialist (SOCS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) personnel. As a result, our deployment to dwell ratio is in line with Secretary of Defense guidance and continues to trend positively for our Special Operations Officers, Special Operations Capability Specialists and Critical Skills Operators.

Our diverse Recruiting and Advertising Branch works closely with Marine Corps Recruiting Command to leverage service efforts and enhance mutual endeavors to attract and retain quality Marines. We have increased efforts by providing information to every recruit that attends Marine Corps Recruit Training regarding the different career paths available at MARSOC. By doing this, we continue to attract a talented and qualified pool of Marines. Thanks to our professional reputation and continued operational employment, there has not been a shortage of highly qualified Marines applying to attend our entry level courses.

Our retention success is evident as MARSOC has routinely achieved and surpassed reenlistments goals. In Fiscal Year (FY) 21, MARSOC exceed the larger Service first-term reenlistment rate by 11%. For subsequent term reenlistments MARSOC achieved a healthy 82%, reflecting a high sense of overall job satisfaction and continued commitment. We continue to maximize support to USSOCOM, TSOCs and Fleet Marine Forces over the long term while we carefully ensure the welfare of our servicemembers.

## **Closing**

In closing, we remain committed to providing our Nation with Marine Raiders that possess superior special operations capabilities, are devoted to modernization, 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 women and men of MARSOC, I thank the Sub-Committee for your continued support to those in uniform and their families, and for your commitment to national security. *Semper Fidelis*.