

MARINE CORPS

Operating Concepts



*Assuring Littoral Access ...
Proven Crisis Response*

Third Edition
June 2010



ENGAGE

RESPOND

PROJECT

United States Marine Corps
Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration

June 2010

Foreword

Mmilitary excellence is defined by the excellence of our Marines; their thinking, ability to innovate, adapt, and to overcome the challenges presented by complex environments, threats, and conditions. Marines continue to rely upon our history of naval character, responsiveness and military professionalism to guide our Corps into the future. In these pages, you won't find an answer to every problem posed by the future. Instead, you should consider it as both a window into many different futures and a mirror to allow you to reflect upon your own ability to operate within them. Many of the words and phrases herein—power projection, seabasing, crisis response, enhanced MAGTF operations, engagement and countering irregular threats—should be very familiar to all Marines. Don't let this familiarity lure you into thinking there is nothing new within these pages. Old ideas can take on an entirely new life when placed with a new context - and if there is one constant reflected in our view of the future, it is that there is no longer a single context but many.

Read critically, these concepts are important not only for what they say, but for what they don't say. As the overarching operating concepts for the Marine Corps, they necessarily don't address every single aspect, activity, or organization within the MAGTF. They need to be read, discussed, dissected, rebuilt, challenged, analyzed, and most of all, added to. Whether the ideas in these pages are proven or disproven is not the point - the act of thoughtful engagement in response to them is what matters. As steel sharpens steel, ideas can - and should - do the same.



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Chapter 1

Overview

USMC's Role in Implementing Our National Security Policy

The Marine Corps has long provided the Nation with a force adept at rapidly and effectively solving complex, multifaceted, and seemingly intractable security challenges—so much so that “Send in the Marines” connotes both a demand for action and a presumption of success. While the general public may not be conversant with what exactly the Marine Corps is or does, our fellow citizens display an intuitive understanding that in times of trouble the Marines stand ready to do whatever has to be done. In recent years, their confidence has been reinforced by the performance of Marines in toppling the regime in Iraq, eradicating the ensuing endemic violence within that country’s al Anbar Province, and in numerous humanitarian assistance operations worldwide. This flexibility and dependability has been captured in the expression, “No better friend, and no worse enemy.” While Marine Corps forces may perform a variety of missions across the range of military operations, two stand at the forefront of what we do.

First, as part of the naval team we *assure littoral access* by bridging the difficult seam between operations at sea and on land. This is accomplished through a combination of activities ranging from military engagement, crisis response, and power projection (both soft and hard). This capability contributes to overcoming diplomatic, geographic and military challenges to access and assists the Nation in its strategic objectives of preventing conflict, protecting national interests, assuring access to engage partners and to defeat aggression when necessary.

Second, we *respond to crisis*, and at the right end of that response spectrum, fight what have historically been called “*small wars*.” Responding to crisis—whether humanitarian assistance at one end of the spectrum or small wars at the other—has traditionally required a high degree of adaptability along with versatile, comprehensive skills. We have a long track record of success spanning recently from Al Anbar province, to the Barbary Wars and suppression of the slave trade in the early 19th century. These are complex problems in which purely military

solutions will not suffice—because the fundamental causes of the conflict are often a complicated combination of security, economic, political and social issues.

What assured littoral access and responding to crisis have in common is that they require forces that are strategically mobile, operationally flexible, and tactically proficient. These three defining traits allow the Marine Corps to meet this standard: our naval character, our high state of mental and material readiness, and an exceptional degree of military professionalism. These capabilities and traits ensure that the Marine Corps can effectively support joint force actions to “prevail in today’s wars; ... prevent and deter threats against the United States, its interests, and our allies and partners; and prepare to defend the United States in a wide range of contingencies against state and non-state actors.”¹

Evolution of the Marine Corps

The Marine Corps—in concert with our seagoing partner, the United States Navy—has continuously revised its organization, training, and equipment to fulfill its role in implementing the Nation’s evolving strategic needs. In each security era, however, the Marine Corps has also been called upon—and maintained the flexibility to—conduct a diverse set of missions. These have included: military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence to prevent conflict; crisis response and limited contingencies to contain conflict, as well as protect U.S. citizens and interests—and major operations and campaigns associated with both conventional and irregular wars. Often thought of exclusively as an amphibious *assault* force, the period 1942-1945 was the only time in our history that the Marine Corps was organized, trained, and equipped for that one mission and did only one mission: amphibious *assault*. During the subsequent Cold War the Marine Corps was optimized for sea-based crisis response. Amphibious *operations*—of all types—remain a Marine Corps forte but not exclusively so. For the last 65 years, Marines have operated from the sea as part of a naval team and conducted other sustained operations—principally referred to as “small wars.”

1. National Security Strategy, May 2010, pg. 14

The Marine Corps' Uniqueness

The historical role of the Marine Corps is unique amongst the Services. The Army, Navy, and Air Force enjoy the clarity of focusing on the domains of land, maritime, and air. Their ties to these domains have naturally led to their individual and distinctive cultures, philosophies, and doctrines. The resultant differences in concepts and capabilities have in many ways created forces optimized for each particular domain. These differences in turn provide strength to the joint force by precluding a myopic focus on a single domain. This lack of a prescribed military perspective ensures the availability of different options that are effective for each manifestation of the diverse situations that will confront the United States.

Where domain-optimized forces have experienced friction is at the seams between the domains and in responding to sudden changes from the expected character of conflict. Unlike the other Services, the Marine Corps has not relied on a single geographic domain to ensure our place in national defense and service to the Nation. This distinction has at times been an institutional vulnerability that has led to attempts to reduce or eliminate the Corps based on perceived redundancy. It has, however, also been a source of great strength that has fueled competitive innovation, strategic and operational foresight, and the ability to view the battlespace “where four map sheets intersect” with a perspective not tied to single cultural or domain bias. The Marine Corps has repeatedly demonstrated its institutional and operational adaptability by effectively bridging the nation’s most critical seams between domains. Those seams have always and will always confront a maritime power with global interests. The Corps has also shown a high degree of military competence in rapidly understanding and adjusting to the diverse and changing pattern of war we face wrought by the diverse social, geographical, political and technological threats we might face and the unconstrained creativity of a dynamic, evolving enemy. Our institutional philosophy is based on an acknowledgment that “we cannot predict with certainty the pattern of war for which we must prepare ourselves,” as

well as the in final analysis “the ultimate determination in war is the man on the scene with the gun.”²

Our unique Service culture has allowed the Marine Corps to “think outside the box” and confront conventional military wisdom. Following the Great War, many theorists believed that the Allied experience at Gallipoli had demonstrated the folly of amphibious operations in the face of “modern” weapons. Our experimentation with amphibious techniques during the 1920s and 1930s created key capabilities necessary for success in World War II, allowing the Allies to project military power across vast oceans. Without this pre-war innovation, wresting the continent of Europe from the Axis and seizing bases on the long road to Japan would have been much more difficult and costly. Since then, the Marine Corps has continually sought to exploit opportunities and overcome challenges where domains converge, leading to our development of close air support doctrine, maritime prepositioning, and vertical envelopment. A natural by-product of our trans-domain perspective is our adaptability to changing operational conditions. Such changes usually involve a high degree of uncertainty and often occur during the opening phases of a campaign and at other times when unanticipated or ambiguous conditions emerge, whether at the shoreline or deep inland. Al Anbar Province is only one recent example demonstrating our ability to adjust our mindset and approach to effectively deal with a blurred and rapidly shifting operational environment. Like all “small wars,” al Anbar was dominated by a high degree of complexity and uncertainty as well as a merger of conventional and irregular warfare tactics.

Due to our trans-domain approach, Marines do not view a given mission from the perspective of a particular tool set or domain prejudice. We consider an adversary holistically and figure out “how to get at him” in creative ways that push us to develop unique technologies, methods, and organizations suited to the trans-domain edge. While others will seek to achieve supremacy in a particular domain, we seek to identify

2. RADM J.C. Wylie, USN, *Military Strategy; A General Theory of Power Control*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 1989 (originally published 1967), pp. 70-73

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opportunities and create new asymmetries across domains. Along with our unique history and perspective, our tradition of institutional adaptability guides the Marine Corps to develop and maintain a broad range of critical capabilities necessary to fulfill our fundamental role in implementing national security policy. This role is best explained by examining national strategy.

As the 21st century unfolds it is increasingly evident that expanding challenges to access are making the flexible, expeditionary qualities of the Marine Corps especially relevant. The *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations* (CCJO) points out that:

*Diminishing overseas access is another challenge anticipated in the future operating environment. Foreign sensitivities to U.S. military presence have steadily been increasing. Even close allies may be hesitant to grant access for a variety of reasons. Diminished access will complicate the maintenance of forward presence, a critical aspect of past and current U.S. military strategy, necessitating new approaches to responding quickly to developments around the world as well as more robust exploitation of existing U.S. advantages to operate at sea and in the air, space, and cyberspace. Assuring access to ports, airfields, foreign airspace, coastal waters and host nation support in potential commitment areas will be a challenge and will require active peacetime engagement with states in volatile areas. In war, this challenge may require forcible-entry capabilities designed to seize and maintain lodgments in the face of armed resistance.*³

This estimate is substantiated by recent history. In the past twenty years, U.S. amphibious forces have responded to crises and contingencies over 107 times, a response rate more than double that of the Cold War. Furthermore, during the same period, forward-postured amphibious forces continually conducted sea-based security cooperation with international partners—reflecting the philosophy that preventing war is as important as winning wars.

3. Mullen, Admiral, Michael G., U.S. Navy, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 15 January 2008), pp. 5-6.

Strategic Concept of the Marine Corps

As a maritime nation with global interests, the United States must be capable of extending its control through influence and power via the sea. Marines operate in the domain of uncertainty and provide the necessary and critical transition of control at the point that history repeatedly demonstrates requires special and adaptable skills – at the interface between the sea, land, and air domains. The Marine Corps is organized, trained, and equipped to operate at and from the sea as part of the naval team to “*engage, respond, and project.*” The Service’s general purpose and highly adaptable capabilities also contribute to other missions especially “Small Wars.” In order to meet the Nation’s strategic needs, the Marine Corps possess the ability to *engage* with a wide set of partners in order to build capability, forge solid relationships across cultural barriers, and promote diplomatic access. At the same time, Marine Corps forces remain prepared to *respond* to crises—either natural or man-made. The Marine Corps will also be able to *project* power—either “soft” or “hard” as the situation requires—at and from the sea. Collectively, these Marine Corps capabilities contribute to *preventing* conflict, *protecting* national interests, and assuring overseas access that will enable the United States to *prevail* in a conflict.

As highlighted in the National Security Strategy, engagement “underpin[s] our commitment to an international order based upon rights and responsibilities.”⁴ Engagement is conducted at the seam between diplomacy and defense. Specifically, the ability of Marine forces to *engage* forward is critical in that it allows us to forge the partnerships that promote diplomatic access; reassure allies and friends; facilitates building partner capacity and a collective approach to maintaining the security and stability necessary to maintain a peaceful global system of commerce and trade. Furthermore, Marine engagement contributes to reducing the sources of conflict and instability; and deters aggression. Simultaneously, our ability to *respond* effectively helps contain disruptions to global stability; overcomes physical challenges to access posed by distance, geography, and insufficient infrastructure; reinforces U.S. credibility, solidifying relationships with establish partners and

4. NSS, pg. 3

forging new ones; and counters extremist ideology. Both our engagement and response activities are enhanced by our close partnerships with Special Operation Forces (SOF) and other government agencies to achieve a more whole-of-government approach. In response to manifested threats, our ability to *project* power complements our naval and national strike power projection capabilities with a capability that can not only punish an adversary but can validly impose our will by seizing or denying something that they hold as critical. It allows us to successfully transition forces between maritime and land domains to support the rapid introduction of joint, other agency, multinational, or non-governmental resources; and enables the joint force to go anywhere to solve problems, protect U.S. citizens, defeat adversaries; contribute to deterrence; and creates access—to achieve the full range of our national strategic requirements.

Characteristics of the 21st Century Marine Corps

In order to execute the Marine Corps strategic security role, the institution embraces enduring characteristics—complemented by an ever evolving set of military capabilities that continue to make the Marine Corps especially relevant in the current and future security era. These are the Marine Corps' **naval character, our responsiveness to missions across the range of military missions, and our military professionalism**. The integrated and highly tailorable organizational capabilities inherent in our Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) structure enable our critical trans-domain role. Consisting of command, ground combat, aviation, and logistical elements organized as necessary for each particular situation, the MAGTF supports the adaptability necessary in light of the uncertainty of the operational environment and the full range of military operations we must expect.

Naval Character- Often mischaracterized as land forces, the Marine Corps is actually part of the Naval Service—*soldiers from the sea*. Fundamentally, this is recognition of the vital strategic role the Marine Corps provides in transitioning national combat power and influence across the critical maritime, land, and air domain interface. As such, Marine Corps forces are primarily designed to be employed, supported, and sustained at and from the sea. Mobility and maneuverability constitute the Naval Service's primary operational attributes, stemming

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directly from the ability of naval forces to move long distances quickly and efficiently, and to maneuver within the maritime environment to achieve advantage in relation to an adversary.

Responsiveness- Forward postured sea-based forces provide a flexible response to a range of crises and contingencies, ever-ready to accomplish emerging missions singly or to facilitate the introduction of additional naval, joint, interagency, multinational, or nongovernmental organizations (NGO) resources. In order to rapidly reinforce, Marine forces can be surged from home stations or other global locations, deployed via various combinations of naval maneuver, naval movement, and strategic airlift. Readiness to achieve necessary responsiveness is the product of a number of factors. This includes our ability to organize and equip for the specific mission; which as noted is achieved primarily through the inherent adaptability of our tailorable, scalable MAGTFs. The versatility of our equipment-sets is another factor that enhances readiness of our forces for emerging missions through their mobility, deployability and adaptability. Further, the brilliance of focusing our training on core-basics serves as the foundation for both operational and mental adaptability that enables our forces to respond to varying missions in a wide range and operational and cultural environments.

Military Professionalism- Our maneuver warfare philosophy, decentralized approach to leadership, and “every Marine a rifleman” ethos translate into a force prepared to rapidly go anywhere and perform “such duties as the President may direct.” As noted before this “Send in the Marines” expectation is a natural by-product of our adaptability to thrive in uncertain and ambiguous operating environments. This attribute, along with our demonstrated warfighting skill on the landward side of the littorals, has leveraged repeatedly for small wars and major combined arms campaigns in support of sustained operations ashore. A significant aspect of that expeditionary agility and operational adaptability is an institutional austerity—a willingness to not only make do with less but to excel under difficult circumstances. It is worth noting that for 6.5 percent of the baseline Defense budget the Marine Corps provides 17 percent of the Nation’s active ground combat maneuver units, 12 percent of the fixed wing tactical aircraft, and 19 percent of the attack helicopters.

Marine Corps Core Missions

Within the overarching capability for the Marine Corps to conduct missions across the range of military operations, the 21st century Corps provides the Nation with two fundamental core missions and associated capacities: **assuring littoral access** and conducting highly complex and difficult, multifaceted operations often described as **crisis response** operations. It is organized, trained, and equipped, and continuously adjusts, to ensure that Marine forces provide the joint commanders with the forces and capabilities to effectively carry out these missions.

The Navy-Marine Corps team provides joint force commanders the ability to bridge the seam between operations at sea and on land—a crucial aspect of the larger joint force effort to gain and maintain overseas access for operations in peace, crisis, or war. This mission is executed continuously through military engagement, crisis response, and power projection. Based on the nature of each individual mission, the Marine Corps can task-organize forces for training and advising, humanitarian assistance/ disaster relief (HA/DR), “small wars” activities, or sustained operations—utilizing up to a full MEF.

- **Military Engagement** involves the routine contact and interaction between individuals or elements of the Armed Forces of the United States and those of another nation's armed forces, or foreign and domestic civilian authorities or agencies to build trust and confidence, share information, coordinate mutual activities, and maintain influence.⁵ Our forward posture is critical to providing effective engagement, as well as ensuring responsiveness. In addition, this posture revitalizes and sustains our ability to be adaptable; assuring the many degrees of access required across the range of military operations.
- **Crisis Response** operations are conducted to alleviate or mitigate the impact of an incident or situation involving a threat to a nation, its territories, citizens, military forces, possessions, or vital interests that developed rapidly and created a condition

5. DOD definition of “military engagement”

of such diplomatic, economic, political, or military importance that commitment of military forces and resources is warranted to achieve national objectives.⁶ Marine Corps forces, leveraging their robust forward postured forces and rapid and flexible surge capabilities, can conduct immediate crisis response using a menu of standard force packages, with additional task-organized forces available on a follow-on basis.

- **Power Projection** comprises the ability of a nation to apply all or some of its elements of national power—political, economic, informational, or military—to rapidly and effectively deploy and sustain forces in and from multiple dispersed locations to respond to crises, to contribute to deterrence, and to enhance regional stability. Marine Corps forces conduct power projection to create access and enable joint combat power—the artful integration of fires and maneuver—at the most dangerous and critical point of power projection, the trans-domain environment at the sea-land-air interface. These operations are conducted to overcome environmental and military challenges, most often to enable more comprehensive and decisive operations. Conducting littoral maneuver, Marine Corps forces will be capable of employing decentralized operations to assure access through multiple entry points and will selectively mass or disperse forces and fires at desired times and places. The trans-domain capabilities of the Marine Corps place the enemy on the horns of a dilemma both operationally and strategically. Strategically, the ability of a joint force enabled by Marine access capabilities compels potential enemies to make investment choices among a broader array of technologies and anti-access defenses. Operationally, Marine capabilities compel the enemy to defend the length and breadth of his coastline, or to concentrate his force. In one case they disperse their forces and risk defeat in detail, in the other they allow access and risk Marine forces maneuvering on their territory and enabling follow on Joint capabilities. In both cases Marine maneuver capabilities

6. This description is adapted from the DOD definition of “crisis,” because “crisis response” is not formally defined.

compel enemy movement and cause them to self-optimize as a target set for our diverse range of reconnaissance, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and attack capabilities.

- “**Small Wars**” consist of operations undertaken under executive authority, wherein military force is applied—usually in combination with the other elements of power—in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such other interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation. The application of purely military measures may not, by itself, restore peace and orderly government because the fundamental causes of the condition of unrest may be economic, political, or social.⁷ Often these operations occur in response to crisis and are executed in austere conditions.

MOC Purpose

This third edition of the Marine Corps Operating Concepts (MOC) provides a conceptual guide for current and future force development and experimentation. The ideas put forth in this volume are meant to inspire discussion, debate, and innovation during the capability identification and solution development process. It is built around the premise that sea-based Marines must be organized, trained, and equipped to “**engage, respond, and project.**” In order to meet the Nation’s needs, the Marine Corps must enhance its ability to engage with a wider set of partners in order to build capability, forge solid relationships, and promote diplomatic access. At the same time, Marine Corps forces must remain ready to *respond* to crises—whether natural or man-made. They must also be able to *project* power—either “soft” or “hard” as the situation requires—from the sea. Collectively, these enhancements will expand the Marine Corps’ contribution to **preventing** conflict, **protecting** national interests, and **assuring** overseas access.

7. Derived from the USMC *Small Wars Manual*, 1940 Edition; use of the term “small wars” rather than COIN, IW, or some other term du jour is a reminder that we’ve excelled at these complex missions for a long time.

The Operating Concepts

Chapter 2, *Mission Command*, and Chapter 3, *Enhanced MAGTF Operations* describe how the Marine Corps will promote flexibility and effectiveness across the range of military operations. Chapter 4, *Engagement* addresses how the Marine Corps will increase its capacity and capability to engage forward, build partners' capabilities, develop relationships, and improve access. It suggests changes that will expand force options and capabilities the Marine Corps can provide to the geographic combatant commanders. Chapter 5, *Crisis Response* addresses how the Navy-Marine Corps team combines its capabilities with joint, international, interagency and non-governmental partners to overcome rapidly emerging contingencies. Chapter 6, *Power Projection*, addresses how the Navy and Marine Corps will overcome a variety of access challenges in permissive, uncertain, or hostile environments. Chapter 7, *Countering Irregular Threats*, provides a broad conceptual view of conflict in the 21st century as well as reinforces the understanding that much of the institutional knowledge gained in our "small wars" history will continue to shape our approach to current and future conflict. Additionally Annex A, the *Marine Corps Functional Concept for Strategic Communication* discusses a very complex aspect of all operations in the 21st century security environment; the reality that there must be a seamless alignment between actions taken, the message sent, and the message received in order to leverage the power of the non-kinetic to influence operations from the tactical to the strategic level—in planning, and through execution.





Chapter 2

Mission Command

Introduction

Among the many ‘enhancements’ included in Enhanced MAGTF Operations (EMO) are continuing improvements to our leader development process that incorporate emerging ideas to adapt to current or anticipated operational demands. MCDP-1 *Warfighting*, widely recognized as the foundation of the Marine Corps’ philosophy of maneuver warfare is steeped in the ethos of mission command and provides a solid doctrinal base for integrating this leadership methodology into all aspects of our training, garrison and combat activities.

Purpose

Mission Command builds on the foundational wisdom of MCDP-1 *Warfighting* and MCDP-6 *Command and Control* to provide insight and guidance to institutional and operational leaders on combat leadership development and application. While the Marine Corps can take justifiable pride in the application of mission orders and the decentralization of command in current operations, it is widely recognized that there remains significant room for improvement in the application of our command philosophy in both garrison and combat. Mission Command is designed to provide a more explicit narrative of the virtues and value of command by influence, with the expectation that it will inform Marines of the continuous duty to establish a leadership climate of trust, mutual understanding and professional respect that enhances combat effectiveness. Based on leader character, Mission Command offers no checklist for success, but instead challenges our Corps to cultivate a bias for action in subordinate leaders and accentuate the senior leadership virtues of trust, moral courage and restraint. A Marine Corps that boldly incorporates the tenets of Mission Command into our institutional ethos will be better able to adapt and achieve advantage in complex and uncertain operational environments.

Defining Mission Command

MCDP-1 *Warfighting* describes the Marine Corps philosophy of command. Key ideas include: decentralized decision making to accelerate tempo and gain initiative, mission tactics, a human approach centered on exploiting “human traits such as boldness, initiative, personality, strength of will and imagination,” implicit communications through mutual understanding, shared philosophy and experience, commanders forward—especially at the point of decision, shared danger and privation, professional trust, familiar relationships and the ability to thrive in an environment of chaos, uncertainty and friction. The term Mission Command is meant to encompass this broad description, but ultimately we will be pressed for a definition that succinctly captures the essential purpose of mission command, even if in being concise it omits a more holistic description.

Incorporating new ideas from the emerging field of operational design, the evolving Army definition of Mission Command reflects the emphasis the Army Capstone Concept places on decentralized operations and adaptability. “The art and science of integrating the warfighting functions and synchronizing forces to understand, visualize, design, describe, lead, assess, and adapt decentralized operations to accomplish the mission within the broad purpose of higher commanders’ intent. Mission Command includes empowering the lowest possible echelon with the combined arms capabilities, competency, and authority to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative.”

Attempting to more closely integrate Mission Command philosophy into service ethos, stress the predatory nature of entrepreneurship in combat and identify the importance of cohesion, the evolving Marine Corps definition of Mission Command is crafted in accord with maneuverist thought.

Mission Command is the leadership philosophy that complements and supports the maneuver warfare philosophy of the Marine Corps. Rooted in service culture and fundamental to our warrior spirit, Mission Command is a cultivated leadership ethos that empowers decentralized leaders with decision authority and guides the character development of Marines in garrison and combat. Mission Command promotes an entrepreneurial

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mindset and enables the strong relationships of trust and mutual understanding necessary for decentralized decision making and the tempo of operations required to seize the initiative, degrade enemy cohesion and strengthen our own cohesive relationships in the crucible of combat.

These definitions all illuminate the evolving idea of Mission Command and contribute to a growing joint understanding of how command philosophy influences decision makers to achieve advantage and accomplish mission objectives.

Describing Mission Command

Mission Command is a command and control philosophy based on the principle of “command by influence.” In *Command in War* Martin Van Creveld identifies three principle genres of command philosophies: Command by Direction, Command by Plan and Command by Influence. Of the three, Command by Influence is the most complex, but also the most counter-intuitive. Most military forces incorporate some elements of command by influence into their command and control philosophy, but to what degree does Mission Command influence the organizational ethos and resulting capability of the force.

The primary characteristic of command by influence is ***decentralization of command with empowered subordinates exercising initiative in accord with the superior commander’s intent.*** We will augment this core characteristic with other aspects of decentralized combat decision making. It is important to note that Mission Command evolved in tandem with maneuverist philosophy. Maneuver warfare seeks not only to capture militarily significant objectives and destroy the enemy force and material, but to simultaneously “*shatter the enemy’s cohesion through a variety of rapid, focused, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which the enemy cannot cope.*” The maneuverist strives to *take the initiative in both the physical and cognitive domains* and asserts the critical importance of tempo and surprise to gain the initiative and compromise enemy cohesion.

Leadership

The wisdom and ethos of Mission Command should define our leadership and inspire our Corps in all endeavors. As leaders, we must understand that the quality of our leadership is rooted in character not method. The moral qualities necessary for establishing the relationships that sustain a climate conducive to mission command place great demands on the courage and character of leaders. Personal fortitude is the foundation underpinning the relationships that promote unit cohesion and combat effectiveness. Mission Command is more than a leadership philosophy; it is about relationships founded in fortitude and nurtured in trust that enable Marines to thrive where others would flounder. Through mission command we can prevail over men bounded by lesser mutual expectation and weaker service ethos. Fundamentally, mission command is dependent upon leaders with the spirit to risk and the moral courage to trust. Mission Command thrives where mutual understanding and trust outweigh the sum of all fears.

Mission Command is founded on the human qualities of trust and mutual understanding that inspire individual and small unit initiative. Professional expectation and dutiful initiative energize subordinates and allow them to take action to accomplish assigned missions (tasks) in accord with commander's intent (purpose). As a method of operational level command and control, Mission Command is dependent on the individual character and reciprocal relationships developed between leaders. The salient features and benefits of the Mission Command philosophy are:

- Enhanced speed of decision or agility of action based on decentralized decision makers closer to the tactical edge where direct observation and cultivated situational awareness enhance military judgment.
- An entrepreneurial spirit focused on developing and exploiting tactical and operational opportunity.
- Greater opportunity to gain and maintain the initiative through greater speed and fidelity of action produced by more numerous decision makers generating and exploiting fleeting opportunity.

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- The opportunity to gain advantage by degrading enemy cohesion through numerous rapid and unexpected actions.
- Preserving the cohesion of friendly forces through relationships strengthened by trust, professional respect and mutual understanding.
- The enhanced situational awareness of empowered small unit decision makers enabling greater fidelity in planning and dexterity in execution.
- Decentralization that enables more numerous points of engagement over a wider battlespace to control terrain and to influence and protect populations.

Like any effective command and control philosophy, Mission Command must be in accord with the nature of war and human nature, reflect our warfighting philosophy, contribute to resolving current or future operational problems and leverage to advantage unique qualities of the people it serves.

Mission Command leverages the unique nature of the American people. Americans are entrepreneurs. Our culture values and rewards calculated risk takers who expend great initiative to develop and exploit opportunity. Could an emphasis on decentralization, empowerment of subordinates and exploitation of opportunity generate a disproportionate increase in combat power? Historic contrast between mission command guided forces and more centralized C2 structures indicates we have much untapped potential within our grasp.

Entrepreneurial spirit is supported by a Mission Command philosophy that is focused on developing and exploiting tactical and operational opportunity. The role of vision, personal will, dynamic creativity, initiative, intuition, risk acceptance and pragmatism as enabling leadership competencies are essential as we move forward.

Mission Command accounts for the nature of war by acknowledging uncertainty as a fundamental characteristic. To resolve this inherent

uncertainty we distribute empowered decision makers to the point of action in order to discern the situation, gain better awareness, and act. Decentralized organizations are inherently more resilient and capable of timely adaptation than those with more hierarchical and centralized decision processes. Decision makers close to the tactical edge will be able to more rapidly develop or exploit opportunity and if given appropriate authority, can take timely and effective action. Dexterity and fidelity of action are also enhanced by decentralization, so commanders are more likely to not only do the right thing, but to do things right. The unclear nature of the future operational environment disallows for any degree of certainty in preparing for future conflict—but investment in developing a culture and command climate of mission command will better enable appropriate adaptation to any operational challenge.

Mission Command accounts for human nature by acknowledging *human will as the deciding factor in battle* and identifying ‘cohesion’ as the critical vulnerability to our success. Human will and cohesion are common to all collective human endeavors conducted amid the risk, danger, violence and uncertainty of war. Our object is to “shatter enemy cohesion” through surprise, speed and violence, and strengthen and insulate our own cohesion from enemy action by emphasizing the trust and mutual understanding between commanders that doubly bond unity of command. Our understanding of C2 is fundamentally about intent and relationships, vice hierarchical control and technological means. Consequently, commanders who lose communications and are physically isolated are expected to continue to act with confidence in accordance with commander’s intent. For this reason we assert that *Mission Command is the sword and shield of cohesion*.

Institutionalizing Mission Command

Institutional changes that promote Mission Command include:

- Adopting and formalizing the traits of Trust, Moral Courage and Restraint that inspire, enable and reinforce a bias for action in subordinates.

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- Establishing a training environment that allows for ‘white space’ in the schedule for subordinates to develop unit cohesion and compels them to exercise judgment and creativity in training.
- Leadership development that challenges initiative to the point of failure as a way to evaluate character, fortitude and resiliency of personality in conditions of adversity.

Operationalizing Mission Command

Operational commanders can effectively integrate Mission Command into operational art, planning and execution by:

- Cultivating a leadership climate that empowers subordinate leaders and lowers the decision-authority threshold.
- Developing cohesive and reciprocal relationships of trust and mutual understanding among subordinates.
- Promoting a service culture that values calculated risk as the means to generate opportunity.
- Incorporating design methodology to promote understanding and visualization of the problem and purpose.
- Creating a command climate that values the shared assessment of subordinate, adjacent and senior commanders to enhance understanding and promote adaptation.
- Promulgating timely vision, intent and guidance.
- Enabling subordinate commanders exercise wide latitude in accomplishing mission objectives within senior commander’s purpose and intent.
- Integration of warfighting functions and synchronization (coordination) of forces to empower the lowest practical echelon

with combined arms capabilities.

- Encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset focused on gaining advantage and degrading enemy cohesion.

Achieving Operational Advantage

By decentralizing tactical decision authority the operational commander gains many advantages, among them are:

- ***Gaining the Initiative.*** Many decision makers making more timely and dexterous decisions closer to the point of action generates more opportunities for exploitation. The rapidity of decisions that Mission Command and decentralization enables can overwhelm a centralized adversary's ability to react. Not only does decentralization enable speed of decision, but it also enhances decision detail and enables greater agility in action. When speed is of lesser importance, as may be the case in counter-insurgency (COIN) operations, trading speed for enhanced precision can also produce advantage. Rarely can a superbly trained and more experience senior make more timely and apt decisions from remote locations than many adequate subordinates who have refined situational awareness at the point of action. The *primacy of proximity* guides mission command.
- ***Generating Feedback Loops.*** By decentralizing command decisions the operational commander unleashes tactical commanders to pressure the enemy or influence the situation at more points of tactical action in accord with his intent. The distributed units also serve as 'observers' who gain situational awareness and report on commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) and other actionable information. After the mission-directed action is taken by a subordinate, he reports back to the senior not only the action taken, but on any unforeseen, unintended or 'emergent' results. Attentive subordinates constantly providing detailed situational awareness (SA) across the operational area, provide the operational commander the opportunity to more quickly discern enemy patterns, better

understand the nature of the problem and provide more effective planning and operational guidance at each step of the design and planning process. This understanding of command relationships places great emphasis on the '*reciprocal relationship*' that bonds commanders rather than hierarchical chains that might shackle them. It recognizes the need for the senior to be attentive to the information, ideas and insights coming from the tactical edge.

- ***Decision Advantage.*** Mission Command is not predicated on more brilliant commanders or troops and does not presume an intellectual or innate cognitive superiority over adversaries. Superiority is *achieved* by exploiting subordinate initiative to control tempo, dictate terms of engagement and realize *incremental advantage* across a wide array of activities and functions that *cumulatively* lead to a deteriorating enemy situation and cause loss of coherence and cohesion that can lead to disproportionate result. The MAGTF commander and his staff establish the **context and command philosophy** that enables information flow, pattern recognition, speed of decision, and effectiveness of action in a decentralized environment. By their every action, question and requirement they convey the expectation and intent that encourages the creativeness required to exploit opportunity and thrive in complex operations. Decision advantage is achieved by establishing conditions that enable cohesive relationships that are resilient in conditions of adversity, austerity, danger and the inherent uncertainty and chaos of combat.

Characteristics of Mission Command

- ***War Compels Adaptive Learning.*** The inherent uncertainty of war, combined with our adversary's reaction to our initiative and simultaneous actions to disguise his capabilities and intentions, make war risky, unpredictable and highly susceptible to chance. While calculated risk can mitigate chance, even the most skilled decision maker operating under the time competitive pressures of combat will make mistakes. Therefore there is a need to develop and select leaders who know how to learn, are used to making mistakes and are capable of generating new opportunities amid

setbacks. (Grant at Shiloh vs. Hooker at Chancellorsville) Because mistakes are inevitable amid the high risk and uncertainty of combat, commanders must be capable of discerning the patterns that led to mistakes and avoid them in the future. To the degree practical, shared experience—especially lessons hard earned—should be promulgated laterally as quickly as possible so that the learning curve of the entire organization is elevated by the creativity or misfortune of individual units.

- ***Continuous Training.*** Operational commanders should expect that deployed units will be trained and ready. However, it is the commander's responsibility to generate the opportunities necessary for task organized units to become a cohesive expeditionary force. Training and discussions about tactics invite senior leaders to develop professional expectation and a sense of personal commitment by subordinates entrusted with exercising their operational vision. History buffs will identify Admiral Lord Nelson's dinners with his fleet captains aboard his flagship while at sea as important contributors to the "Nelson Touch." Different, but similar efforts to develop personal relationships of trust and professional respect are essential to success in combat operations. Professional development should educate leaders on the need for continuous professional engagement and shared educational experiences among commanders and subordinates at every level, even during the conduct of combat operations.

Senior Leadership Traits

Mission Command asserts new senior leadership traits of *TRUST*, *MORAL COURAGE* and *RESTRAINT* to complement the classic leadership traits and principles. These senior leadership traits are designed to promote those qualities of character in senior leaders that enable initiative, innovation and a bias for action to thrive among subordinates. The trust and mutual understanding developed in training allows dutiful subordinates to know what is expected of them and how their actions integrate into the wider purpose of the commander's vision. Once confident that subordinates know how to innovate an appropriate action based on commonly discussed principles, *commanders must display the moral courage and exercise the restraint that unleashes the*

innovative potential of subordinates conditioned by a creative spirit, to strive for advantage and wrest the initiative from a determined foe, or take effective action in chaotic and complex situations.

Moral courage conveys the moral strength, emotional resiliency and predatory calculation that steels resolve and tempers impatience. It is the ability to absorb great pressure and to master emotion with composed judgment. Moral courage is a quality of character that enables other leadership traits to thrive amid danger and violence under the weight of command. It steadies leader confidence and distinguishes those self-assured enough to invite criticism, listen to subordinates, learn from all, while avoiding arrogance.

Just as Mission Command must permeate our culture in both garrison and combat, so too the moral qualities of mission command must be exercised and exemplified in both peace and war. In garrison and training leader's moral courage combines with *restraint* to unleash subordinates to train to failure, make mistakes and develop their decision making skills. Moral courage embraces risk, vice merely tolerating it.

Risk as Military Virtue

Embracing risk is a military virtue. "He who dares not risk cannot win" and "victory belongs to the bold" capture the spirit of moral courage that must animate the character of joint leaders. Calculated risk is not reckless, it is the recognition that in war nothing is assured and that friction and chance can radically influence events; yet advantage can be gained through relentless efforts to generate, recognize and exploit opportunity in a timely manner. Risk calculation and acceptance is a complex problem that confronts commanders in both the intellectual and moral dimensions. Risk cannot be eliminated, nor in pursuit of the utopian battlespace should we seek to do so. Risk is a component of resolve, and inherent to the entrepreneurial spirit promoted by *Mission Command embraces calculated risk to generate opportunity*.

Conclusion

Mission Command is not a panacea. Nor is the formal adoption of a “policy” of Mission Command sufficient to make a quick difference in operational capability. The leadership habits of Mission Command can not be “trained” into a force, but must be more subtly “imbued” by the words and example of confident leaders—cultivated over time. The long history of human conflict is punctuated with exceptionally capable forces sustained beyond mortal limits by leaders and warriors welded in purpose by Mission Command. Anticipating the demand for future operational effectiveness compels resolute effort toward a deepened Corps ethos of Mission Command today.



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Chapter 3

Enhanced MAGTF Operations

Introduction

Evolving the MAGTF for the 21st Century provided a framework for refining our primary operational approach for conducting the range of military operations: the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF). Long and varied operational experience has proven that the MAGTF—designed to be deployed, employed, and sustained from the sea without reliance on host nation ports, airfields, or permissions—is a fundamentally sound construct. Combat operations over the past decade have underscored two significant points. First, our adversary will continue to adapt, and second, we must continually assess and adapt our warfighting capabilities in order to ensure mission success. *Enhanced MAGTF Operations* acknowledges this requirement to continue to adapt and looks into ways our MAGTF capabilities can be enhanced to best support the requirements of the future security environment.

Description of the Military Problem

The MAGTF remains a fundamentally sound construct for task-organizing and employing Marine Corps forces across the range of military operations. However, the historical insights, recent operational experience, and projections of future challenges the MAGTFs must possess sufficient ability to:

- Remain deployable and employable given today's lift challenges.
- Perform multiple, diverse, and often simultaneous (combat, engagement, security, relief & reconstruction) activities across the range of military operations.
- Provide the capabilities necessary to engage forward to build partners and relationships; respond to protect National interests

and assure allies; project power to overcome access challenges, and counter irregular threats enabling wide area security.

Central Idea

Mission command provides the basis for enhancing the capabilities of the MAGTF. As described in the previous chapter, the purpose of mission command is to empower decision-making to the tactical edge, and is based on the mutual trust between senior and subordinate commanders. It calls for increased trust and fosters increased competence across the force.

Mission command is the foundation for developing *Enhanced MAGTF Operations* (EMO). The purpose of this initiative is to advance the ability to:

- Operate in a distributed environment where information and communications may be limited or non-existent and thus require informed decision-makers at the lowest echelons of command.
- Perform multiple, diverse, and often simultaneous tasks across the range of military operations.
- Employ, support, and sustain subordinate maneuver units at extended distances, or in compartmentalized terrain which creates physical separation from higher and adjacent units.
- Interact effectively with local populations to understand a given situation and ensure tactical actions support strategic goals.
- Conduct operations at sea, from the sea, and ashore.
- Overcome challenges to access and mobility, and when necessary employ decentralized operations to assure access through multiple entry points.
- Selectively mass or disperse forces and fires at desired times and places, as the situation requires.

What are Enhanced MAGTF Operations?

EMO does not offer any revolutionary ideas in thought; it is evolutionary in design. It seeks to develop the human dimension, improve upon the intricacies of command, and the integration of technology. The concept pushes all elements of the MAGTF to become lighter, more adaptable, more resourceful and faster in relation to the enemy. It embraces maneuver warfare doctrine and extends our capabilities and capacities. In particular EMO recognizes the need for decentralized action to solve complex problems, and adapt to ambiguous situations—at a tempo that outpaces that of our adversaries. Through EMO we have the ability to extend the battlespace and likewise to improve our capability to concentrate when required generating increased levels of responsiveness, precision and versatility.

Enhanced MAGTF Operations provides a means to improve capabilities in leadership, training, leader development, doctrine and technology across the MAGTF to prepare the Corps to adapt **ahead of any enemy**—anywhere in the world—under any conditions. It is a base-line concept to drive advancements that leverage technology to empower the ingenuity of our small-unit leaders; advancements that take advantage of mission tactics between well-developed leaders. This emphasizes decentralized command and control and takes advantage of well cultivated command climates while consciously avoiding overdependence on technological solutions to complex problems. As such, it is our belief that the tenants of MCDP-1 continue to be the most valuable resource in understanding our nature and view of warfare.

The conceptual ideas driving EMO should be viewed as a long term goals, with an acknowledgement that recent operations have marked a change in the nature of war from technology-centric to human-centric. The enemy has positioned himself to avoid our technological overmatch and reinforce his ability to wage war in the human dimension. The MAGTF must evolve to address and take advantage of this reality. We must revisit and then expand upon the lessons learned throughout the history of the small wars. The leadership, aggressiveness and

adaptability that that have served our Corps throughout history must expand and evolve to prevail in this current and future environment.

This concept is intended to provide fundamentals and direction to guide enhancements. We will continue to discover the specific improvements through experiments and feed back from the MAGTF and vet those concepts throughout the force. Then we will test the training, organization and equipment in the most demanding missions across the range of military operations.

Fundamentals of EMO

- ***Learning Organization-*** Learning Organization defined: an organization that acquires knowledge and innovates fast enough to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing environment. Learning organizations (1) create a culture that encourages and supports continuous learning, critical thinking, and risk taking with new ideas, (2) allow mistakes, and value employee contributions, (3) learn from experience and experiment, and (4) disseminate new knowledge throughout the organization for incorporation into day-to-day activities.
- ***Risk Acceptance-*** Embracing a prudent amount of risk allows a commander to take advantage of enemy gaps, to place his unit in an advantageous position on both human and physical terrain. Taking a risk offers the possibilities of both great victory and great defeat; it does not require the abandonment of all security – it is simply calculating an action or series of actions against the possibility for tactical, operational or strategic outcomes and embracing the chance of loss and failure, in an effort to achieve advantage over the enemy.
- ***Context-*** The understanding of the Information Operations (IO) plan, intelligence collection and dissemination, the human terrain, the strategic and operational goals, and the constraints and restraints placed upon the force flows up and down the chain of command. Throughout a campaign the MAGTF must understand the environment they work in; one which may evolve

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over time. The enhanced MAGTF must have the tools and training that allow them to rapidly share necessary information throughout operations.

- **Tempo-** The MAGTF must control the tempo of operations understanding the need for tactical patience and when to increase the rate of decision and action to force the enemy to react to us – out maneuvering him across physical, human and cyber terrain. The empowerment of junior leaders inherently enables and reinforces rapid decision making—collectively due to the multitudes of individual decisions being made concurrently at the tactical level at any given time; and individually due to the willingness of junior leaders to make a decision they know is theirs to make. This idea, reinforced through application creates an operational tempo most adversaries will be unable to match.
- **Elasticity-** The MAGTF requires a capability to change its size, shape, or distribution distribute as far as required by METT-T and aggregate to take advantage of mass when the opportunity or necessity arises—expanding the range of tactical options. We must be able to operate from dispersed to concentrated throughout the battlefield regardless of terrain, distance and complexity, in operations that span the ROMO. This demands an increased ability to work in some of the most austere and complex of environments; this requires increased capability for mobility, communication and sustainment. This also places new demands and increased responsibility on small unit leaders. Elasticity requires empowerment at the lowest level—empowerment earned by trust and demonstrated self-sufficiency.

MAGTF Refinements

Lighten the MAGTF

First, we need to significantly lighten the MAGTF, which will require a considerable paradigm shift across the Marine Corps and will have a significant impact on research and development, programmatic budgeting, acquisitions, doctrine development, and employment of future

systems. This action comes at an important time as the United States emerges from a significant period of land-centric operations and faces an era of strategic uncertainty, increased challenges to access, and increasingly limited amphibious assets. Concurrently, geographic combatant commanders have increased the demand for forward-postured amphibious forces capable of conducting security cooperation, regional deterrence, and crisis response.

The current challenge is to determine how to balance finite logistical capacity against wide-ranging operational imperatives. This is not a new phenomenon. The basic building block of our MAGTF, the Marine expeditionary unit (MEU), has rarely, if ever, deployed all desired assets within the space constraints of amphibious shipping. Commanders are challenged with configuring the force with a greater emphasis on space constraints as opposed to strictly on mission analysis. Thus, there is a requirement to tailor MAGTFs for the most likely missions while accepting risk against the least probable. Incremental improvements and “business as usual” will not satisfy this objective.

The process of leveraging emerging technologies should begin with a bottom-up reevaluation of all systems from individual equipment through large principal end-items with a specific focus on making each system smaller, lighter, and more efficient whenever possible. The accumulation of small savings at each level will achieve our ultimate goal: a lighter and more agile MAGTF that is able to conduct sustained operations from the sea. Toward that end, the Marine Corps will pursue the following objectives:

- Reduce the size and/or weight of individual items in the MAGTF in order to accomplish deployment aboard amphibious shipping. With the exception of the KC-130 aircraft, every end-item employed by Marine Corps operating forces must be able to be embarked aboard an amphibious ship. The force must be able to employ the equipment from the ship to shore without pier-side operations. The Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) Assault Echelon must be able to fit onto amphibious shipping, with no greater than 446,000 square feet within projected height and weight restrictions. The MEU must be able to fit onto amphibious shipping, with no greater than 85,000 square feet

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within projected height and weight restrictions. Consideration should be given to requiring all ground combat vehicles have the capability to have scalable armor protection appropriate to the threat and capable of being embarked separately from the vehicle. To maximize available cube, a concentrated effort will be made to remove QUADCONS from unit allowances (T/Es) and replace them with Joint Modular Intermodal Containers (TAMCN C0077).

- Optimize the MAGTF for sustained operations from the sea in order to project national power across the range of military operations. Self-sufficiency remains a hallmark of an expeditionary force. To that end, the accompanying supplies required by a MEB continues to be up to 30 Days of Supplies/Days of Ammunition (DOS/DOA) while for a MEU it is up to 15 DOS/DOA. This will be balanced by mission requirements, stowage, and use of the naval distribution chain.
- Increase operational reach while reducing the logistical footprint by: strategically positioning supplies and equipment; forward posturing maintenance capabilities; and establishing theater-deployable sustainment and maintenance capabilities. With the exception of self-deploying assets, every item in an infantry battalion T/E must be able to be transported using organic MAGTF assets. No equipment can exceed 25,000 lbs in weight, combat loaded. To meet these standards, items of equipment may require some level of disassembly. Infantry companies must be able to independently operate for prolonged periods without combat vehicle support. The unit must be self-sustainable in an uncertain environment for at least 72 hours. This should directly drive procedures and training and indirectly drive the weight of the force and other avenues for sustainment. The equipping goal would be to significantly reduce the weight of individual items while maintaining the ability of the force to execute Enhanced MAGTF Operations. The individual assault load should not exceed 75 lbs, while the individual existence load should not exceed 150 lbs.

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- Further reduce vehicle dependency. Integrate emerging unmanned systems such as the cargo unmanned aerial system (UAS); increase resource efficiency and MAGTF self-sufficiency; reduce equipment density, energy demands and consumption rates. Increase usage of renewable and alternative supplies; reduce our dependence on battlefield contract support; leverage emerging technologies for equipment; and develop the inherent security capabilities provided by support units in order to minimize any draw off combat power for force protection requirements.
- Reexamine/reevaluate the MEU baseline T/E to determine whether current baseline T/E reflects reality in terms of: regionally focused missions; risks associated with most likely missions vice most dangerous; and the combatant commanders' requirements. Continue development and deployment of MEU enhancement capability: a subset of MEU Equipment Set (MEU Slice), i.e., that equipment normally left behind by MEUs, as forward deployed, flexible source of additional gear that may be required due to operational requirements.

Efforts taken to optimize equipment size, weight, force protection, and operational range, augment and streamline the MAGTF commander's ability to embark, deploy, and sustain the forces needed to prevail in future, austere, and uncertain operating environments.

Command Element (CE) Enhancements

As the central element of the MAGTF the Command Element, in particular command and control, must adapt as the subordinate elements (SE) and other functions are enhanced. Command will continue to decentralize—and the MAGTF Commander and his staff need to be networked into the major subordinate elements (MSE) to command and facilitate coordination and information flow. Improved communications, over-the-horizon, on-the-move, will aid in facilitating information flow. The system must be resilient—when all communications fail the ability for a small unit leader to complete his mission based on intent, trust and ingenuity remains the unbreakable stopgap for all MAGTF operations.

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To enhance situational awareness, improved surveillance and reconnaissance is a requirement. This includes technical and human development alike. Increased abilities in human intelligence (HUMINT) collectors, reconnaissance personnel and snipers, supported by increased fidelity from UAS and sensors will tie in with reports from Company Level Intel Cells (CLIC) to create a more descriptive picture of the battlefield. Once the information is gathered and the intelligence is developed, enhanced means of sharing information throughout the MAGTF allows commanders at all levels to better predict and understand enemy actions and maneuver their forces ahead of those of the enemy. With shared information on the battlefield the CE can determine the context of the fight and design the battle plan.

To affect these enhancements, it rests on the MAGTF commander to ensure training space. MSEs require “white space,” realistic training areas and scenarios as well as the ability to train with the tools they are expected to be fighting with. Marines require time to experiment with new technologies and tactics. More importantly, time to train with technology should not impede on the time required by the junior leader to build Marines’ basic skills—nor should it attempt to substitute the development of leadership and trust within a unit—they take time.

As requirements to fight in more austere conditions and in a dispersed manner become more frequent, a central enhancement required across all elements is reducing energy consumption. Less dependency on energy allows the MAGTF to travel lighter—with less fuel and batteries. It allows us to move faster, through the reduction in bulk supplies and the reduction in size and amount of equipment. New technologies and techniques that reduce our cube and weight as well as our dependency on energy allow the MAGTF the ability to conduct operations in the most austere of environments—where excess and luxury is not practical.

Ground Combat Element (GCE) Enhancements

The requirement to disperse and decentralize creates increased requirements in mobility, fires, training, sustainment and leader development. The ability to move throughout the battlespace allows the commander to disperse forces and yet retain the ability to concentrate them when the situation dictates.

Mobility advancements are a multi-dimensional issue; first is the ability to move within the environment utilizing organic advancements; second is the ability to find advantage over the enemy through speed. The organic advancements start with the Marine—trained to operate in their environment; physically and mentally fit. A Marine unit must be able to efficiently navigate human and physical terrain. Combat Hunter and other such programs that increase the general ability and field skills of the Marine become vital as the situations they face become more and more unpredictable. The nature of war requires that Marines operate equally well in crowded cities, vast deserts, frigid mountains, blue and green water ways and thick jungles. This concept is a call back to our “Small Wars” ruggedness—requiring competent Marines that can operate and adapt to any condition.

Next we must take advantage of speed relative to our enemy—to mass and disperse as the opportunity arises. New vehicles that provide maneuverability, speed and protection require the ability to traverse over harsh terrain and water, to allow maneuver from the sea. Fuel-efficiency makes it possible to extend distance and increase the rate of action. Vehicles should provide rapid surface options, run faster on less fuel and remain light and deployable aboard ship. The use of alternative delivery means (ex: small boats) can provide clandestine options that offer both speed and surprise; as well as a more practical option for everyday movement in many underdeveloped parts of the world.

As the infantry maneuvers quicker, largely dispersed and with less firepower, fire support faces the unique challenge of disseminated coordination, rapid reallocation of assets and force protection. Current systems, on a distributed battlefield must be placed at a central locale to support as many units as possible or divide their assets and lose the ability to mass fires. New systems combined with training of smaller, mobile detachments with the right weapons-mix to perform direct support (DS) missions and coordination cells pushed to the lowest level possible may be a solution. Increasing combined-arms training and time for experimentation would help Marines to understand fires capabilities and limitations; as well as drive requirements.

Lightening the GCE requirements for energy and supplies provides a faster more sustainable force. Providing food, water, ammunition, casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) and fuel present some of the most difficult challenges on the battlefield. The less a unit requires to operate, the less dependant it is on a supply chain. Food can be foraged or bought locally, and in some cases provides an invaluable connection with the local populous. Water can be acquired and purified locally as well. Better trained and equipped Corpsmen and Marines can provide longer-term care to the wounded and ill.

Aviation Combat Element (ACE) Enhancements

The enhancement of the ACE in EMO centers on the MAGTF's requirement to disperse and decentralize. This will subsequently create new or expanded requirements for mobility, fires, training, sustainment and leader development within the ACE. The ability for the GCE Commander to disperse his units throughout the battlespace and yet retain the ability to rapidly concentrate without straining his lines of supply will fall largely on the ACE. Maneuver and fires will remain the key capabilities the ACE provides to the GCE but those aviation units must be able to do more with less. The enhancement of the ACE, simply put is to increase flexibility.

The ACE can improve its flexibility and capabilities in the expeditionary environment in three areas—by becoming lighter, better networked and developing Marines with diverse MAGTF backgrounds. These improvements in turn will positively affect all the ways the ACE supports the CE, GCE and LCE.

First the ACE must become lighter, not in the size and weight of the aircraft necessarily, but in the size of the footprint required to operate them. This can be done by constantly improving our existing aircraft as well as those entering service in the future with the primary end-state desired being a group of platforms that require significantly less maintenance and are serviced by a much more versatile group of ground support equipment (GSE). Future GSE must have the ability to perform multiple functions and to be able to service a variety of platforms—all the while taking advantage of technological advances in miniaturization and weight-saving composite construction to lower its overall logistical

footprint. Lightening the ACE also must look at reducing the amount of petroleum, oil and liquids (POLs) that fuel our fleet of aircraft—manned and unmanned. Collectively these aircraft must be able to be more fuel-efficient as well as have the ability to operate using a variety of fuels—from JP8 to biofuel. Expanding on this theme, there may be a requirement for a light-attack platform to add to the ACE inventory; one which can perform multiple missions; filling in the mission seams between our Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), MV-22 and rotary aircraft—including escort of assault aircraft, point resupply and medical evacuation.

Next the ACE must become better networked both within the aviation component and within each component of the MAGTF writ-large. The JSF will present the ACE with a great opportunity, as the first step toward true network integration. The JSF has the capability and capacity to collect, process and distribute vast amounts of information and must be fully integrated throughout the MAGTF to the lowest tactical level. The networking capability and sensors developed for the JSF need to be migrated to the other platforms in Marine aviation and integrated into Marine Aviation Command and Control to enable the expected information-sharing required between dispersed elements of the MAGTF. Furthermore, the MAGTF must fully leverage the information collected and processed by the JSF.

The ACE should be able to provide the MAGTF with a common, secure data link capability and improved long-range communications suite to counter line-of-sight complications resulting from operations in extreme geography or at extended distance. The result of these communications enhancements will increase the ACE's ability to support the MAGTF with Fires, Logistics, Mobility and C2.

Finally, the aviation community must continue to expand non-flying (b-billet) opportunities for aviators and aviation Marines. Education opportunities and billets (Joint and service) outside the cockpit or squadron should be embraced for their overarching contributions to the ACE in the development of well-rounded and experienced MAGTF officers. The specialization required within Marine aviation is such that many Marines are not encouraged to expand their knowledge and experience in other MAGTF billets without negatively affecting their

proficiency in the air as well as the negative impacts of being away from their respective tactical community.

The MAGTF of the future will need more Joint Terminal Air Controllers (JTACs), employed at the lowest echelon possible. The natural propensity aviators have to perform the terminal controller mission as an operator or instructor cannot be overlooked. Aviators should be encouraged to do shorter recurring tours as controllers throughout their career; first as operators then as instructors. Additionally, command and staff billet opportunities earlier in an ACE officer's career, such as planning staff, training command, and headquarters have numerous benefits across the MAGTF. We must endeavor to create these opportunities to expand our officer and non-commissioned officer corps' expertise outside of the ACE. With the experience gained as operational and tactical planners and commanders, ACE officers will enhance their ability to understand how the ACE can better contribute to MAGTF success—from an air or ground perspective.

The resulting benefit of the aforementioned enhancements to the ACE will be a more responsive, networked, flexible MAGTF regardless of the geography or situation presented by future operations.

Logistics Combat Element (LCE) Enhancements

The elasticity of the enhanced MAGTF provides some of the greatest challenges in the area of logistics and the combat support provided by the LCE. Creative solutions to medical care—such as smaller surgical teams and live tissue training for Marines and Corpsmen can aid in more efficiently treating some emergency needs. Engineer elements will have to distribute as well and be prepared to detach smaller teams to smaller units—disseminating expertise rather than labor. Purchasing officers may need to disseminate their capabilities to provide food and water from local sources to elements as small as companies and platoons. Mechanics and technicians can create contact teams to service separate units, or train operators in higher levels of maintenance at the local level—rather than attempting to return broken material to a central source.

The LCE must lead the way in creating lighter and more efficient means of supply, maintenance, engineering and emergency care. As the GCE becomes more fluid and flexible the LCE must adapt with it—and keep step with changing pace of the GCE. It must predict the needs of the MAGTF and prepare to support any unit—regardless of mission.

Like all parts of the MAGTF this begins with training and education. Non-traditional career paths create a wealth of creative ideas that will feed the force and prepare it for a changing world. Increased business, joint and international exchange programs will provide a wealth of experience; facilitating unique solution sets, creativity and enabling comprehensive military and industry collaboration. In addition, the LCE must increase its ability to organically defend supply lines and forward arming and refueling points (FARPs) as well as conducting operations in support of their defense. As the remainder of the MAGTF increases flexibility, the LCE must increase its creativity and be prepared to support increasingly fluid and dynamic situations.

Warfighting Functions

- ***Command and control*** coordinates all other functions and therefore must evolve as the other functions advance. The critical element is design and the understanding of design—this shapes a commander’s total understanding of the context of the battlefield and how he will conduct his campaign. To do so the commander requires feedback from his MSEs as well as an understanding of the enemy, the culture and the political context in his area of operations. Enhancements in the tools that aid in the flow of information, expertise on the staff that aids the commander in his understanding of the information, and the training and tools that aid in the control and movement of units, better prepare the force to conduct operations in a complex and distributed environment.
- ***Maneuver and mobility*** face some of the largest challenges as operations become more decentralized. The need to maneuver across multiple types of terrain at a pace faster than the enemy; and maintain the ability to concentrate forces to mass when the opportunity presents itself is vital and should drive any

enhancements. A mix of developments are required to improve upon maneuver and mobility—increased individual physical and mental fitness levels, improved land navigation skills, improved marksmanship training, terrain specific training and leadership development are areas to investigate on the human side. Material solutions should investigate more fuel efficient vehicles, multi-terrain vehicles and the reintroduction of small boats. Any material solution must keep in mind our naval and expeditionary nature and account for the deployment of vehicles aboard amphibious shipping.

- **Intelligence** collection and dissemination enhancements provide the maneuver forces and the MAGTF commander greater insight into the enemy and the context of the battlespace. The introduction of Human Terrain Teams (HTT) increased human intelligence (HUMINT) and increased surveillance and reconnaissance by ground forces as well as aviation platforms such as a networked Joint Strike Fighter and Raven UAS is tempered by a logical dissemination program. Intelligence and information needs to flow throughout the force in a rapid, palatable manner.
- **Fires** support improvements come in the form of fire support coordination and responsiveness. JSF provides a great deal of awareness as an extension of the fire support coordination center as well as responsive, scalable fire power. Combined with rotary wing close air support (CAS) assets and JTACs, the cumulative overwhelming capability for precise, lethal fires, provide a great deal of depth in fire support. Airborne assets alone are not the fires solution. Artillery and naval gunfire enhancements that provide responsive, all-weather options to a decentralized force are vital to increase the lethality of the distributed force. These capabilities must also be scalable in range, portable and lethal, with the ability to incorporate network operations such as Information Operations (IO) messaging as well.
- **Sustainment** must adapt to overcome the distance between and the differing needs of dispersed forces. In addition to prohibiting an increase in the variety of supplies there is a requirement to

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protect longer lines of communication (LOC). In addition to seeking material solutions such as unmanned air delivery vehicles, enhancements to the means of supply can provide the maneuver force a greater ability to sustain itself. In prolonged operations maneuver forces can forage and purchase some classes of supplies with proper training and funding. In addition other material solutions such as fuel efficient vehicles and less battery dependant electronics, as well a general lightening of the force, lessen the need for supplies. Simply put, a general reduction of unnecessary supplies and equipment will reduce sustainment needs.

- ***Force Protection*** needs increase as the force distributes. Longer LOCs require a robust and detailed force protection (FP) plan. Units, that normally rely on adjacent and supported forces to provide FP as well as small elements that normally benefit from mutual support must now provide their own FP, potentially causing a loss in manpower to accomplish the mission. Material and training advancements should seek to decrease this draw on manpower and aid the unit in mission accomplishment via technological and doctrinal advancements.
- ***Information*** is suggested to be added as the seventh warfighting function. Information, disinformation, psychological operations, cyber attacks and defense are persistent elements on the modern battlefield. Combining the efforts of Strategic Communications, Information Operations and Public Relations takes into account that the story told about a bomb that is dropped is more powerful than the bomb itself. Understanding information and how it affects the battle is vital on the modern battlefield and will be even more so in the future.

Below is a proposed EMO Capabilities Matrix created to assist with adding specific detail to the requirements for the development of EMO in an effort to continue to promote the evolution of the MAGTF to counter the anticipated threats the Marine Corps will likely face in the uncertain operations of future campaigns.

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Function	Essence	Crux	Enhancements
C2	Decentralized execution synergized by commander's intent	Shared situational awareness (up) and dissemination of commander's intent (down) across domains in remote and complex environments.	Proliferate agile decision-makers, promote an environment of trust and initiative, develop decision tools that enable sharing SA and intent
Log	Transportability & Mobility	As units operate in more dispersed, less linear formations, the physical limitations of logistics remain constant.	More self-supportive units; lighter more efficient, leveraging technology alternate fuel sources, water purification and unmanned systems
Fires	Integrated & responsive	Maintain all-weather combined arms synergy and Force Protection while both fire and maneuver forces are dispersed.	Non-traditional relationships, automated observer to FSCC/ FDC tools, lighter more deployable fire systems, JSF
Maneuver	Gain/Maintain relative advantage to concentrate and disperse	Mobility over varied terrain and domains	Mission vehicle mobility sets to optimize for terrain
Intel	Ability to process information into knowledge at the point of action	Real time collection, fusion & dissemination of intell elements and intuitive products	Intel cells at lower level/ improve intel networks Tailored, automated and balanced Information pull (passive) and selective push.
Force Protection	Protection over all domains, inclusive and proactive.	Absence of mutual support	Enhanced networks, comms, fires, mobility
Information	Induce self-disadvantageous action by the enemy	Timely pattern recognition	Information planning and execution throughout all levels of command.

Figure 1

EMO Capabilities

In order to meet these challenges the following questions and capability metrics are offered for refinement and future development.

What capabilities are needed to conduct Operations?

Maneuver Unit Organic Capabilities

- Battalion (BN)
 - C2 - voice to team level, data to platoon level

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- Fires – kinetic, non-kinetic, IO, Public Affairs (PA), translators
 - Maneuver – med/ heavy airlift, LCAC (H2O maneuver)
 - Intel – human terrain/ environmental, target population
 - Force Protection – nonlethal options
 - Logistics – water purification, ground transportation, contract-generation (engineering, transport), medical 1 FRSS – 1STP attached to distributed BNs (72 hrs of trauma medicine), dental, area/environmental assessment capability, air-drop support, robotics
 - IO – dedicated IO cell capable of integrating Psychological Operations (PsyOps), military deception, EW, Operational Security (OpSec) – and planning BN operations that integrate company level realities with strategic goals. The cell must also be able to coordinate Joint, Interagency and coalition assets.
 - Civil-Military Operations (CMO) – CA team capable of coordinating civilian/police engagements providing personnel support to the company level and acting as special staff to the BN commander to coordinate tactical-level projects with operations and strategic goals, and coordinating Joint, interagency and coalition efforts and resources into the BN plan.
- Company (CO)
 - C2 – voice to team level, data to platoon level
 - Fires – experienced FiST leadership, FDC, ability to utilize non-standard relationships, advanced PLI capability; dispersed fires
 - Maneuver – transportable within surface and vertical limits
 - Intel – HUMINT, MASINT cell, Tier 4/5 UAS access (fed from MAGTF), connection between CLIC and MAGTF S/G-2
 - FP – lethal, non-lethal, robotics
 - Logistics – supply clerk, 1 IDC per CO, 1 OEMS Corpsman per squad + 1 DMOC trained Marine per team, man portable H2O purification
 - IO – 2 man IO cell to CO level provided from BN IO cell
 - CMO – squad CA attached, enabler from MAGTF

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- Platoon (PLT)
 - C2 - voice to individual
 - Fires – support for CO, type II CAS capable
 - Maneuver - foot mobile
 - Logistics – 1 OEMS Corpsman per PLP, 1 OEMS Corpsman per squad, 1 DMOC trained Marine per team
 - Intel – data feed from CLIC
 - FP – training

Parent MAGTF Enabling Capabilities

- MEB
 - C2 – command element capability to connect the BN with all elements and assets
 - Fires – kinetic, nonkinetic
 - Maneuver – med/ hvy airlift, LCAC
 - Intel – human terrain, environment, target population
 - FP – nonlethal
 - Logistics – scalable, modular, adaptable
 - IO – dedicated IO cell, capable of integrating PsyOps, military deception, EW, OpSec & cyber security – and planning MAGTF operations to integrate Joint interagency and coalition assets
 - CMO – CMO staff function at the MAGTF level to integrate, coordinate and design tactical level CA and Poli-Mil plans and operations within the construct of operational and strategic goals. The staff integrates Marine, Joint, interagency and coalition efforts and resources.

- MEU
 - C2 – command element capability to connect the BN with all the elements and assets
 - Fires – kinetic and nonkinetic
 - Maneuver – med/hvy airlift, LCAC
 - Intel – human terrain/ environmental, target populations
 - FP – nonlethal
 - Logistics - modular

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- IO – dedicated IO cell, capable of integrating PsyOps, military deception, EW, OpSec and cyber security – and planning MAGTF operations to integrate with strategic goals. The cell must also be able to integrate Joint, interagency and coalition assets
- CMO – CMO staff functions at the MAGTF level to integrate coordinate and design tactical level CA and Poli-Mil plans and operations within the construct of operational and strategic goals. The staff integrates Marine, Joint interagency and coalition efforts and resources.

What Capabilities are within a given echelon's ability to command and control?

Maneuver Unit Organic Capabilities

- Battalion – Command of Joint, Coalition, maneuver, fires & reconnaissance, terminal control of aviation and operational fires (including AC130 – 2025)
- Company – Command of Joint, Coalition, maneuver, fires & reconnaissance, terminal control of aviation and operational fires (including AC130 – 2025)
- Platoon – Joint, Coalition direct support – and terminal control of fires to include aviation fires

Parent MAGTF Enabling Capabilities

- MEB – Joint Coalition, Interagency – maneuver, fires, intelligence, IO, special operations
- MEU – Joint, Coalition, maneuver, fires, intelligence, IO, special operations.

How big should the operating radii of the maneuver units be once ashore?

Maneuver Unit Organic Capabilities

- Battalion – 165 NM
- Company – 15 NM
- Platoon – 5 NM

Parent MAGTF Enabling Capabilities

- MEB – 365 NM
- MEU – 165 NM
- SPMAGTF – mission dependant

How long will they operate before needing reinforcement or withdrawal if under attack?

Maneuver Unit Organic Capabilities

- Battalion – 16 hours
- Company – 8 hours
- Platoon – 4 hours

How quickly will units need to aggregate for emerging missions that require massed forces?

Maneuver Unit Organic Capabilities

- Battalion – 10 hours
- Company – 5 hours
- Platoon – 1 hour

Parent MAGTF Enabling Capabilities

- MEB – 10 hours
- MEU – 5 hours
- SPMAGTF – 1 hour

What reaction force capability and response time must the MAGTF be able to provide?

Maneuver Unit Organic Capabilities

- MEB – up to a BN Task Force in < 16 hours
- MEU – up to a Co Task Force in < 8 hours
- SPMAGTF – up to a PLT in < 4 hours

What geographic environments-urban, desert, mountain or jungle-should units be organically optimized for?

Maneuver Unit Organic Capabilities

- Primary – urban
- Secondary – mountain





Chapter 4

Engagement: Forward Presence and Engagement to Prevent Crisis, Build Partnerships & Relationships and Assure Access

Introduction

The forward presence of naval forces serves to contain and deter regional adversaries while increasing the engagement opportunities with allies and partners. Engagement forward prevents crisis, builds partners & relationships and assure access. The importance of seamless interoperability with allies and effective coordination with partners cannot be overstated. The imperative to build and sustain partnerships that measurably contribute to security, deterrence and combat effectiveness comes at a time when sensitivity to U.S. bases overseas is rising and the overall number of U.S. forces stationed on foreign soil is much lower than during the Cold War. In this context, sea-based forward presence provides the opportunity to conduct cooperative activities with allies and an expanding set of international partners, while minimizing the political, economic, cultural, and social impacts sometimes associated with forward stationed U.S. forces.

Engagement in conjunction with that forward presence has usually consisted of short duration bilateral training exercises afloat and ashore. Marines and Sailors may have perceived these events simply in terms of training exercises; they were actually supporting the higher purpose of security cooperation and relationship building. In reality, security cooperation activities are mainstream Marine Corps operations, rather than activities conducted only when forces are not occupied with other missions. They are planned, sourced, and executed through existing joint and Service processes, receiving the same level of senior leader attention as other operations. Informed by an understanding of the national strategy, such exercises take on significance well beyond their training value.

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The combination of forward stationed and rotationally deployed forces is a uniquely adaptable means to maintain global military presence while respecting the sovereignty of other nations. The presence of forward naval forces provides American policymakers with an expansive range of options to influence events and project power in peacetime, crisis, and war. These options are largely the result of interoperability with ally and partner maritime forces, achieved through effective, steady-state engagement activities; and the flexible employment of naval force packages that are tailored to specific capacity building, security cooperation or crisis response requirements.

- Building partner capacity is the most often cited purpose—enabling partners to ensure their own security will reduce the need for our forces to deploy and operate at the low end of conflict.
- Secondly, our presence should increase the understanding between diverse cultures. Americans have many misperceptions about foreign cultures and unfortunately our future partners have many perceptions about Americans that are true. Increasing the instances of working together will help reinforce the correct perceptions and perhaps mend the misperceptions.
- Conducting forward presence develops our expeditionary capabilities in a cooperative environment providing the training necessary to operate in austere uncertain or hostile environments.

The Marine Corps conducts planned activities focused on enhancing regional ties and relationships, such as security cooperation and security force assistance; maritime security operations; major training and readiness exercises; humanitarian and civic assistance. These activities build the foundation to address regional challenges with multinational partners. The combatant commanders' demand for forward postured amphibious forces—amphibious ready groups with embarked Marine expeditionary units (ARG/MEUs)—exceeds the current and forecast capacity of the Naval Service. Since 2007 the combatant commanders' cumulative requests for amphibious forces have grown 86 percent for ARG/MEUs and 53 percent for individually deployed amphibious ships with Marine detachments.

While demand has increased the security environment of increased uncertainty, complexity and rapid change complicates the ability of the force to conduct engagement. Increased competition for influence, the rise of new actors, the increased flow of information, proliferation of weapons, democratization of technology, and diminished force structure and resources all challenge our ability to engage forward.

The challenge is to engage *globally distributed, mission-tailored forces* across a wide range of missions that promote stability, prevent crises and combat terrorism; while maintaining the capability to *regionally concentrate credible combat power* to protect U.S. vital interests, assure friends, and deter and dissuade potential adversaries. Forward forces and forces surged from the United States, along with those of allies and partners, must be sufficiently ready and interoperable to respond effectively across a broad spectrum of crises.

Description of the Military Problem

The combatant commanders' demand for Marine Corps forces to build partner capacity through security force assistance and cooperative engagement greatly exceeds current and future capacity of forward-postured ARG/MEUs or MARSOC units. Additionally, many security cooperation missions call for more discrete and tailored force structure options. Per the CCJO and DOD planning guidance, the Marine Corps must increase its capability and capacity to conduct steady-state security, engagement, and relief and reconstruction activities, without forfeiting the ability to conduct major operations, to include forcible entry, when required. It must do so with no increase in force structure, at minimal cost, and without reducing its contribution to ongoing operations.

Central Idea

The Marine Corps will examine alternative means to increase forward engagement.

- Examine initiatives to increase employability and availability of Marines aboard Navy and Coast Guard platforms beyond

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amphibious ships.

- Examine regionalization of Marine forces to increase understanding.
- Blend existing general purpose forces with new and/or enhanced specialized capabilities to provide an expanded array of capabilities for engagement activities.
- Develop engagement enabling capabilities (within the operating forces and supporting establishment) to expand the force options and capabilities the Marine Corps can provide to the Geographic Combatant Commands' engagement and security force assistance requirements.

The combination of general purpose and specialized forces' capabilities gives the Corps *tiered expertise* throughout the force that will result in the ability to:

- Increase Naval forward presence capabilities and capacities for engagement within the littorals
- Enhance integration with the Navy and Coast Guard for maritime security operations
- Provide subject matter experts and mobile training teams
- Conduct or support bi-lateral or multinational training and exercises
- Provide security assistance training on defense articles purchased through the Foreign Military Sales program
- Provide indirect support, or direct support not involving combat, to Foreign Internal Defense activities

- Conduct select civil-military operations, to include foreign humanitarian assistance, humanitarian and civic action, and military civic action

Marines Afloat

By embarking Marines aboard a wider variety of naval vessels, we can expand the capability and capacity to conduct discrete, sea-based engagement with a greater number of partner nations. Doing so will have the additional advantage of increasing the flexibility and utility of these vessels for the range of military operations. For example, Marine detachments can be placed aboard large surface combatants, littoral combatants, and cutters to conduct maritime security force assistance with coalition and partner nation naval forces, or proactive humanitarian assistance with local populations. Furthermore, Marine detachments could provide a boarding and raiding capability on each ship, along with enhanced force protection capabilities. When crises or natural disasters occur, these Marines could go ashore to provide site reconnaissance, liaison, terminal guidance, or other enabling tasks to facilitate the introduction of additional naval, joint, other agency, or non-governmental organization resources.

Marine detachments afloat may also benefit from the enhanced MAGTF operations initiative, which is geared towards improving the self-sufficiency of smaller units so that they can operate over greater ranges and for extended durations.

Regionalization

Regionalization is the process through which individual Marines and specific units develop intellectual focus and operational expertise on a specific geographic region. Continued expansion of regionalization will ensure forces have a strong cultural foundation and are regionally knowledgeable. Current MAGTF and naval force packages may be complemented by alternative, non-standardized approaches and options appropriate to a broader range of missions. These may include joint, interagency, multinational, international, and non-government organization partnership on projects of mutual interest. Adaptive force

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packaging can be leveraged to achieve greater global presence and engagement.

None of the Services can engage everywhere—all the time. Therefore, the enhanced engagement espoused is ‘selective’. It is based on direction contained in *Guidance for the Employment of the Force* and Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) priorities. Although capable of responding to tasking anywhere, the Marine Corps will identify countries in each GCC’s area of responsibility that are best suited for engagement by Marines. These areas will include nations that have Marine/Naval Infantry units, coastal areas and significant delta/riverine systems where an integrated naval team is desirable, and countries where long-standing relationships have not been developed and the misperceptions of differing cultures are greatest.

As such, we are examining the regionalization of our major headquarters as follows:

- I MEF oriented on US Central Command (USCENTCOM), US Pacific Command (USPACOM), and US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) (west coast of Central and South America {Guatemala, Colombia, Panama}).
- II MEF oriented on USCENTCOM, US Africa Command (USAFRICOM), US European Command (USEUCOM), and USSOUTHCOM (east coast of Central and South America {Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica}).
- III MEF oriented on USPACOM and, as required by force providers, USCENTCOM.

During phase 2 of this effort, the Marine Corps will focus the warfighting and force provider commands as follows:

- I MEF oriented on USCENTCOM, USPACOM, and western coast of USSOUTHCOM.

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- II MEF oriented on USCENTCOM, USAFRICOM, USEUCOM, and the eastern coast of USSOUTHCOM.
- III MEF oriented on USPACOM.

Blend Enhanced and Specialized Capabilities

Increased capacity at the MARFOR will provide the supporting MEF units with a persistent engagement element that links to the GCC, country teams, and partner militaries. MARFORs provide regional expertise and will establish personal relations with key regional individuals while maintaining knowledge of the diverse range of organizations (e.g. interagency, multi-national, non-governmental organizations) located in the region. They will seek to integrate activities whenever possible, deconflict when integration is not possible, and coordinate and collaborate with as many elements in the operating environment as possible. These efforts will increase the ability to create a level of synergy among partners that truly helps build partner capacity in a coherent manner.

Specialized **engagement-enabling** capabilities and enhancements at various echelons and general purpose force capabilities within each Marine Expeditionary Force will substantially increase the quality of specially tailored training teams, global fleet stations detachments, or elements that are sourced in support of combatant commander requirements. Close coordination and planning between the Service component, Navy and Marine Corps Security Cooperation enabling organizations, GCC, country team, and the host nation are essential to effective engagement. The capabilities and enhancements will include subject matter experts to the general purpose forces conducting the engagement activities providing depth for the force and increasing effectiveness for the supported GCC. The proposed enhancements include:

- ***Increased MARFOR component capacity for coordination*** which will serve to integrate Marine Corps forces into:
 - Security cooperation engagements
 - Security force assistance

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- Foreign internal defense
- Civil-military operations

- ***A Marine Corps Training and Advisor Group (MCTAG)*** coordinates USMC Security Force Assistance (SFA) efforts, provides general military skills training and advisor support to host nation security forces (HNSF) or to General Purpose Forces (GPF) partnering with HNSF, and provides planning assistance to MARFORs in developing and executing partner nation training programs in order to build partner capacity in support of Combatant Commander SFA objectives. MCTAG provides institutional capacity to provide training and advisor support.

- ***Examine the need for MEF-level capabilities and enhancements such as:***
 - Civil Affairs (CA) planning and execution forces
 - Foreign training/advisory units
 - Liaison structure
 - Increased cultural expertise (e.g. Foreign Area Officers/Regional Area Officers, civilian anthropologists)
 - Information Operations detachment with Psychological Operations planning capability embedded
 - A commander who is responsible for providing the unified, specialized engagement support required by deploying forces.
 - A commander who is responsible for "operationalizing" IO and an IO Coordination Center to oversee and influence Information Operations across the MEF and Joint IO effort—with links to the Marine Corps Information Operations Center (described in the next section).

Supporting Establishment Organizations

To support requirements for OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, and military engagement, the Marine Corps has established an array of engagement-enabling organizations and refined other standing organizations. The following

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engagement-enabling organizations will contribute to preparing, supporting and in some cases augmenting Marine forces conducting engagement activities:

- ***Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA)***- MCIA is the Marine Corps' service intelligence production center and provides reach-back for tailored expeditionary intelligence analysis and cultural studies to Marine Corps operating forces, other services and the intelligence community. In addition, MCIA can provide highly focused pre-deployment training, as well as augment units with specialized teams and liaison officers.

- ***Security Cooperation Education and Training Center (SCETC)***- SCETC is responsible for implementing and evaluating U.S. Marine Corps Security Cooperation (SC) education, training, and programs in order to support Marine Component Commands' efforts to build partner capacity. It sources, organizes, and trains security cooperation and security assistance teams from the supporting establishment and assists operating force planning for security cooperation and security assistance activities as required. SCETC maintains in-depth knowledge of the authorities, funding regulations and Department of State policies needed to support Marine Corps security assistance activities for implementing tasks associated with the foreign military financing program (FMFP), international military education and training (IMET), foreign military sales, and peace operations.

- ***Center for Advanced Operational and Culture Learning (CAOCL)***- CAOCL is the U.S. Marine Corps agency for operational culture, regional studies and language familiarization training and education. CAOCL is the only USMC institution singularly focused on regional understanding, culture and language and its effects on operations. CAOCL in conjunction with the USMC Senior Language Authority has the responsibility for all operational culture and operational language aspects of the DOTMLPF process, including: policy, training, education, and validation of required capabilities and training.

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- ***Center for Irregular Warfare (CIW)***- CIW develops and coordinates Irregular Warfare concepts, policy and doctrine for the U.S. Marine Corps. CIW focuses on the primary and supporting activities that comprise Irregular Warfare: Counterinsurgency (COIN), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Counter-Terrorism (CT), Unconventional Warfare (UW), Stability Operations, Information Operations, Intelligence, and Interagency Operations.
- ***Marine Corps Information Operations Center (MCIOC)***- MCIOC is the executive agent for the U.S. Marine Corps IO Program and is responsible for implementing and evaluating USMC IO education, training, and programs in order to support institutional USMC and MARFOR IO-related partnership building efforts. MCIOC provides MAGTF commanders and the Marine Corps a full-spectrum IO planning and PSYOP capability by means of deployable support teams and a comprehensive IO reach-back capability in order to support the integration of IO into Marine Corps operations.
- ***Marine Corps Systems Command – International Programs (MCSC-IP)***- MCSC IP provides assistance to, and cooperation with, allied and other friendly nations pursuant to the Foreign Assistance Act and the Arms Export Control Act. MCSC IP explores international opportunities to support CCDR and regional MARFOR Theater Security Cooperation priorities, providing systems, logistics, technology, and follow-on support to international partners. MCSC IP promotes the exchange of technologies and equipment with international partners by initiating, coordinating, and managing cooperative research and development.
- ***Advisor Training Groups (ATG)***- ATG train U.S. Marine Corps Transition Teams to advise, mentor, and train foreign military, police, and border units in operational techniques and procedures to combat terrorism and to counter an insurgency.

Engagement Conducted by General-Purpose Forces

MEUs will remain a central element of the Marine Corps—forward-deployed, expeditionary forces postured to respond to missions across the ROMO. Some elements of the MEF with specialized engagement-enabling capabilities will be task-organized for deployment with each MEU while additional elements will be aligned to the deployed MEU in a reach-back capacity. Additional pre-deployment training for Marines and Sailors will prepare ARG/MEU personnel for increased performance of engagement activities. When ARGs/MEUs deploy they will routinely disperse to accomplish engagement activities, affording the supported combatant commander maximum employment options. ARGs/MEUs will conduct distributed operations by deploying smaller task forces or single ships while maintaining the ability to re-aggregate and respond to emergent requirements.

Additionally, each MEF will form a *Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force* for *Security Cooperation*, or *SC MAGTFs* of up to 500 Marines and Sailors. Drawn from subordinate commands focused on different regions of interest, these SC MAGTFs will be formed for a designated period on a rotational basis, within the larger framework of the overall training, exercise and employment plan for Marine Corps forces (this includes forces assigned to the Unit Deployment Program supporting PACOM). Once formed, each SC MAGTF will undergo a training cycle preparatory to its attachment to a GCC. Upon completion of the training cycle, it will be attached directly to a GCC through the Global Force Management Allocation Plan for approximately six months. Based on the GCC's operational requirements, the SC MAGTF commander may execute assigned missions using all or part of his force. The SC MAGTF will usually only deploy those elements needed for the mission. Deployment may be directly to the mission area, to a forward operating base, forward operating site or cooperative security location⁸ to associate with equipment and integrate with other assistance elements, or by embarking on naval shipping to maneuver within the operating area

8. Main operating bases are permanent bases with resident forces and robust infrastructure to support command and control, training, and the deployment and reconstitution of forces.

while maintaining a minimal footprint in the host country. Naval shipping will often be amphibious ships. However, deployment alternatives will expand and may include littoral combat ships, destroyers, joint high speed vessels, maritime prepositioning ships and other vessels to maximize options that support GCC and country team requirements. A SC MAGTF will be able to conduct sequential, simultaneous, or overlapping missions of varying duration and location by task-organizing and deploying:

- ***Training, Advisor, and Assessment Teams*** of 5-15 Marines and Sailors who will episodically deploy for short-duration missions of approximately 15 days.
- ***Detachments*** of 15-200 Marines and Sailors who will episodically deploy for medium-duration missions of 30-90 days.
- ***Special purpose MAGTFs for Security Cooperation (SC MAGTF)*** of 200-500 Marines and Sailors who will episodically deploy for longer-duration missions of 90-150 days.

SC MAGTFs are not envisioned to have significant crisis response capabilities. However, like all MAGTFs, Marines will possess the basic skills to conduct limited reinforcement as required. These SC MAGTFs will operate with a diverse set of partners. In many locales, Marines and Special Operations Forces (SOF) will be conducting parallel operations—simultaneously. Efforts must be made to integrate activities or ensure they complement one another. Marine units can both leverage SOF (e.g. established relationships with local military/civilian leaders, intelligence sources) and support SOF (e.g. mobility, logistics). Establishing relationships and sharing information early in pre-deployment training will increase synergy once deployed.

The development of SC MAGTFs and regionalization-sourcing may change tasking and command relationships⁹:

9. When sourcing of CCDR requirements falls outside the SP MAGTF construct, it is envisioned current processes and procedures remain germane.

Marine Regiment

Existing Methodology

Marine components to a GCC conduct security cooperation assessments within the theater, provide input to the GCC Theater Campaign Plan, and publish a supporting plan. The Deputy Commandant, Plans, Policies and Operations (PP&O) publishes a campaign support plan to prioritize Marine Corps security cooperation efforts. The global force management process validates specific mission requirements and sends to joint force providers to source. Marine Forces Command determines appropriate sourcing, submits to PP&O, who approves the plan and publishes Marine Corps Bulletin 3120. Specific units which meet the requirements are listed in the force synchronization playbook. The MEFs, and Marine Forces Reserve source units per the playbook. Designated unit commanders conduct detailed mission analysis, identify resource deficiencies and the MEFs source or request assistance from throughout the Marine Corps operating forces and supporting establishment. MEFs conduct pre-deployment training and certify the task organized units for deployment. Upon deployment to the AOR, Operational Control of the unit is delegated to the MARFOR.

SC MAGTF

Suggested Methodology

Marine components to a GCC conduct security cooperation assessments within the theater, provide input to the GCC Theater Campaign Plan, and publish a supporting plan. The Deputy Commandant, Plans, Policies and Operations (PP&O) publishes a campaign support plan to prioritize Marine Corps security cooperation efforts. The global force management process validates specific mission requirements and sends to joint force providers to source. Marine Forces Command determines appropriate sourcing, submits to PP&O, who approves the plan and publishes Marine Corps Bulletin 3120. A SC MAGTF is formed from regionally focused units within the MEF and enhanced with specialized engagement enabling capabilities from the operating forces and supporting establishment (e.g. MCTAG, MCIOC, MCAG) to meet a series of requirements listed in the force synchronization playbook. The MEF conducts pre-deployment training and certifies the SC MAGTF for attachment to supported GCC. The SC MAGTF is OPCON to the Marine component and deploys teams, detachments and special purpose MAGTFs in accordance with the plan. As emerging requirements develop, the SC MAGTF deploys elements to satisfy the requirement if within its organic capability.

*modified text underlined for emphasis

Rotational Models

Rotational Marine forces that support engagement initiatives include MEUs and SP MAGTFs; including those sourced from units in the Unit Deployment Program (UDP). Sourcing options may change over time as requirements to support named operations emerge. The preferred sourcing model for SP MAGTFs is similar to the air contingency force construct of the 1990's whereby scalable, task-organized packages are tailored for specific missions and only the element that is needed is deployed. Regimental and/or aviation group commanders and their headquarters would serve at the SP MAGTF Commander/CEs. Units assigned to the SP MAGTF will often have recently returned from deployment retaining the highly trained core of the unit, orienting its

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training toward engagement activities, and assigning specialized engagement forces to the base unit.

Due to operational commitments in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF), the Marine Corps will employ different rotational models in the near and mid-to-far terms. The near term model expands engagement activities while not overstressing the force as it supports current operations. The mid-to-far term model maximizes both engagement and forward deployed crisis response capabilities.

- Near Term (OEF surge). For illustrative purposes we will have 6 infantry battalions committed in CENTCOM with a 1:2 deployed-to-dwell ratio (accounts for 18 infantry battalions). 9 infantry battalions remain to support engagement and crisis response.
 - 1 CENTCOM rotational MEU presence
 - 1 PACOM Forward Deployed Naval Force forward-based presence
 - 1 SP MAGTF available for global sourcing (SOUTHCOM, EUCOM or AFRICOM)

- Mid-to-Far Term (post-OEF surge). The post-OEF surge rotational model's goal is to increase the deployed-to-dwell ratio to 1:3. This allows increased training and readiness of the general purpose force. The potential deployment orientation of these forces is:
 - 1 CENTCOM Forward Deployed Naval Force forward-based presence or rotational MEU
 - 1 EUCOM / AFRICOM rotational MEU presence
 - 1 PACOM Forward Deployed Naval Force forward-based presence
 - 4 SP MAGTFs (SOUTHCOM, EUCOM or AFRICOM)
 - 3 Unit Deployment Program Battalions

Although an SP MAGTF is not envisioned for support to NORTHCOM, it is expected that increased USMC security cooperation activities will take place in that GCC.

Combat Development Implications

- **Doctrine**
 - Current joint and Marine Corps doctrine will need to be reviewed for sufficiency.
 - Although a DoD-wide definition for security force assistance is not yet approved, security force assistance is a term associated with building partner nations' security capacity and is part of the broader set of activities defined as Security Cooperation. Once the DOD Directive on security force assistance is released, a review of the approach on how to integrate SFA into Marine Corps doctrine is warranted. The approach could range from incorporating a section into MCDP 1-0, *Marine Corps Operations* to a stand-alone doctrinal publication.
 - Joint doctrine must be reviewed in coordination with GCCs to ensure that assignment of home-based Marine forces to GCCs for employment in engagement activities can achieve a desirable level of responsiveness. Additionally, an analysis of command relationships within combatant commander areas of responsibility may be warranted.

- **Organization**
 - Expanding engagement capability and capacity may be accomplished in part through organizational changes. There will be an increased need for liaison elements to coordinate with diverse organizations such as country teams, the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC), interagency and non-governmental organizations, and multi-national partners. Some liaison elements may reside with the MARFOR headquarters, the MCTAG, the MEF, and at Headquarters Marine Corps. Organizational changes can be accomplished incrementally. For example, the MEF HQ group-construct is notionally upwards of 600 personnel per MEF consisting of headquarters, advisory, liaison, civil affairs, and information/psychological operations personnel. Initially, the organization could be formed consisting of approximately 200 personnel per MEF. As the engagement

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programs mature and assessments confirm proof of concept, the MEF HQ group could grow commensurate with recognized utility of each sub-element of the organization.

- Establishing new organizations and expanding others, as discussed above, will require hard choices about from where to reduce or divest. Assuming at least initially that there will not be a manpower increase beyond the 202K means adjustments to 202K and the current force structure will be required. A detailed review will be required to determine where shifts should take place.
- There are numerous potential constructs for organizing a SP MAGTF for Security Cooperation. This concept proposes one based upon a model similar to an alert contingency MAGTF with minor differences. One difference is the SP MAGTF is attached to a GCC. Another is that although the construct contains all the elements of a MAGTF, when employed it is organized in a non-standard manner. Instead of employment via ground combat element, aviation combat element, and a logistics combat element, the proposed construct has a training/advising/engagement element and a support element. The first element conducts the actual mission sets while the second element provides support to the first element. This subtle difference connotes an emphasis on building partner capacity versus one on crisis response/warfighting. SP MAGTFs are likely to evolve over time. The requirements in each supported GCC will drive tailoring of the supporting MAGTF. The need to tailor units based on mission requirements is not new to the Marine Corps. However, the type of tailoring required to support enhanced engagement might require other force development initiatives beyond operational force tailoring.
- Figure 2 below depicts a potential construct for a SC MAGTF organization. The actual organization will depend on the results of experimentation and assessments.

Proposed MAGTF for Security Cooperation (500 Person Construct)

- **Command Element** - (1 x Inf or Arty Bn CE) (LtCol) (50)
 - Traditional Staff Functions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6
 - CA Planning Detachment
 - Comm Co or Comm Bn Detachment
 - Translators/Linguists Detachment (from MEF)
- **Training & Assistance Element** (Maj) (300) [Performs SFA, FID CMO tasks, activities ISO HN]
 - Mobile Training Teams (Tactics, Weapons, Medical, Maintenance, Communications, Policing & Security, etc.)
 - Med/Den Cap Detachment
 - Engineering Detachment
- **Support Element** (Maj) (150) [*Supports MAGTF operations*]
 - Air Mobility Detachment
 - 4 x CH-46 Detachment or 2 x CH-53 Detachment
 - 2 x UH-1 Detachment
 - 2 x KC-130 tethered
 - Force Protection Detachment
 - Supply (Inf/Arty Bn augmented with contracting support)
 - Maintenance (Inf/Arty Bn augmented from MLG)
 - Engineer → All Required in Addition
 - Ground Mobility Detachment → to Capabilities in
 - Health Services (USN) → Elements Above
 - Veterinary (USA or civilian)

1

Figure 2

• ***Training***

- A pre-assignment training program to common essential tasks and GCC-specific tasks, similar to the models for pre-deployment training in support of MEU or UDP deployments, oriented on engagement activities, cultural awareness, training foreign partners, etc. must be developed. It must be structured with common program elements for all units as well as specific elements that support regionalization. The training program construct will depend upon the chosen model for Marine Corps force provision (i.e. will some units be permanently designated as MEUs, UDP, or SP MAGTF—or will there be a more rotational model employed?). Regardless of how the force is provisioned, a requirement remains for each unit to train for proficiency in the full range of mission essential tasks to include warfighting/crisis response missions as well as security cooperation/security force assistance tasks. Resources

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(personnel, funding, training venues) will be required for the training establishment to support engagement initiatives.

- The initiatives that have emphasized and expanded cultural and language training will need to be maintained and diversified, and not atrophy once participation in current operations scale down.
 - Expanded engagement opportunities may include training host nation personnel in the United States. In some cases, individuals and units from partner nations would benefit more from coming to the U.S. and receiving training using our robust infrastructure rather than training in their home countries. This technique should receive equal emphasis in planning/coordination with GCCs.
- ***Matériel***

There are a myriad of potential material implications derived from this discussion and this section does not propose a comprehensive list. Some of the potentially important matériel implications may include:

 - Refinement of requirements for prepositioned equipment and supplies that support engagement activities. Plans could include a combination of using Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons, prepositioning equipment sets ashore in critical locations, and utilizing designated Main Operating Bases, Forward Operating Sites, or Cooperative Security Locations to support deployed forces. This review must take a measured approach and find a solution that provides effective operational support and cost effectiveness.
 - Many partners are outfitted with non-U.S. weapons, vehicles and equipment. To effectively train those forces, Marines require familiarity with those systems. The Marine Corps will need to review and expand its procurement of non-US weapons systems for ‘train-the-trainer’ programs. For systems the Marine Corps does not purchase, it should seek arrangements with other joint services and partner militaries to leverage their systems for “train-the-trainer programs.”

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- Training foreign partners will often entail ‘give away’ and ‘leave behind’ materials. Whether building material used to teach construction of a fortified position or used to create a simulator to train marksmanship with an AK-47, the Marine Corps must budget for and utilize Title 10 and receive authorization for Title 22 funding to support engagement initiatives. Included will be the need for special allocations and/or authorities for ammunition and other training consumables, as well as determining which costs are borne by the supported GCC, by Marine Corps operations and management funds, and other sources of funding.
 - Dispersed small-team operations, often in austere environments, will place a premium on digital and satellite communications-gear and improved translation devices.
 - All rotary-wing and tilt-rotor squadrons should be organized and equipped specifically to accommodate supporting operations with detachments—of an increasingly smaller composition.
- ***Leadership and Education***
 - Leadership, education and training are the cornerstone for effectively conducting security force assistance and other engagement activities. As with the pre-assignment training section above, education efforts must continue to emphasize cultural education and include regional orientation for officers, staff noncommissioned officers, and noncommissioned officers.
 - The Marine Corps should seek to expand opportunities for U.S. personnel to attend partner nation (current allies, coalition partners and nations with whom we seek to build security force capability and capacity) professional development courses and for partner nation personnel to attend Marine Corps schools. Personal and institutional relationships formed during these opportunities should be cultivated and actively maintained over time.
 - Engagement activities will continue to increase the interaction and cooperative activities between Marines and interagency partners. Where possible, the Marine Corps

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should seek to send more Marines to interagency education venues, request additional exchange opportunities, encourage interagency personnel to lecture and participate in cooperative forums, and impart knowledge about the other U.S. government agencies in our formal schools.

- Besides educational opportunities with security force partners and interagency elements, the Marine Corps should search for opportunities to send Marines to take part in and learn from other organizations. These opportunities may include fellowships to academia, exchange tours with certain multinational corporations, or immersion experiences with missionaries and non-government organizations.

- ***Personnel***
 - Career management that supports expanded engagement activities will be an important issue. A combination of primary MOSs, secondary MOSs, and billet MOSs will be needed to provide adequate numbers of Marines with the requisite skills. In some cases, our mix of active and reserve components will need to be adjusted to meet the demands of the future security environment. In other cases, such as for civil affairs capability, active duty units may need to be formed to provide the professional core around which Marines possessing a secondary MOS are placed—expanding overall capacity. Finding the correct balance between specialization in support of engagement, and general purpose trained and oriented on engagement yet possessing the ability to operate across the ROMO, will require difficult decisions. A mix of incentives and specific precepts for promotion opportunities may be needed especially in the early stages of implementation.
 - Assignment patterns and policies should be aligned to support regionalization. The goal would be to ensure Marines have repeated tours in units that concentrate on specific regions. A specific review of Foreign Area Officers/Regional Area Officers (FAO/RAO) assignment may be warranted. There are likely niche countries, especially those countries having a Marine Corps or other

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maritime forces that Marine Corps FAO/RAO or other specialized personnel should be aligned with.

- In some cases, there may be a benefit to waiving enlistment criteria for individuals with unique or desirable qualifications. For example, individuals with language capabilities or county-specific knowledge who otherwise might not fit all enlistment criteria could be important contributors to Marine Corps engagement activities.
 - To complement regionalization initiatives, assist commanders in identifying personnel with skill-sets related to security force assistance tasks or country specific experience, and to satisfy department of defense requirements, the Marine Corps will need to update what it tracks in its personnel tracking system. There will be a need to identify what specific categories to track. Caution should be used initially when determining what skill sets and experiences to track. Too much data entry could make the data unusable. Consideration should be given to prior civilian work experience and education when making occupation specialty selections at The Basic School.
- ***Facilities***
 - Establish Marine Corps facilities at designated Forward Operating Sites, or Cooperative Security Locations.
 - Create training venues in the U.S. and engagement with combatant commanders for training venues abroad that support engagement activities.

Conclusion

The security of the United States is intrinsically linked to that of the broader international community. NDS 2008 states “the best way to achieve security is to prevent war when possible and to encourage peaceful change within the international system” emphasizing “building the capacities of a broad spectrum of partners for long-term security.” As the Nation’s naval expeditionary, force-in-readiness, the Marine Corps has throughout its history routinely innovated to protect and promote our national interests. In an era of increasing global

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interconnectedness the Marine Corps is once again building upon its legacy of adaptability to enhance its operational utility. Furthermore, increased security cooperation may also provide opportunity to enhance access. Such operations build relations with partners and may help shape the operating area by alleviating the sources of discontent that may breed extremism. This is especially beneficial when forward postured naval forces are tasked to respond to crisis as discussed in the following chapter. To that end, Marines will remain general purpose forces that fight and win our Nation's battles while increasing its means to work with foreign civil authorities and militaries to improve interoperability and build partner capability and capacity.



Chapter 5

Crisis Response

*In 1952, when the 82nd Congress was writing into law the Marine Corps' role in the national-security infrastructure, it recognized that the cost of maintaining a ready combat force is insignificant compared with the much higher cost of military unpreparedness. What Congress wanted...was to create a national "force in readiness... **the most ready when the nation is least ready.**"¹⁰*

Introduction

A **crisis** is defined as “An incident or situation involving a threat to the United States, its territories, citizens, military forces, and possessions or vital interests that develops rapidly and creates a condition of such diplomatic, economic, political, or military importance that commitment of United States military forces and resources is contemplated to achieve national objectives.”¹¹

The key phrase that distinguishes a crisis from other types of military operations is “develops rapidly,” meaning that a given situation occurred unexpectedly or with minimal warning. Crises span the range of military operations, from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the incipient phases of major operations and campaigns. Normally, the more expeditiously resources can be brought to bear to seize the initiative, the more quickly the crisis can be contained and prevented from growing.

Our nation’s leadership has historically tasked naval forces with providing worldwide, multi-dimensional crisis response capability. A prime example of this occurred between August 1990 and June 1991. During that ten-month time period, a wide range of Navy and Marine Corps resources responded to near-simultaneous crises in several regions:

10. Sea Power Magazine, “Almanac 2003,” (Arlington, VA: The Navy League of the United States, 2003), electronic edition.

11. JP 1-02.

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- Approximately 92,000 Marines, assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force, 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), deployed by sea and air to the Persian Gulf region. Operating from a sea base of amphibious ships and from forward operating sites ashore, they conducted *maritime interdiction operations, show of force operations, raids, demonstrations, amphibious assaults, and major combat operations* during OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM.
- The 22nd and 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), operating from a sea base of amphibious ships, conducted *embassy security, non-combatant evacuation operations, and humanitarian assistance* in Liberia during OPERATION SHARP EDGE.
- A contingency MAGTF, operating from a sea base of amphibious ships, conducted *non-combatant evacuation operations* from Somalia during OPERATION EASTERN EXIT.
- The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), projected from a sea base of amphibious ships to a forward operating site in Turkey, providing *humanitarian assistance* in northern Iraq during OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT.
- The 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, operating from a sea base of amphibious ships, provided *humanitarian assistance and disaster relief* in Bangladesh during OPERATION SEA ANGEL.
- A detachment from III Marine Expeditionary Force, deployed by air from a main operating base in Okinawa to a forward operating site in the Philippines, provided *humanitarian assistance and disaster relief* in support of OPERATION FIERY VIGIL.

A more recent example of the Marine Corps ability to rapidly respond to crisis was in January 2010, when a detachment from II Marine Expeditionary Force, deployed by sea from Camp Lejeune to various forward operating sites in Haiti, providing *humanitarian assistance and disaster relief* in support of OPERATION UNIFIED RESPONSE.

Chapter 1 described the widespread disorder and potential crises that will characterize the operating environment of the early 21st Century, indicating naval forces will be even more likely to conduct simultaneous or closely sequential crisis response operations around the globe than they have in the past.

Description of the Military Problem

Since 1990, the Marine Corps has responded to over 100 crises worldwide—more than doubling previous historical responses for a similar period. This trend is expected to continue. Simultaneously, over the same period of time, amphibious lift has been reduced from over 60 ships to just over 30 amphibious ships. This trend is significantly impacting availability of response platforms. The numbers of United States overseas bases have decreased while impediments to access have increased; a trend which is likely to continue. Ten years of operations principally in Iraq and Afghanistan have resulted in training, equipment and deployment focused on operations in these specific environments; a trend that has produced a heavier force with some equipment-sets not ideally suited to rapid response. These four trends potentially place the Marine Corps' and our congressionally mandated role as the nation's force in readiness, in jeopardy.

The optimal force structure, associated lift, and global posture that balances the requirements for distributed security cooperation and counterterrorism with the competing requirement to effectively aggregate forces and respond to crises across the spectrum of operations has not been determined. Additionally, available shipping will remain constrained for the foreseeable future. Similarly, establishing certain seabasing capabilities aboard amphibious ships, such as selective offload, would likely require that they be less densely loaded, further reducing what can be embarked. Collectively, these changes in forward deployed capabilities will impose changes on how naval forces will respond to

crises. Naval forces are inherently flexible and mobile but we must validate our current positioning and structure to ensure we are optimally organized and positioned to proactively influence events forward while retaining the ability to globally respond to the unforeseen. As we seek new and innovative methods for reconfiguring our force structure, associated lift, and overall global posture, we must also consider the impact of continued Marine Corps participation in prolonged operations as described in Chapter 4.

Central Idea

The Marine Corps must continue to hone its crisis response capabilities in order to continue to be the “nation’s force in readiness.” It must continue to identify those areas most critical to the geographic combatant commanders and ensure the development of crisis response capabilities to address those demands. Readiness—individual, unit, and institutional—is the most critical element of crisis response and it is one that is totally within our ability to control and influence.

Marine Corps forces are general purpose forces, designed for multiple missions as a MAGTF and will provide immediate response to an emerging crisis. Working alongside U.S. Government and private organizations, they will seek to resolve a crisis at the earliest opportunity. When required, these forward-deployed forces will enable the introduction of additional forces or resources. In such cases, forward-deployed Marine Corps forces will be complemented by additional forces (Marine Corps/Joint/Multinational) that can shift to crisis areas from other global locations. Collectively, they will provide the proper blend of capabilities appropriate to the mission. Given the likelihood that forward-deployed Marines may be the first on scene in an emerging crisis, Marine Corps command elements must be prepared to assume Joint task force command responsibilities, thereby enabling the regional combatant commander to conduct operations prior to the arrival of more robust Joint command and control elements. Achieving these goals requires a comprehensive examination of what resources should be forward deployed, pre-positioned or retained at home stations, along with a prudent estimate of available lift and time required to deploy, employ and sustain them. Toward that end, force planners must have a thorough understanding of the attributes of successful crisis response.

Attributes of Successful Crisis Response

Successful crisis response is dependant on three fundamental attributes—speed, flexibility, and operational effectiveness. Of these three attributes, speed will be the most challenging—and therefore the Marine Corps’ area of primary concern. As noted in MCDP-3 *Expeditionary Operations*:

*The speed at which capable forces can be deployed to the scene of a crisis is often vitally important. The more quickly forces can deploy to stabilize a situation, the greater will be the likelihood of eventual success and the less may be the eventual cost. What matters, however, is not just how quickly the first forces can deploy; it is the speed at which **capable, sustainable** forces can deploy.*¹²

Speed of response is accelerated by a global force posture that places Marines in areas where crisis is likely to occur in order to reduce the “tyranny of distance” associated with deploying from the United States to many crisis areas. Speed of response is also facilitated by a high degree of individual, unit and institutional readiness.

Flexibility will be obtained through the expansive range of Marine force-options, mission capabilities, and task-organization aptitude. Crisis response forces must be able to deploy quickly via a variety of deployment means such as amphibious ships and military airlift, but must also be able to deploy via commercial ships and aircraft, rail or in any combination of transport modes.

Operational effectiveness will be obtained through the Marine Corps tradition of innovative and intense training, extensive operational experience via continuous employment, and overall force readiness with an expeditionary mindset. Operational effectiveness is enhanced by the ability to conduct land and sea based vertical maneuver, surface maneuver from the sea, as well as ground maneuver via mechanized, motorized and foot mobile units. These fundamental attributes provide

12. MCDP 3, pp. 39-40.

the foundation for assessing the viability of future Marine Corps crisis response-enabling initiatives such as those described below.

Crisis Response Enabling Initiatives

Chapter 4 proposes refinements to the organization and positioning of naval forces in order to enhance forward presence, security cooperation and counterterrorism capability and capacity. It pointed out that those refinements must also provide a preventative approach to likely crisis areas and the means to rapidly concentrate globally sourced joint combat power when required. Chapter 4 described the importance of evolving the naval element of the global defense posture and developing co-located and integrated naval force packages. These initiatives are equally important to enhancing Marine crisis response capability; as discussed in the previous chapter.

Additional initiatives for improving crisis response capability include, but are not limited to *global basing refinements, rejuvenated readiness training, seabasing, repositioning enhancements, tethering/modularity, enhanced access, crisis response force packages, and streamlined command, control and communications.*

Global Basing Refinements

The Marine Corps must continually review its global force lay-down and ensure that it is best positioned to respond to crisis worldwide. In addition to our traditional regions for forward deployment, we recognize the growing importance of Africa and the Western Hemisphere and must identify ways to increase our global presence to cover down on these regions of rising importance. Furthermore, current efforts at widening the Panama Canal will provide opportunity for greater flexibility for sourcing of Marine forces outside the current paradigm.

Reduction in overseas bases has created potential opportunities to position Marine Corps elements in locations where a global gap in coverage may presently exist. Future movement of selected Marine Forces from Okinawa to Guam and Hawaii provide greater global distribution of Marines. Identification of select cooperative security locations that may be permanently manned by Marines and resourced

with select equipment and supplies, offer additional options for increasing global Marine Corps force presence. Repositioning additional amphibious ships in Hawaii or Guam as well as shore basing of selected assets in critical areas could further enhance crisis response capabilities.

Rejuvenated Readiness

Readiness—individual, unit, and institutional—is central to effective crisis response and is an area completely within our ability to rejuvenate. Ten years of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have resulted in training programs, equipment solutions, and deployment patterns that support operations in those environs. As we draw down from Iraq we must rejuvenate our readiness posture across the force. Readiness includes operations, maintenance of equipment, medical and dental, legal affairs, and family readiness elements. Each of these elements must be in the proper balance in order to achieve the highest possible levels of Marine Corps readiness.

Numerous initiatives at the small-unit level such as Lightening the MAGTF, Enhanced Company Operations and Enhanced MAGTF Operations, as they continue to evolve, will provide additional capability to effectively respond to crises foreseen in the operating environment of the future.

Seabasing

Sea-based forces can be adapted for a wide array of missions and operations. They can improve speed of response by acting on indications and warnings, free from diplomatic constraints, to reposition closer to an emerging crisis. The sea base can also provide a stable, safe, and fully equipped command and control capability that is already operational while en route to the scene of crisis. Sea-based forces can respond to a crisis while minimizing force protection requirements ashore. With relatively modest enhancements to connectors, materiel handling equipment and procedures, and command and control suites, we can further enhance crisis response speed, flexibility, and operational effectiveness.

Maritime Positioning Force (MPF) Enhancements

The MPF enhancement provides an important element to craft sea-based capability for use in benign or low-threat environments and will enable the Navy and the Marine Corps to hone tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) that are necessary to execute this capability. In support of this enhanced maritime positioning ship (MPS) concept of operations, three T-AKE auxiliary dry cargo ships have been shifted to provide logistics support to Marine Corps units ashore. Further, the Navy will provide for at-sea transfer of vehicles from a cargo ship and provide an interface with Landing Craft Air-Cushioned vessels. The Navy will procure mobile landing platforms (MLP) to fulfill this capability. These MLPs will be based on an ALASKA-class crude oil carrier modified to be a float-on/float-off vessel. These ships will provide concept validation, operational testing, and an incremental operational capability. The three current maritime positioning squadrons will each have a MLP and a T-AKE to supplement the current maritime positioning force.

History has proven our MPF program to be a tremendous crisis response enabler. The improved at-sea transfer and selective off-load capabilities of these squadrons will further enhance speed of response and operational effectiveness with the added benefit of being able to tailor the footprint ashore as required. Marine Corps forces must participate actively in the development of TTPs and continue to think of ways to improve the crisis response capabilities of our maritime preposition program as well as chart the future course for MPF.

Tethering/Modularity

Crisis response speed and flexibility can be enhanced through forward deploying only necessary assets; preferably based at sea or cooperative security locations ashore, tethered to forward reinforcement or augmentation¹³ modules. Other assets could be located at forward

13. Reinforcement modules provide more of the same capability. Augmentation modules provide significantly different capabilities.

operating sites or even main operating bases that are farther away from the crisis scene, but still regionally accessible. For example, prior to deployment a Marine Expeditionary Unit would task organize and embark aboard amphibious shipping those capabilities necessary to conduct security cooperation and crisis response tasks unique to the region. The balance of the Marine Expeditionary Unit's capabilities would, if needed for an unanticipated crisis, be delivered via tailored modules drawn from MPS or forward operating sites. These modules might be delivered directly by the prepositioning ships or by means of high-speed connectors. Furthermore, tilt-rotor and heavy lift aircraft might be used to ferry modules from main operating bases or forward operating sites.

Crisis Response Force Packages

Crisis response speed can be further enhanced through refinement of high-readiness, "lead-element" force packages such as JTF-nucleus capable Forward Command Elements, Disaster Assessment Teams, Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Teams, Global Response Forces, and Marine Expeditionary Units forward-deployed on amphibious ships. Additional skills, such as contracting expertise to support a variety of economic initiatives, will greatly enhance crisis response effectiveness and efficiency. Capable of response within hours of a crisis, these first-on-the-scene elements provide an immediate presence with many benefits, to include a visible statement of U.S. involvement, Joint-enabled command and control suites, preliminary defense of key U.S. installations such as embassies, first-hand intelligence gathering capability and a Public Affairs planning and response capability responsible for initial liaison with local authorities. Over time, these initial-response elements can be augmented or reinforced with follow-on forces if required.

The possibility of a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high yield Explosives (CBRNE) event has increased markedly over the past decade and represents a capability set currently demanded by all regional combatant commanders. Responding to such an event prevents unique challenges and opportunities for a crisis response force. The Marine Corps needs to think comprehensively about this critical response

area, determine how best to support such an event, identify the required capabilities, and begin the process of capability development.

Streamlined Command, Control, and Communications

Crisis response speed and operational effectiveness can be enhanced through streamlining interagency communications and net-centric information-sharing processes, authorities, and technologies between Marine command elements and other joint and coalition forces, and government and non-government agencies. This may include assignment of Marines to liaison duties to facilitate communications between Marine-led forward command elements and other organizations, such as the State Department. The objective will be to reduce the time required to activate, coordinate, and ultimately take effective integrated action in response to a crisis.

Implications for Capability Development

Thorough experimentation, wargaming, and assessment are required to determine the optimal force structure and global posture that will generate Marine Corps forces agile enough to deploy rapidly, robust enough to sustain themselves in an expeditionary environment, and strong enough to succeed in likely missions. Key DOTMLPF elements of that effort will include:

- Developing crisis response force modules afloat and ashore, to include the development of a more responsive CBRNE capability (e.g. a lighter, easier to deploy subset of the current capability set or forward positioned modules in select geographic areas) and options for increasing the number of forward deployed MEUs..
- Developing, in partnership with the Navy, an interoperable system of main operating bases, forward operating sites, cooperative security locations, sea base platforms and high-speed connectors.
- Establishing, in coordination with the other services and the combatant commanders, a command and control architecture that

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integrates service, joint, interagency and multinational processes, authorities, and technologies for crisis response.

- Developing, in coordination with the other services and the combatant commanders, a streamlined global force management system for deployment, employment and sustainment planning and coordination.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented ideas for organizing and positioning Marine Corps forces to expeditiously and effectively respond to future crises. Crisis response is always difficult, and is made even more so when amphibious lift is constrained and challenges to access exist in the operating area. As our nation's force in readiness, the Marine Corps will improve speed, flexibility, and operational effectiveness to upgrade its responsiveness in crisis situations.



Chapter 6

Power Projection

*Whether the landing force lands by pulling boat, by motor sailer, by diesel-driven barge, or by helicopter, there must still be fighting men to project American maritime power onto the farther shores and the islands in between...America's safety and well-being depend in primary measure upon American ability to control and, even more important, exploit control of the seas. Thus, maritime warfare is our predominant mode of warfare, and that is where the Marine Corps finds its place, as the nation's ready maritime expeditionary force. This role suits the Marine Corps above all others, because of the naval character of the Corps.*¹⁴

Background: The Joint Expeditionary Era

During the Cold War the United States maintained a “global garrison” posture, wherein significant military forces were positioned overseas in close proximity to likely employment areas. Since the end of that conflict, U.S. military forces have been transitioning to an expeditionary posture. Most forces are now based in the United States and deploy overseas, rotationally or episodically, to meet operational requirements. Meanwhile, the United States’ global network of air and land bases has diminished. In this “joint expeditionary era,” U.S. forces are increasingly challenged by diplomatic, geographic and military impediments to access, necessitating a greater emphasis on power projection capabilities. The *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations* elaborates on this topic.

Diminishing overseas access is another challenge anticipated in the future operating environment. Foreign sensitivities to U.S. military presence have steadily been increasing. Even close allies may be hesitant to grant access for a variety of reasons. Diminished access will complicate the maintenance of forward presence, a critical aspect of past and current U.S. military strategy, necessitating new approaches to responding quickly to

14. Heinl, Robert D., Jr., *Soldiers of the Sea*, (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1962), pp. 603-604.

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*developments around the world as well as more robust exploitation of existing U.S. advantages to operate at sea and in the air, space, and cyberspace. Assuring access to ports, airfields, foreign airspace, coastal waters and host nation support in potential commitment areas will be a challenge and will require active peacetime engagement with states in volatile areas. In war, this challenge may require forcible-entry capabilities designed to seize and maintain lodgments in the face of armed resistance.*¹⁵

Power projection is defined as “the ability of a nation to apply all or some of its elements of national power—political, economic, informational, or military—to rapidly and effectively deploy and sustain forces in and from multiple dispersed locations to respond to crises, to contribute to deterrence, and to enhance regional stability.”

The United States has two broad *military* means—normally employed in combination—for projecting power overseas: air power and sea power. Air power provides a means to deliver fires, personnel (to include airborne and air-mobile forces), and limited materiel very quickly. It is less effective, however, in delivering equipment and supplies in the volume necessary to sustain larger military operations. Sea power provides a means to deliver fires, personnel (to include amphibious forces), and resources with somewhat less immediacy than air power, but in much greater weight and volume. The preponderance of joint force materiel—vehicles, equipment, ammunition, and supplies—is still delivered by sea. While air power can project a light force quickly, it is soon outpaced by, and cannot compete with, sea power in the projection and sustainment of larger forces.

Given the weight and volume advantages of seaborne transportation, sea power has long been recognized as the most useful means of projecting military power overseas. Strikes and amphibious assaults are the most commonly recognized naval contributions to power projection.

A **strike** is an attack to damage or destroy an objective or a capability. Naval strike capabilities include ballistic or cruise missiles, aircraft, naval surface fires, electronic warfare, computer network attack, Marines,

15. Mullen, Admiral, Michael G., U.S. Navy, Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 15 January 2008), p. 6.

and naval special warfare teams. Among the various strike options, the U.S. Navy's aircraft carriers and sea-based missile platforms provide unique and preeminent capabilities. U.S. aircraft carriers (often containing Marine fighter/attack squadrons) are without peer among the world's navies. Operating from international waters, their carrier air wings are capable of dominating portions of the maritime domain for hundreds of miles. In addition to the capabilities of the carriers and their embarked air wings, carrier strike groups (CSGs) may also include surface combatants and submarines capable of conducting precision missile strikes. They also provide the capability to protect power projection forces from surface, subsurface, and air-delivered threats, including ballistic missiles. The mobility, operational independence, and surge capability of these CSGs provides the access, endurance, range and volume of fires necessary to conduct a wide variety of strike operations, from time-sensitive, precision strikes against fleeting, high-value targets; to sustained, massed fires to destroy enemy ground formations. This versatility and lethality can be applied across the ROMO, from destroying terrorist base camps, to protecting friendly forces involved in sustained counterinsurgency or stability operations, or to defeating enemy anti-access/area-denial defenses in support of amphibious operations. Recent examples include the extensive air, surface, and subsurface strike operations in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. They have also included small, precise attacks against terrorist cells and sanctuaries.

An ***amphibious assault*** involves establishing a landing force on a hostile or potentially hostile shore. Although landing forces may vary in size, they are normally organized as a MAGTF—each composed of four core elements: a *command element*, a *ground combat element*, an *aviation combat element*, and a *logistics combat element*. The largest, the Marine expeditionary force, is the Marine Corps' principal warfighting organization and includes at least a Marine division, a Marine aircraft wing, and a Marine logistics group. The Marine expeditionary brigade is the "middleweight" MAGTF and is composed of at least one reinforced infantry regiment, a Marine aircraft group, and a combat logistics regiment. The Marine expeditionary unit is the standard deployed MAGTF and is composed of a reinforced infantry battalion, a composite squadron of rotary, tilt rotor, and fixed-wing aircraft, and a task-organized logistics combat element. An Amphibious ready group,

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usually composed of three ships, provides the standard means of MEU deployment and employment. An SP MAGTF is a non-standing organization temporarily formed to conduct a specific mission. Amphibious assault ships, amphibious transport dock ships, and dock landing ships provide the complementary platforms required to project, sustain, and recover landing forces, while the Naval Support Element performs key support functions. Additionally, a host of naval capabilities, such as mine warfare, may be critical to the conduct of successful amphibious assaults.

Less well understood is the utility of naval forces in projecting and sustaining other forms of national power. While assault used to be the primary impetus for amphibious capability development, future force development must address all five types of amphibious operations. These include *assaults, raids, demonstrations, withdrawals, and amphibious support to other operations*. In the post-Cold War security era, the United States has repeatedly conducted all five of these doctrinal applications of amphibious capabilities. U.S. naval forces have conducted more than 107 amphibious operations since 1990, with 78 of them falling into the “other” category. The majority of these were non-combatant evacuations, disaster relief, or similar crisis response events conducted in austere and uncertain environments.¹⁶ Indeed, one of the largest and most complex amphibious operations in modern history, the withdrawal of more than 6,200 United Nations’ peacekeepers from Somalia, was conducted under the threat of surface-to-air missiles in the hands of local militants.

Not included in those amphibious operations are the increasing number of security cooperation and proactive humanitarian assistance activities conducted by naval forces, which both the national and maritime

16. The data cited in this paragraph has been obtained from multiple sources, to include: the electronic Chronologies of the United States Marine Corps, 1982-2007 and the official histories produced by the History & Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps; SEA POWER FOR A NEW ERA: 2006 Program Guide to the U.S. Navy, Appendix A “Navy-Marine Corps Crisis Response and Combat Actions,” produced by the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations; and the Naval Review Issues of the U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 2003-2006.

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strategies espouse as essential to preventing conflict. In addition to amphibious forces, these activities have been conducted by a wide variety of naval units, to include CSGs, joint high-speed vessels, hospital ships, cutters, maritime pre-positioning ships, combat logistics force ships, and the various elements of the Naval Expeditionary Combat Command. The variety of these applications has demonstrated the flexibility of naval forces and the usefulness of sea power in projecting not only *combat* power, but also *smart* power.

Also not well understood are the important interrelationships among strike, amphibious, and sea control operations. Extensive strike operations may be essential to the successful conduct of both sea control and amphibious operations, while amphibious raids by Marines or naval special warfare teams provide a lower-scale strike option. Conversely, extensive sea control operations may be required in order to close strike platforms within range of a target. Similarly, the establishment of local sea control is usually a pre-requisite for successful amphibious operations, as demonstrated at Normandy in 1944 and countless other historical examples. The reverse is also true. Amphibious operations may be essential to the prosecution of a larger sea control effort, as was the case during the Central Pacific campaign in World War II. In the future, amphibious operations may be required to remove landward threats to sea lines of communication, especially in key maritime choke points.

A primary strength of naval forces is their ability to quickly aggregate capabilities to form Expeditionary strike forces (ESF) capable of projecting overwhelming combat power from the sea to the shore. A few recent examples of the rapid aggregation of naval forces are chronicled below:

- During Operation ENDURING FREEDOM I, Fifth Fleet was rapidly expanded to include four carrier battle groups and two ARGs/MEUs. The USS CARL VINSON, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JOHN C. STENNIS, and ENTERPRISE provided the preponderance of strike sorties for the operation.
- The USS PELELIU ARG/15th MEU and USS BATAAN ARG/26th MEU, aggregated into Task Force 58, were the first

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conventional forces ashore in Afghanistan. Projected, supported, and sustained from the sea at a distance of 450 miles, they opened a lodgment for the introduction of additional joint forces. This lodgment, Forward Operating Base Rhino, supported the seizure of Kandahar and subsequent operations several hundred miles further inland.

- Operation IRAQI FREEDOM I involved aggregation of even more forces. These included five CSGs and three ARGs/MEUs, as well as two amphibious task forces (ATFs), two maritime pre-positioning ship squadrons, a MEF and a MEB.¹⁷ Operating in the Mediterranean Sea, USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT and HARRY S. TRUMAN maintained continuous strike fighter orbits over northern Iraq—700 miles away—for 27 days in order to overcome the lack of suitable land bases in the region. In the Arabian Gulf, USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, CONSTELLATION and KITTY HAWK executed a full range of missions in support of operations in southern Iraq.¹⁸ ATF West and the maritime pre-positioning ships squadrons supported the establishment of I MEF in Kuwait in preparation for the overland attack into Iraq, while ATF East delivered 2nd MEB for the same purpose. The USS TARAWA ARG/15th MEU supported the seizure of the Al Faw Peninsula and its oil infrastructure by the United Kingdom's 3 Commando Brigade. Eight days after the attack into Iraq began, the USS NASSAU ARG landed 24th MEU in order to reinforce I MEF. In the Mediterranean, the USS IWO JIMA ARG landed 26th MEU in order to secure Mosul in northern Iraq after its liberation by Kurdish forces.

17. ATFs West, East, and the MPS ships were not part of the ESF. They provided transportation for USMC forces from CONUS

18. OIF missions conducted by Arabian Gulf-based carriers included: including Strike, Interdiction, Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD), Joint Close Air Support (JCAS), Strike Coordination and Reconnaissance, (SCAR), Forward Air Controller (Airborne) (FAC-A), ISR, Combat Air Patrol (CAP), Defensive Counter-Air (DCA), Offensive Counter-Air (OCA), Surface Combat Air Patrol (SUCAP), Airborne Battlefield Command and Control (ABCC), Electronic Warfare (EW), and Aerial Refueling.

Opportunity and Challenge

In the new joint expeditionary era, sea power provides the means for overcoming diplomatic, geographic and military impediments to access in order to project influence and power in a selectively discreet or overt manner. In addition to being able to “kick open the door” when required, the mobility and global reach of sea power allows forward postured, sea-based forces to conduct routine engagement activities and respond to episodic crises while treading lightly on partner sensibilities. As described in previous chapters, this approach can mitigate the unintended social, economic, and political consequences for a host nation partner that often accompany the basing of U.S. forces overseas. These discreet engagement and response activities can support the other elements of national power—diplomatic, informational, and economic—and contribute to establishing the mutual trust which helps alleviate reservations regarding Joint force access in times of crisis or conflict.

While the global reach of U.S. naval forces provides an inherent means of overcoming geographic impediments to access and the conduct of proactive sea-based activities by those forces may provide the opportunity to reduce diplomatic difficulties—we must also recognize that military challenges to access are expanding. These include the continued use of mines and terrorist attacks against shipping, as well as the development of anti-access weapons with increased range, speed, and precision. They also include the proliferation of such weapons among both state and non-state actors. As demonstrated during 2000 terrorist attack against the USS COLE and the 2006 Lebanon noncombatant evacuation, U.S. operations overseas—even those conducted for benign reasons—may be threatened by a variety of anti-access weapons. These conditions have generated considerable uncertainty regarding the capabilities and capacities required to project power—both soft and hard—ashore in the 21st century.

Central Idea

Power projection operations will be planned and executed based on one of three operating environments—permissive, uncertain, or hostile. Each of these operating environments, and the access challenges associated with them, must be understood in order to determine the appropriate mix of capabilities, capacities, and expertise required to operate successfully therein. A key to gaining that understanding is recognition that the capabilities, tactics, and techniques applied in future power projection operations may bear little resemblance to those employed by previous generations of Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen.

The sections below describe these operating environments, while also providing a conceptual framework to support capability and capacity assessments. They are succeeded by a summation of the naval logistics and command and control enhancements necessary to support power projection in the 21st century.

A ***permissive environment*** is one in which host country military and law enforcement agencies have control as well as the intent and capability to assist operations that a unit intends to conduct. Forward postured naval forces routinely conduct a variety of power projection operations in permissive environments. The capabilities that allow naval forces to project and sustain combat power against a hostile shore are the same capabilities that allow them to overcome limited or damaged local infrastructure, while also providing a diplomatically discrete alternative to basing U.S. forces overseas. Command and control centers, well decks, flight decks, surface and air connectors, emergency medical capability and cargo capacity all allow globally distributed, mission-tailored naval forces to conduct sea-based security cooperation activities; build partnerships; respond to disasters; and, when necessary, facilitate the introduction of additional naval, joint, or multinational capabilities, as well as interagency, multinational, or non-governmental organizations.

An ***uncertain environment*** is one in which host government forces, whether opposed to or receptive to operations that a unit intends to conduct, do not have totally effective control of the territory and population in the intended operational area. Forward postured naval forces have frequently conducted a number of crisis response operations,

such as noncombatant evacuation or embassy reinforcement, in uncertain environments. Occasionally, they have been called upon to aggregate with additional forces to conduct larger missions, such as the 1995 amphibious withdrawal of United Nations' forces from Somalia. Similar applications of naval capability can be anticipated in the future.

Additionally, in the 21st century an increased number of ungoverned or under-governed areas throughout the world are being exploited as safe havens by terrorists, weapons traffickers, pirates, and other criminal elements. In all likelihood, these complex and uncertain environments may be the most prevalent arena for power projection in the foreseeable future. Naval forces are increasingly likely to be tasked with counterterrorism, counter-proliferation, and counter-piracy missions. These will likely involve strikes and amphibious raids conducted for the purposes of: destroying terrorists and their sanctuaries; capturing pirates or other criminals and seizing contraband; rescuing hostages; or securing, safeguarding and removing materiel, to include weapons of mass destruction.

Operations in complex and uncertain environments will be conducted with the expectation of armed opposition. In some cases, however, rules of engagement may constrain naval forces from conducting kinetic attacks. While a fully integrated anti-access defense is unlikely to be present, potential adversaries—including non-state actors—may still possess a variety of lethal anti-access weapons. Naval forces can limit the effectiveness of such weapons through a combination of new tactics and technologies such as: over-the-horizon operations; improved shipboard defenses; greater connector range, speed and agility; improved mine countermeasures, and highly responsive counter-fire—especially for the immediate suppression of threats. Information operations, to include deception, psychological operations, and the non-kinetic neutralization of potential adversaries' command and control systems, will likely be required.

A **hostile environment** is one in which hostile forces have control as well as the intent and capability to effectively oppose or react to the operations a unit intends to conduct. The most challenging power projection mission in a hostile environment is an amphibious assault to enable the introduction and sustainment of large-scale follow-on forces.

While other power projection operations in an uncertain or hostile environment, such as strikes and amphibious raids may be more likely, amphibious assaults conducted to open a major operation will require the full range of naval, joint, and interagency capabilities necessary to establish local sea control and project power ashore. Three major, overlapping tasks provide a useful conceptual framework in this regard:

Gaining and Maintaining Operational Access

Although a large number of countries possess military capabilities that will generate varying degrees of uncertainty regarding operational access, only a few have the capability to present a comprehensive anti-access defense-in-depth. There are, however, several scenarios—vital to U.S. national interests—in which a potential adversary might seek to curtail our freedom of action through the threatened or actual employment of robust anti-access capabilities. Some of these pose a serious danger impossible to ignore. The effectiveness of widely proliferated first generation anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) can be reduced through over-the-horizon operations that minimize an adversary's ability to acquire and track targets. While the number of countries currently possessing the latest generation of longer range, higher speed, and more lethal ASCMs is limited, it is highly likely that over time such weapons will become more widely proliferated. Furthermore, the use of ships and aircraft as ASCM launch platforms will allow adversaries to extend the range at which they can challenge operational access. If successful, the development of anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) will pose a more significant threat to access. Adversaries may also attempt to neutralize U.S. intelligence, command and control, and weapons capabilities by attacking information systems and networks, including the satellites that enable them. We can also expect adversaries to exploit low cost non-technical means to sever or weaken our logistics sustainment, and will need to protect our forces at sea and ashore in order to ensure sustained combat capability.

The various military challenges to gaining and maintaining operational access described above—and others yet to be envisioned—may not be present in every power projection operation. The full range of current and potential threats must, however, be identified to develop the means of countering them. Gaining and maintaining access will require a

comprehensive joint force solution, including air, space, cyberspace, special operations, and U.S. Government civilian agency capabilities—both lethal and non-lethal. Marines contribute to that joint solution by providing the ability to conduct *naval maneuver*. Naval maneuver involves fighting at and from the sea to project and sustain *ready-to-fight* combat forces or conduct strikes on a hostile or potentially hostile shore, and may be conducted from strategic distances. Littoral maneuver is a critical subset of naval maneuver.

The establishment of local sea control, which permits the use of the sea as maneuver space, is the essential pre-condition for successful power projection. Forward postured U.S. naval forces, reinforced when necessary by others aggregated from different locations, will gain and maintain access. This will involve application of integrated air and missile defense, undersea warfare, surface warfare, and mine warfare tasks, as well as extensive strike operations to defeat anti-access and area denial challenges. In several potential scenarios an important element of gaining access will be neutralization of advanced anti-ship cruise missiles prior to surface forces coming within their range.

Armed with a combination of manned and unmanned aircraft, carriers will play a major role in deterring conflict and projecting power far into the foreseeable future. Aircraft carriers are normally deployed in strike groups. CSGs will continue to include surface combatants to conduct sea control tasks, and may include submarines to conduct sea control and power projection tasks. Surface combatants also provide a complementary aviation strike capability in the form of helicopters carrying air-to-surface missiles. Amphibious assault ships with rotary and fixed-wing attack aircraft also provide a strike capability complementary to that provided by aircraft carriers.

Appropriate capacity of continuous, high-volume naval surface fires in support of strike and over-the-horizon amphibious operations will be required for many scenarios. Current shipboard gun systems must be complemented by airpower and missiles to degrade adversary defenses from a safe distance and to support the initial phases of an amphibious assault when organic artillery is not yet ashore. Additionally, the robust land attack missile advantage of our surface combatants and submarines will be employed as required.

Advanced target acquisition capabilities, exploiting a combination of space-based and locally deployable intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) systems, has improved target designation and combat efficiency. Naval platforms will continue to deploy networked and interoperable ISR capabilities to support local, regional and global operations, and will be complemented by enhanced reach-back capabilities. These capabilities will likely include a complementary mix of air, surface, and underwater manned and unmanned platforms with multi-spectral capability as well as highly trained reconnaissance and surveillance teams, and the craft that transport them—to obtain information that only a human can provide. Additionally, all-weather, obscured visibility target designation capabilities will ensure increased levels of precision fires.

Weapon system enhancements will continue to be focused on improving range, precision, speed of delivery, and penetrating power. Future enhancements to naval surface fires may include hypersonic precision ordnance and loitering munitions. Aviation strike capabilities will benefit from advanced networks and unmanned systems, and development of a longer-range, low-observable aircraft, including a vertical/short takeoff and landing variant. Missile enhancements will include greater speed, range and precision capabilities to attack time-sensitive targets and minimize collateral damage. Additionally, we will continue to expand a portfolio of electronic warfare and computer network attack options.

Conducting Littoral Maneuver

Littoral maneuver is the ability to transition ready-to-fight combat forces from the sea to the shore in order to achieve a position of advantage over the enemy. It may be employed: directly against an objective, including inland objectives, to accomplish the mission singly; to seize infrastructure or lodgments which will enable the arrival of follow-on forces; or to pose a continuous coastal threat which causes an adversary to dissipate his forces. Littoral maneuver is enabled by the ability of naval forces to establish moving umbrellas of domain superiority around the various distributed elements of the landing force. MEBs will normally provide the landing force building blocks for larger

contingencies and major operations. When combined, two MEB assault echelons constitute the assault echelon of a MEF.

Weather, geography, mission purpose, and the nature of the operating environment will all combine to create a unique set of seaward and landward littoral maneuver challenges for every power projection operation. Military challenges may include enemy aircraft, air defenses, submarines, surface combatants, fast-attack craft (including suicide boats), improvised explosive devices and mines (in the sea and vary shallow water, as well as on land), and a collection of weapons often referred to as G-RAMM: guided rockets, artillery, mortars and missiles. In addition to counter-attacks by conventional maneuver forces, littoral maneuver may also be subject to attack by irregular forces employing a variety of simple and sophisticated weapons.

To offset these threats, especially widely proliferated first-generation ASCM, assault echelons will normally commence littoral maneuver from amphibious ships positioned—at least initially—over-the-horizon. This will maximize the range from and minimize the ISR available to the adversary. Naval forces use complementary, high-speed vertical and surface means in support of over-the-horizon littoral maneuver. The desire to provide a mix of vertical and surface means is well founded. Operational experience has repeatedly demonstrated that the rapid projection of combat power ashore is the key to successful littoral maneuver. Experience and analysis have shown that the fastest method of doing so is through a combination of vertical and surface means.¹⁹ These complementary means also provide flexibility in negating threats unique to a given operation. For example, during Operation UNITED SHIELD in 1995, a landing force was projected ashore to support the amphibious withdrawal of United Nations forces from Somalia using an all-surface approach in order to offset a significant surface-to-air missile threat.

19. The second-fastest method of building up combat power is by using surface lift only. An amphibious operation conducted exclusively with vertical lift provides the slowest means of building combat power. The all-vertical lift option is therefore primarily suited for small-scale, long-range but short duration operations.

Additionally, the enhanced MAGTF operations initiative is pursuing capability and capacity refinements that will improve the self-sufficiency of smaller units so that they can operate over greater ranges and for extended duration, as well as increasing their ability to land from a wider variety of ships. It also includes the ability to conduct larger-scale operations by transitioning numerous maneuver units ashore via multiple, distributed points—versus establishing a single, contiguous beachhead—in order to avoid established defenses, natural obstacles, and the presentation of a concentrated, lucrative target.

By keeping its command, aviation, and logistics elements afloat to the maximum extent possible, the MAGTF will further reduce vulnerabilities ashore while retaining a high degree of mobility and dexterity. This approach will provide multiple options for employment of the ground combat element within the joint or multinational force commander's scheme of maneuver. Included among those options is the ability to re-embark the ground combat element to conduct further amphibious operations aimed at outflanking an adversary, cutting enemy supply lines, or simply outpacing overland movement.

Sustained littoral operations may also include the employment of coastal and riverine forces. Depending upon the environment and the mission, these forces may operate as independent units or be task-organized with amphibious and strike forces to ensure an integrated, combined-arms approach to littoral operations. Embarkation of Marines, Coast Guardsmen, or Navy Maritime Expeditionary Security Force personnel aboard littoral combatants may provide additional force employment options. This organizational flexibility provides additional fire, maneuver and sustainment options within the larger context of a joint or multinational campaign.

Littoral operations are frequently conducted in underdeveloped areas of the world and in austere theaters. Expeditionary forces must be able to sustain initial operations independent of local infrastructure, securing the maritime environment and providing the essential supplies and services necessary to keep the force sustained and equipped to conduct the ROMO. Leveraging the benefits of seabasing, integrated naval logistics

and a complementary mix of vertical and surface connectors will support and sustain all elements of the force afloat and ashore.

Enabling the Arrival of Joint or Multinational Forces

Naval forces may be tasked with enabling the rapid build-up of joint or multinational forces in the objective area. Inasmuch as the finite number of amphibious ships will be committed to the assault echelons conducting littoral maneuver, the arrival of follow-on forces will be accomplished primarily through *naval movement*. Naval movement involves military sealift and merchant vessels transporting vehicles, equipment, and supplies in volume over strategic distances for offload at a port or expeditionary facility. Naval movement is normally employed in concert with the movement of personnel by strategic airlift. Maritime pre-positioning forces, which are composed of one or more maritime pre-positioning ship squadrons, a Navy support element, and a MAGTF fly-in echelon, exemplify the combination of naval movement and strategic airlift. Maritime pre-position forces play a crucial role in rapidly reinforcing the assault echelons in order to bring the full capabilities of the MEF into action. This approach merges the weight and volume advantages of sealift with the speed of airlift. However, unlike naval maneuver, which projects units in ready-to-fight condition, naval movement and strategic airlift are dependent upon secure infrastructure ashore to deliver disaggregated elements which must go through a process of reception, staging, onward movement, and integration before units can be employed. Naval movement and strategic airlift must therefore be enabled by amphibious or airborne forces either seizing existing infrastructure intact or securing a lodgment for the establishment of expeditionary facilities.

The seizure of existing ports and airfields intact is not always possible. Adversaries recognize their value and may concentrate defensive capabilities around these facilities. They may also disable or destroy key infrastructure to prevent its use. Even a successful seizure might cause combat damage. In some cases infrastructure may not be available, or a joint force commander may intentionally avoid established ports and airfields—at least initially—in order to make his scheme of maneuver less predictable. Naval forces must therefore be capable of mine countermeasures operations, explosive ordnance disposal, and

construction engineering in order to conduct rapid repair of existing facilities or to build expeditionary facilities. Naval cargo handlers, combat logisticians, and maritime security forces will also be required to facilitate the introduction of follow-on forces and other resources.

The dependence upon secure infrastructure ashore may be alleviated to a degree through select enhancements to maritime pre-positioning and other forms of military sealift. Providing the ability to conduct selective offload and at-sea transfer of personnel and equipment from sealift platforms to amphibious ships or directly to air and surface craft capable of ship-to-shore delivery would enable a more sea-based approach. Current high-speed intra-theater connectors are capable of offloading onto austere facilities in a secure area. Increased use of expeditionary causeway systems or development of connectors may further exploit that characteristic to reduce reliance on existing infrastructure, as would the development of future connectors capable of offload near-shore or on the beach.

Naval Expeditionary Logistics

Naval forces are among the most responsive, flexible, powerful and independent tools of national policy, and robust expeditionary logistics support is a critical enabler across all naval missions. Effective naval logistics supports continuous forward presence, peacetime engagement, deterrence, and timely crisis response from the challenging maritime and littoral environment. In peace, naval logistics enables our forces to accomplish a wide variety of missions—independently or in conjunction with other Services, agencies, allies, or coalition partners. In war, it is essential to combat effectiveness.

The ability to sustain forces—whether globally dispersed or aggregated to project power—is accomplished through an extensive defense distribution system comprised of military bases at home and abroad; expeditionary enabling and support forces; joint capabilities; host and partner nations; and private vendors. Built around the Combat Logistics Force ships and support ships operated by the Military Sealift Command, naval expeditionary logistics provides an end-to-end supply chain capable of continuously providing parts, supplies, and equipment from the continental United States, or intermediate advanced bases, directly to

naval forces at sea. With these assets, a full range of logistics distribution functions are possible even when shore-based support is limited or nonexistent. The ability to conduct logistics functions afloat enables naval forces to maintain station anywhere. The Navy and Marine Corps will further improve support and sustainment of forward operations by moving beyond logistic interoperability toward Naval Logistics Integration (NLI). NLI will enhance our ability to provide sea-based support to naval as well as joint and multinational forces operating at sea or ashore.

Command and Control Enhancements

Given the anticipated complexity, tempo, and distributed nature of future power projection operations, naval forces will require the technical capability and command relationship flexibility to support an increased level of coordination and integration among all elements of the force. Naval forces will require the ability to collect, process, and disseminate relevant information in near real time to support distributed fire and maneuver at the operational and tactical levels. This will require that ISR sensors, processing systems and associated communication systems are fully interoperable and scalable to the particular mission. Platforms will be networked to allow for increased decentralization. Planning will be distributed using en route mission planning software and leveraging reach-back to non-deployable organizations for subject matter expertise. Given the distances from which they will be employed, naval forces will require collaborative planning, rehearsal, execution and assessment tools. Additionally, landing forces and support craft will require beyond-line-of-sight, over-the-horizon, and on-the-move systems capable of operating in a degraded communications environment.

These operational capabilities will be incorporated into the continued development of the Navy's Maritime Operations Centers (MOC)²⁰ and

20. MOCs are functionally-organized staffs that use standardized processes and a globally networked architecture to support Navy commanders' assigned operational level command and control responsibilities, either as a Service component commander, joint force maritime component commander (JFMCC) or as a commander, joint task force (CJTF). MOCs also allow commanders to track items of interest in the maritime domain as they cross geographic combatant command boundaries, which are largely located at sea.

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Marine Corps command and control nodes. Included among these initiatives will be development of improved command and control capabilities both afloat and ashore. The aggregate of C2 enhancements will incorporate manning and protection for network, intelligence, and decision aid architectures. Standardized task forces will provide strike, expeditionary and landing force training and process improvements, which support decentralized control and execution while enhancing joint coordination.

In many operating environments, however, this level of connectivity may not be possible, as emerging anti-satellite weapons, jamming technologies and precision strike may damage or degrade our network infrastructure. To allow effective power projection in the face of these challenges, the Naval Service must develop procedures to operate with only line-of-sight communications or no communications, while establishing more resilient networks that rely on distributed and redundant nodes; in space, the atmosphere and on the surface. This resilient network will also require improved command and control capabilities afloat to execute missions and control naval and air forces without the benefit of reach-back to out-of-theater organizations.

Conclusion

The ability to project and sustain power ashore is the basis of our combat credibility. Enhancing our ability to counter more widely proliferated and sophisticated anti-access/area denial threats will be a key factor in allowing the United States to not only win but to deter future conflicts.



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Chapter 7

Countering Irregular Threats

*The application of purely military measures may not, by itself, restore peace and orderly government because the fundamental causes of the condition of unrest may be economic, political, or social.*²¹

Introduction

First and foremost, this is a concept about war. Conventional warfare and irregular warfare are subsets of war that exist simultaneously, to one extent or another, on every battlefield. The purpose of this concept is to describe Marine Corps operations to counter irregular threats. The term irregular threat does not ignore or re-define existing terminology—it is meant to widen the aperture through which we look for solutions. This concept is designed with two objectives in mind. First, it is intended to influence the capability development process by focusing on the challenges of countering irregular threats. Secondly, it is written to assist Marine leaders at all levels that are engaged in the execution of policy.

From a historical perspective, the ideas posited in this concept are not new. From a capability development perspective, however, they are new in that they break the focus on combined arms maneuver of mechanized forces that has predominated since the Vietnam War. This conventional focus often assumed that forces designed, trained and equipped for major combat operations against a peer competitor would be equally adept at operations to counter insurgents, guerrilla forces, and other irregular threats. Recent experience has revealed the fallacy of such assumptions. Understanding and adequately preparing for operations against irregular threats requires an intellectual investment by Marines similar to that expended by their forbearers in developing amphibious warfare capability and our maneuver warfare philosophy.

21. U.S. Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual*, 1940

Future Conflicts and the Nature and Theory of War

Future conflict will not be dominated by tests of strength that characterize industrial war.²² It will be dominated by wars fought among the people, where the objective is not to crush an opponent's war making ability but to influence a population's ideas and collective will. The nature of war in the 21st Century is the same as it has been since ancient times, "...a violent clash of interests between or among organized groups characterized by the use of military force."²³ The terms "organized" and "military force" refer to a group's ability to mobilize support for its own political interests and its "ability to generate violence on a scale sufficient to have significant political consequences."²⁴ These terms do not limit the participants in war to regular armies employed by a nation-state.

Clausewitz tells us that war has two natures, the "objective" and the "subjective."²⁵ Though this seems confusing, it demonstrates the dynamic nature of war. It is both constant and fluctuating. The objective represents those elements or qualities that every war has in common. The subjective refers to those qualities that change from war to war.²⁶ There is permanence to the objective nature of war that is represented in the enduring elements that all wars, large and small, share. These enduring qualities include friction, uncertainty, fluidity, disorder and danger. These qualities produce interactions that are a complex mixture of causes and effect that cannot be individually isolated or dominated by technological solutions. Though these elements of the objective nature of war are always present they vary in degree from war to war based on the political purpose of the conflict. Like the weather, certain elements are common—pressure, humidity, wind, and so forth—but they vary

22. General Sir Rupert Smith, "The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World," (United Kingdom: Allen Lane, Sept 2005.).

23. MCDP 1, Warfighting, (Washington, DC: United States Marine Corps, June 1997) p. 3.

24. Ibid, p.3

25. Ibid, p. 85.

26. Antulio Echevarria, "The Trouble With History," (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Quarterly: Parameters, Summer 2005), p.138

constantly; it is the same in war.²⁷ The subjective nature of war consists of qualities that vary to a greater degree and consist of things like the political purpose of the conflict, the types of armed forces used or the weapons and tactics employed. The subjective factors are often what cause the objective to vary in degree of clarity.

War, as an aspect of politics, extends beyond the winning of battles and campaigns. Winning battles is a means to the end but does not solely drive the outcome in war. The achievement of strategic objectives in war includes military action considered in concert with all the other instruments of power and influence. In an ideal sense, the requirements of policy can lead to absolute wars or wars for more limited policy objectives. In reality, the requirements of policy may be almost infinitely various, war can surely be of any kind, not only of two.²⁸

The American Approach

History reveals that violent clashes of interests often include irregular forces or factions that exist outside the authority of established states. *War in the Shadows*, by Robert Asprey, documents over two thousand years of conflict between regular and irregular forces. In 1965, Dr. Bernard Fall described the 20th Century as “The Century of Small Wars.” He cited 48 small wars from the first 65 years of the 20th Century that, *in toto*, involved as many people and as many casualties as either one of the two world wars.²⁹ This is no insignificant point and suggests that conflicts like World War II represent both an aberration as well as a refinement of the actual tradition of war. The traditional form of war is actually more irregular.

In 1964, Bernard Fall warned “American readers... will find to their surprise that their various seemingly ‘new’ counter-insurgency gambits,

27. Analogy provided by Dr. Echevarria during an interview conducted on 20 September 2005.

28. Michael Howard, Clausewitz, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.51.

29. Bernard Fall, “The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” (Newport, RI: Naval War College Review, 1965), p.1.

from strategic hamlets to large-scale pacification, are mere rehashes of old tactics to which helicopters, weed killers, and rapid firing rifles merely add a new dimension...without changing the character of the struggle.”³⁰ Asprey, Fall, Clausewitz, and other distinguished students of war all echo the sentiment that asymmetric adaptation during war is timeless. Regardless of the actors involved, war is fundamentally a struggle between “...hostile, independent, and irreconcilable wills, each trying to impose itself upon the other.”³¹

The American way of war has predominantly been shaped by conflicts characterized by the use regular armies. Throughout history, states have made war against other states in what most have come to see as conventional warfare. In this sense, and particularly from the American perspective, the term “conventional” in the context of military operations has come to be synonymous with “regular” or “traditional” combat. The reality is that war will not always follow convention, and actors other than conventional combatants may engage in combat. The weak will usually look for innovative ways to attack the strong; and the strong will similarly look for ways to gain advantage over their opponents, including unconventional means.

Even American history does not reflect the argument that conventional war is the most common or even most significant, defining type of warfare.³² Regardless, throughout American history the default setting for military preparedness has derived from what was considered conventional or regular. Since World War II the U.S. military has been predominantly organized, trained and equipped to fight an enemy very much like the image it saw in the mirror. This concept will address a broader view of war beyond the microcosm of modern conventional war. It will address what the U.S. military has for some number of years termed “irregular.”

30. Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1975), p.xiii

31. MCDP 1, p. 3.

32. As exemplified by: Gen Nathanael Greene’s southern campaign of the Revolutionary War; the Indian Wars (Colonial period through late 1800s); the Philippine Insurrection 1899-1902; the Banana Wars; Vietnam; and Somalia, among others.

Irregular Threats

The term irregular is broadly used herein to refer to all types of unconventional methods of violence employed to counter the traditional capabilities of the military forces of a nation-state. Irregular threats include acts of a military, political, psychological, and economic nature, conducted by both host nation and outside actors for the purpose of undermining the authority of a local government or influencing an external power. Individuals who practice irregular methods and tactics probably do not consider themselves “irregular.” They are “irregular” from the perspective of a western nation-state such as the United States. Included in this broad category of irregular threats are insurgents, guerrillas, terrorists, and similar groups and organizations that operate in and from numerous weakened and failed states. For capability development purposes, it is useful to group them under the rubric of irregular threats because the techniques of countering such threats share some commonality.

Successfully countering irregular threats requires an understanding of the particular character of the conflict, its context, and its participants. Typically this is more difficult in a conflict with irregular threats than one with conventional forces. Insurgency begins with a cause. Conceptually, there are two elements of that cause: the underlying social environment, or “passive” element that provides the background context, and a catalyst, which is an “active” element of the cause. For instance, widespread discontent may provide a passive background that is ripe for expansion into an active insurgency and collective violence.³³ The people come to a point that they believe their situation will improve by overthrowing the existing regime or evicting an occupation force. Passive elements, however, usually do not lead directly to an insurgency. They usually require an agent to spark insurrection. In most cases, an insurgent-elite interjects the catalyst by increasing the population’s sensitivity to their disadvantaged state, or by committing overt acts, or both.

33. Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 13.

Whether classified as insurgents, guerrillas, or terrorists, these individuals are usually involved in a political struggle of one sort or another against existing authority. If government authority is unable or unwilling to address real or perceived inequities, a portion of the population may resort to some form of rebellion against those in power. This usually involves attempts to “de-legitimize” that authority in the eyes of the population at large in order to bring about social or political change. For a populace to support a rebellion, they must clearly see that there is futility in continuing the social debate within the framework of the existing government. Likewise, if a government takes actions, even after a rebellion has begun, which substantially address the people’s grievances the insurgency may be undermined and the rebels ultimately convinced to work within the system. Essentially, the counterinsurgency effort works to diminish or remove the catalytic agent while also working to improve the background situation (the passive element of the cause) that fueled the rebellion to begin with.

The Security Environment and Policy Objectives

Throughout the last half of the 20th century, the United States’ national security strategy rested on deterrence in a bipolar world. The delicate stability that existed during the Cold War era was characterized by elaborate deterrence measures by the two super-powers, such as the development and fielding of robust conventional military capabilities, along with thermo-nuclear weapons and delivery systems. To avoid escalation to a war of almost unimaginable consequences, the two super-powers did not engage each other in direct combat but instead conducted a series of irregular “proxy wars.” Paradoxically, most of the U.S. military remained focused on fighting conventional wars. The collapse of the Soviet Union prompted the emergence of a more complex and unpredictable world in which the Cold War concepts of security and deterrence have less relevance.³⁴ A new security environment, wherein irregular challenges have increased, has replaced the one for which the majority of the U.S. military has been organized, trained, and equipped.

34. Max G. Manwaring, “The Inescapable Global Security Arena” (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), p. 3.

Though traditional threats may arise, irregular threats will likely be the predominant threat we will face in the future. Deadly violence, extremism and state failure are widespread problems in many parts of the world. The causes of modern conflict and state failure are varied but often include stagnant or deteriorating economies, weak or corrupt political institutions and intense competition over natural resources. These causes often involve ethnic, religious, political, or ideological underpinnings. Whatever the dominant theme, most conflicts take on elements of most or all of these trends and cannot be neatly slotted into one category.³⁵

The rise of transnational extremist ideologies has added a new dimension to irregular conflict. Internal or localized strife is now subject to exploitation by transnational actors. Civil discord is likely to arise in countries suffering from ethnic or religious strife, poverty, a highly unequal distribution of wealth, the vestiges of colonization, weak governmental institutions, ineffective police and military forces, and difficult terrain—conditions that allow irregular threats to thrive.³⁶ Weak or failing states often display an inability to preempt, counter or contain the cross-border activities of disaffected groups. Irregular groups that seek to undermine stability or to simply remain unmolested often have easy access to weapons and sanctuary or safe havens from which they create unrest. The gap created in a nation's ability to govern often results, ultimately, in a failed or failing state. This phenomenon can create opportunity and sanctuary for non-state actors.

Today the United States faces a transnational threat that is composed of extremist organizations with regional allies and affiliates. Many local irregular groups have existed before or in isolation from these transnational extremist organizations, and have no ideological linkages or common objective. In other cases, particularly in areas of the world

35. Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, *Conducting a Conflict Assessment: A Framework for Strategy and Program Development*, (Washington, DC: U. S. Agency for International Development, 2004), p.12.

36. Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascual, "Addressing State Failure," (New York, NY: Foreign Affairs Magazine, July/August 2005)

that are historically characterized by ethnic or religious strife compounded by poverty, regional extremist organizations co-opt local groups and issues that serve their goals as well as those of their global affiliates. In doing so, these regional groups serve as intermediaries.³⁷ This global movement is made up of loosely coupled, independent movements and not a monolithic, easily template-able organization. Global players link to and exploit local players through regional affiliates who provide sponsorship and support to the local level.³⁸ This global aspect or nature to conflict adds a new dimension of complexity and may substantially complicate the effort to counter irregular threats. Our ability to operate in the “cognitive domain” represented by the intersection of complex environments, hybrid threats, many-sided views of what constitutes success, cultural predispositions, and the like will rely as much on the “non-kinetic” abilities of the MAGTF as they will on the violently “kinetic” abilities.

Some Precepts for Countering Irregular Threats

Research and analysis of doctrine, historical case studies, wargaming, and lessons learned from more recent experience in irregular conflict, has resulted in development of following precepts for countering irregular threats:³⁹

- ***Political Primacy in pursuit of objectives*** ensures that any conflict, including those that involve irregular threats, is understood as a political problem that cannot be solved through a single means.
- ***Legitimacy and the moral right to govern*** create a contract between the governed and the governors. That contract is based on an idea of governance that derives its powers from the

37. LtCol David Kilcullen, “Countering Global Insurgency,” (Small Wars Journal web site, 30 November 2004), p.10

38. Ibid., P.10

39. This list is was developed from input provided by select participants in the Joint Urban Warrior 2005 Wargame, informed by U.S., British and Australian doctrine as well as the writings of Kitson, Thompson, Galula and Manwaring.

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consent of the governed. The government should have viable political competence that can and will manage, coordinate, and sustain security, and political, economic, and social development in a morally and culturally acceptable way.

- ***Understand*** the complex dynamics of the threat, including the wider environment. This includes understanding the causes, ideologies, aims, organizations, capabilities, methods/approaches, external support, and wider environment.
- ***Influence*** human will through the discriminate application of power (including a limitation on the use of force, especially firepower) and other means of persuasion. Supplant or preempt the ideas of the irregulars while contributing to the welfare of the society. Understand the importance of the “say-do” gap and be able to mitigate its effects.
- ***Unity of purpose*** facilitates the coordinated actions of participating agencies.
- ***Isolate*** the irregulars from their physical and moral support base. Address the conditions that permit the spread of enemy ideologies and provide a viable alternative.
- ***Patience, persistence, and presence*** with no sanctuary. Each area requires a unique approach. Normalize where possible. Do not conduct large operations unless prepared to suffocate the insurgent with the swift introduction of police and political bureaucracy.
- ***Sustained commitment to expend political capital and resources over a long period.***

Description of the Military Problem

Combat operations are rarely, if ever, singularly decisive when countering irregular threats. The U.S. military has not relinquished its conventional view of war based on conceptual thinking that was prominent immediately following World War II and reemphasized

following the Vietnam War. This conventional view is incomplete when viewed against the backdrop of the security environment the United States is likely to face for the foreseeable future. Today's military personnel struggle with conceptualizing the threat. They have difficulty developing strategies and designing campaigns that are suitable for countering irregular threats. Military personnel often focus on what they know best: combat operations. In successful conflict resolution against irregular threats, combat operations are but one of several campaign design components that must be applied in a coherent and synchronized way.

Central Idea

To be successful at effectively countering irregular threats, military personnel must view both the problem and the solution more holistically. The establishment of a secure environment in which a society can make progress, that supports the normality of that particular society, is vitally important. Security cannot be established solely through combat operations and the training and mentoring of host nation security forces. To support the establishment of stability the military, along with other government agencies and coalition partners, requires a broader appreciation of the problem that leads to intervention and the requisite solutions. Toward that end, an expanded view of campaign design must be applied. That view includes the following components: ***combat operations, training and advising host nation security forces, essential services, promotion of governance, economic development, and strategic communications.***⁴⁰ These components are not intended to be a "success template." They will require judgment in application, with the nature of each conflict demanding different emphasis and techniques associated with each component. Additionally, each intervention will require working relationships between all participants, civilian and military, American and allies, that foster unity of effort. The military must not only understand the impact that each component may have on campaign success, they must also be prepared to lead activities

40. Major General Peter Chiarelli and Major Patrick Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full Spectrum Operations," (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center: Military Review, July-August 2005) p. 7.

associated with components that have not traditionally been military responsibilities.

Campaign Components

The six components listed above are intended to inform both capability development and practical application in countering irregular threats. These components will be most effective when integrated and synchronized within a situation-specific concept of operations—none exist in isolation, nor should they be planned or executed in isolation of the other components. “Success” in a singular component may, if not conducted in consonance with the other components, create a “gap” that is detrimental to overall success. The assumption must be that the enemy could exploit this “gap” if he senses it.⁴¹ For this reason, it is important to acknowledge and maintain the harmonic balance between the components. Leaders should ask themselves, “What will be the effect of this action or effort on the other components?”⁴²

These components will require the establishment of criteria for success. Assessment will play a crucial role in the operational application of this concept. Commanders at every level should make assessment a natural, integrated part of their operational activity. When dealing with irregular threats, decision-making is often extraordinarily complex, and progress may come slowly and in unusual and unexpected ways. Assessment is not a function to be performed by a staff officer at some place far removed from the action, but rather it should occur within the domain of execution, where action is specifically taking place. A continual assessment dialogue should take place between leaders at all echelons, contributing to the ongoing refinement of campaign design and execution. That assessment dialogue is based on judgment, intuition, and quantitative as well as qualitative analysis. Commanders should choose criteria carefully so that they align with, and keep subordinates focused on, the overarching purpose. Establishing criteria for success should

41. Ibid.

42. Insight provided by Ambassador Edwin Corr, telephonically, 4 Oct 2005. In that discussion, the term “lines of operation” was used instead of “campaign components.”

quite naturally lead to the development of criteria for assessment, which are normally observable outputs. Great care must be applied here, as we are often dealing with complex societal issues requiring judicious assessment criteria in order to avoid spurious conclusions. In an intervention military leaders will be predisposed toward military solutions and assessment criteria, but when countering irregular threats they will likely be secondary to political, ideological and administrative issues.⁴³ Political, economic, and social initiatives, with their respective assessment criteria, will take precedence.

These components are relevant to all six phases of the joint campaign construct, although a different emphasis may be placed on the various components during different phases. In most cases, the earlier irregular threats are addressed, the easier it will be to reach a positive conclusion. For this reason, the Marine Corps will make substantial use of forward presence via engagement to support security cooperation and counterterrorism to provide the means of proactively shaping the environment as well as to enable preemption or early intervention.

Combat Operations

Combat operations involve the purposeful application of violence, or the threat of violence, to establish dominance over an adversary or create favorable conditions within an operating environment. The combat operations required to counter irregular threats may have some similarities to conventional operations, but they also have significant differences. They are often more complex and ambiguous in nature than conventional combat operations because they occur among the people. The people are the battlefield—the objectives to be won. Combat operations take place in the presence of civilians, in defense of civilians, and against some portion of those civilians. These combat operations will pit Marines against an elusive enemy who will seek to avoid direct combat so that he can survive to strike another day. Combat operations remain an essential element in counterinsurgency campaign design, but do not provide the decisive means of achieving the political end state as they would in an industrial war.

43. Fall, p. 1.

Combat operations against irregular threats are largely focused on providing security for, and isolating the insurgents from, the population. While large operations may occasionally be necessary, they will not be the norm. Policing or constabulary activities will take precedence over killing the enemy. Large unit operations, especially those predicated on vague intelligence are generally imprecise and indiscriminant. They tend to disturb the population and are rarely able to locate the insurgent elites who provide the catalytic agent. In the end, large-unit operations can often create more animosity than positive results and thus continue to fuel the insurgency.⁴⁴ Historically, combat operations have best supported the overall counterinsurgency effort by employing small units with substantial freedom of action.

Some of the reasons for this phenomenon emanate from the greater ability of small units to act in a timely and discriminate fashion. Small units can more easily be placed close the population—“hugging” them—to establish the relationship that is essential to counterinsurgency success. Physical proximity to, and shared hardship with, the people will help establish and reinforce such relationships.⁴⁵ These relationships promote greater cultural understanding and situational awareness among military forces, and lead to better tactical intelligence. Large units ensconced in “secure” bases may provide the illusion of force protection, but they run counter to the need for establishing a positive relationship with the populace. Anything that physically or psychologically separates the intervention force from the population makes forming that relationship more difficult.

“Hugging” the population places great demands on small-unit leaders. There are few prescribed solutions for the myriad, complex, and fluid situations that will likely arise. Each of these will require timely decisions independent of a higher headquarters far removed from, and unfamiliar with, local conditions. Small-unit leaders will be forced into a dynamic environment for which they must have the skills and autonomy

44. Kalev I. Sepp, “Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,” (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center: Military Review, May-June 2005) p. 10.

45. *Ibid.* p.10.

to make decisions on their own. Key capability development tasks are to develop the training, education and personnel policies that will produce small-unit leaders more capable of thriving in a complex and often chaotic operational environment, to the point that they can capitalize on that complexity and chaos to the adversary's detriment. To use a metaphor, instead of attempting the impossible act of drying up the sea of chaos, we will endeavor to make Marines better swimmers than our opponents. While some theorists, such as Mao, make great reference to the importance of focusing on the people, their writings often infer that the population is some homogeneous whole. There is great risk of oversimplification in that treatment. The reality is that most of the time factions will exist within the population. For instance, in many parts of the world the dominant social structure is ethnic or tribal. These influences will need to be understood and addressed—both in terms of dealing with the active insurgency and in planning for a lasting solution.⁴⁶ A sophisticated and complex understanding of the populace is necessary to be successful in nearly every case of intervention. “Hugging” the population often contributes key insights with respect to these factional distinctions and agendas.

Effective tactical intelligence is essential to successfully countering irregular threats. The saying that “every Marine is a collector of intelligence” is true. Simply acknowledging that fact will not be enough—existing intelligence processes and networks may need to be refined. Users (leaders at all levels who will act on the intelligence), must be the priority when forming a collection plan. The collection effort will be manpower intensive. Human intelligence will take on a dominant role and commanders may elect to form special units specifically tasked with the collection and management of this human intelligence. The success of most intervention forces in small wars has historically revolved around the intervention force's (and/or host nation government force's) ability to win the intelligence battle. The greater the fidelity and accuracy of the tactical intelligence, the better units will be at conducting timely,

46. Paul Melshen, “Tribalism and African Nationalist Wars of Liberation, 1945-80,” (Washington, DC: Center for the Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University: Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement, Vol.8, No.3, Autumn 1999), pp. 85-101.

discriminate, precise operations to counter insurgent activities. The tempo of adaptation is a crucial success factor in countering irregular threats; quality tactical intelligence promotes the ability to adapt faster and more effectively than the adversary.

When planning military support to counterinsurgency, the reinforcement of host nation military and security forces must be carefully considered. Simply introducing an increased number of combat troops to fight in a conventional manner will likely be counterproductive and result in an escalation of violence. A more successful approach usually involves a combination of preemptive and reinforcement measures.⁴⁷ Preemptive measures are those initiated within the other components to alleviate the basic causes of the insurgency.

Train and Advise Host Nation Security Forces

The Navy and Marine Corps long ago realized the crucial importance of global security cooperation. Through engagement, U.S. Naval forces will expand such cooperation with a wider set of partner nations, especially with those nations struggling to maintain or restore viable government institutions. Many of these failed or failing states are unable to provide sufficient control over their own borders, a vulnerability that is exploited by non-state actors seeking sanctuary. In such cases, security cooperation will be aimed principally at assisting these nations with the organization and training of their security forces. These security forces may include military and law enforcement organizations conducting a diverse array of activities, such as point or area defense, controlling lines of communication, coastal or riverine security, and so forth. While Special Forces have the lead for foreign military training, the scope of the problem also calls for some measure of similar capability resident among general-purpose forces.

A common pitfall associated with training foreign security forces is the temptation to remake them “in our own image.” Training for host nation forces must be designed to suit the purpose and situation of those forces,

47. Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972) p. 230.

aspiring only to the level of proficiency required to accomplish their basic mission. For example, troops involved in point security simply do not require the tactical movement skills of units involved in long range patrolling.⁴⁸ Normally, units that have proven the most effective in fighting an insurgency have focused on achieving “brilliance in the basics.” This is especially true for forces engaged in highly mobile, small- unit operations.⁴⁹

Essential Services

A key component of achieving and maintaining stability is the governing authority’s ability to ensure basic human needs are met. It is highly likely that naval forces will either support other agencies in, or perhaps even be directly responsible for, the provision of essential services such as food, power, potable water, the handling of waste, and basic medical care. A nuance here is that people residing in rural areas will likely have different needs and expectations than those living in dense urban areas. For instance, people living in a rural area may have a lower need for, and expectation of, electrical power than those living in a city. Early in an intervention, an assessment will be required to determine needs and develop a coordinated approach for meeting them. Leaders must be sensitive to how these needs may change over time, perhaps quite rapidly. They must also be sensitive to factional issues, to ensure that the provision of essential services does not have the unintended consequence of becoming a divisive issue. Another potentially counterproductive action is committing valuable and limited resources to “feel good” projects that do not support the desired the end-state.

Promote Governance

One of the most important aspects of a functioning society is the rule of law—there simply cannot be lasting stability without it. The host nation population may require assistance in the development or restoration of a functioning legal system that minimally includes civil and criminal laws,

48. Insight provided by Dr. Melshen during a presentation at MCCDC on 31 Aug 2005.

49. Sepp, p. 10.

courts, a judiciary, and the means of enforcing legal decisions, including incarceration when required. Both the judiciary and the police must enjoy the confidence of the people.

Similarly, other government institutions must be established or re-established. These may include executive or legislative bodies as well as the public administration of functions such as power, water, health, safety, communications, transportation, infrastructure, agriculture, commerce, finance, natural resources, and education. The ability of the indigenous government to deliver positive results is vital to winning the allegiance of the population. The legitimacy of the government is closely linked to performance.⁵⁰ In the early stages legitimacy may be based on what is acceptance vice ideal. An evolutionary process, the people will appreciate some measure of progress initially, and then grow to expect more as conditions improve over time. Initial arrangements should be oriented on achieving reasonable results early—and not aim for perfection right away.⁵¹

As described previously, widespread discontent may provide a passive background that is ripe for expansion into an active insurgency and collective violence. Poor economic conditions are often a primary source of such discontent. Economic development therefore constitutes a key component for effectively countering irregular threats. Improving the economic well-being of the population at large must be integrated with the other components, particularly enhancements to security and the promotion of effective governance. Note that security enhancements must be defined by the needs of the population at large, vice the narrower requirements of government institutions and activities.⁵² Before economic growth can begin to occur there must be adequate security for the population to engage in the myriad activities—farming, building, selling, trading, and so forth—that will contribute to economic growth. Agencies that oversee or coordinate such activities must similarly be effective. Further, mass unemployment, if allowed to persist for even a modest amount of time, can provide a source of discontent for

50. Max G. Manwaring and William J. Olson, editors, *Managing Contemporary Conflict; Pillars of Success*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 85.

51. Insight provided by Ambassador Corr, telephonically, 4 Oct 2005.

52. Race, p. 190.

exploitation by the insurgent elite. In many intervention cases, there must be both a short-term and long-term economic plan. The short-term objective is to find some productive way to employ a large percentage of the young and middle-aged men—if only until more enduring employment opportunities can be developed.⁵³ The long-term objective is to promote self-sufficiency, independent of direct foreign aid. This particular component represents the “staying power” of a stability effort. There can be no perception of partiality or preferential treatment, by the government or the intervention force, towards any portion of the society. Such perceptions undermine the legitimacy of the government and reinforce the discontent that helped foster the insurgency.

Strategic Communications and Information Operations

By seeking to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of the existing government, an insurgency is waging an “information war” or “battle of ideas and ideology.” The characterization of war as an extension of politics is nowhere more apparent than in small wars, which tend to have a highly nuanced and complex political character. Political struggles, by their very nature, involve competing factions vying for the allegiance and support of the people. Information is the principal means used by both sides to shape that allegiance and support.

Military forces have a role in waging the battle of ideas that is far more subtle and complex than merely assisting in the broadcast, publication or distribution of information. Complicating matters, however, is a modern information environment no longer confined by a centralized, broadcast model, one in which governments and institutions control information. Rather, today's environment represents a radical and irreversible shift in how human beings receive information, communicate, and form opinions. Emerging technologies empower the individual, allowing anyone to create content, share information and push micro-agendas to sympathetic audiences at little cost. These individuals readily filter out information that conflicts with their ideologies and biases, all the while facilitating virtual, networks based on common needs and interests - regardless of geography. These changes give our enemies new advantage in

53. Insight provided by Ambassador Edwin Corr, telephonically, 4 Oct 2005.

discrediting our actions and building support for their causes. They also make it increasingly more difficult for the Marine Corps to be heard, understood, and believed. All actions related to campaign components must be planned and implemented with due consideration for how they will be perceived by the population. They must also be carefully considered with respect to how the insurgents might distort information about those actions in order to manipulate public opinion. We need to ask ourselves, “What is it that we ideally want civilians to do in terms of desired collective behavior?” The answer to that question should help shape campaign design. The information war is a means to morally isolate the insurgents from the population. As one expert noted from the French Algerian experience, “...one of the main weapons of anti-insurgent warfare is to find and magnify internal differences.”⁵⁴ This moral isolation extends beyond the borders of the country in which Marine Corps forces are involved. External support can have moral and political aspects, and information operations should be deliberately aimed at isolating the insurgents from this external support.⁵⁵ Ultimately, for a counterinsurgency to be successful, the indigenous population has to come to the point where it views the insurgents as the outsiders or outlaws.⁵⁶

A critical restriction in waging the information war is that deception should be limited only to employment against the enemy. Deception is a useful tool in combat operations against the insurgents, but it is never a good idea to lie to the populace in the name of the government.⁵⁷ Credibility and perceived legitimacy are critical elements of an indigenous government’s ability to counter rebellion, achieve stability, and function effectively. Ultimately, the perceptions held by the populace are more important than reality in the government’s struggle for legitimacy.⁵⁸ Care must be exercised to do nothing that will undermine

54. Edgar O’Balance, *The Algerian Insurrection; 1954-1962*, (London, UK: Faber, 1967), p. 205.

55. O’Neill, pp. 114-115.

56. John A. Lynn, “Patterns of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center: Military Review, July-August 2005) p. 27.

57. Col Napoleon Valeriano, AFP (Ret.) and Lieutenant Colonel Charles T.R. Bohannon, AUS (Ret.), *Counter-Guerrilla Operations; the Philippine Experience*, (New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1962), p.143.

58. Manwaring and Olson, p. 85.

the perceived legitimacy of the United States or the host nation government it supports.

Perceived legitimacy is so vital to the ultimate success of nearly every intervention activity that it cannot be relegated to an afterthought. One vital aspect to achieving and maintaining some measure of perceived legitimacy is moral rectitude in all endeavors. Through morally upright conduct, particularly in dealing with civilians and prisoners, Marines can avoid stimulating the recruitment of new insurgents and may even benefit from valuable intelligence. A lack of rectitude will have a negative effect that will be exploited by enemy information operations.⁵⁹

A lack of rectitude will also adversely impact the support of the American people for a given intervention. Small wars are typically protracted in nature, with progress toward broadly defined goals often slow and hard to measure. Domestic support for an intervention is often difficult to maintain over the long term. There is a close relationship between the amount of support that the American public is prepared to afford an intervention and the degree of legitimacy and efficiency demonstrated by the host nation government and the U.S. forces supporting it.⁶⁰

The Lessons of History

The ideas presented in this concept are the result of extensive historical research and assessment. Though there is always a risk of oversimplification when an attempt is made to summarize historical lessons, there are, nevertheless, some clear points to bring out which can help future Marine leaders enhance their chances of success in small wars. First, security of the population is the paramount role of military forces. The force used to provide security may not be the force used to apply pressure to the insurgent military forces. While combat operations

59. Max G. Manwaring and Anthony James Joes, editors, *Beyond Declaring Victory and Coming Home: The Challenges of Peace and Stability Operations*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000) p. 61.

60. Sam C. Sarkesian, *America's Forgotten Wars: The Counterrevolutionary Past and Lessons for the Future*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984) p. 9.

and the training of security forces are of vital importance, in nearly every historical example success in the other components proved to be at least as important. Moreover, these components cannot be tackled sequentially, but must be addressed concurrently. The insurgents had to be physically and morally separated from the populace in order for the host nation government or the intervention force to achieve any meaningful, long-term success. At various times Marine Corps forces may be called upon to perform or support activities associated with all six components, but in all cases they should do so by leveraging the core competencies of the other government agencies involved.

Conclusion

The Marine Corps has a rich and colorful history of success in “small wars.” Largely overlooked in recent years, the changing security environment has resulted in a resurgence of interest in the lessons learned during those hard years of small war campaigning. Given the Commandant’s guidance that irregular wars will characterize the foreseeable future, that trend must continue in a more formalized way. Though the Marine Corps will remain a multi-purpose force, its focus will shift more toward to what Rudyard Kipling called “the savage wars of peace.”⁶¹ In order to realize some of the points proffered in this concept, an extensive capability analysis must consider the implications for the force. Additionally, the Marine Corps will expand its operational continuum and improve its ability to support, or in some cases perform, all the components listed above, even as it acknowledges that combat operations and the training of other nations’ militaries and security forces will be its principal focus. Our capability development initiatives and operational practice must understand and maintain the harmonic balance between the components.

61. Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002), p. xiv.



Annex A

Marine Corps Functional Concept for STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION (SC)

Purpose

"To remain the Nation's force in readiness, the Marine Corps must continuously innovate. This requires that we look across the entire institution and identify areas that need improvement and effect positive change."⁶²

The purpose of this functional concept is to inspire thought and stimulate experimentation, wargaming and debate about the nature of strategic communication and its utility to the Marine Corps as an institution and, specifically, to the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). This concept also will be used to inform the Expeditionary Force Development System (EFDS) process and provide the conceptual underpinnings necessary to address SC gaps in doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities (DOTMLPF) and policy. It provides practical considerations for Component and MAGTF planners, commanders and staffs.

Overview and Scope

The Marine Corps Functional Concept for Strategic Communication (SC) covers the timeframe from 2017 to 2025. This timeframe addresses SC during the period beyond the current Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) out to the guidance provided in the Marine Corps Vision & Strategy 2025. This concept applies primarily to all elements and command echelons of the MAGTF with conceptual application also at the HQMC and institutional level.

Strategic Communication (SC) is currently defined at the joint level as focused United States Government (USG) efforts to understand and

62. Marine Corps V&S 2025

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engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of USG interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power.⁶³ Another definition is that SC is simply a way to affect perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of key publics in support of objectives.⁶⁴

Guidance in the 2010 QDR, the Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO), and the Strategic Communication Joint Integrating Concept (JIC), coupled with the projected future in JFCOM's Joint Operational Environment (JOE), make clear that the U.S. military must enhance its ability to operate in the cognitive domain. By cognitive domain, we mean the intellectual and emotional arenas in which individuals, families, tribes and governing bodies reason and make decisions based on their respective historical, cultural, social, religious and educational backgrounds. It is the domain of mind, will and emotion. It is a domain in which perceptions affect attitudes.⁶⁵

SC concepts, definitions and boundaries at the U.S. Government and the Joint levels continue to evolve. In order to adhere to and take advantage of current guidance and conceptual thought at all levels, this Marine Corps functional concept expands on the following basic framework from existing joint publications:

- The importance of information as an operational enabler will continue to rise.
- Military concepts, definitions and doctrine with respect to the information environment are evolving, partially in response to an

63. Joint Pub 5-0

64. Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL) Issue Paper; "The Trouble with Strategic Communication"; Dennis Murphy, Jan 2008; Vol 2-08

65. Strategic Communication conference in October 2009; In a briefing on "Future Marketing and Advertising," Dr Julie Edell Britton indicated that more than 70 percent of attitudinal change is based on feelings. Dr Britton is an associate professor at Duke University.

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increase in diverse populations who are accessing advancing technology and influencing a rapidly evolving information environment.

- SC is a process of understanding and engaging key publics to advance U.S. national (strategic) interests and objectives.
- SC is affected significantly more by actions than by words or images.
- SC is relevant to the Marine Corps as an institution at the service level and to the MAGTF at the tactical and operational levels.
- SC is a broad, overarching concept that, in the operational realm, includes all operational actions, defense support to public diplomacy (DSPD), IO, and Public Affairs (PA), as well as Civil-Military Operations (CMO) and Combat Camera (COMCAM).⁶⁶
- SC for the MAGTF is the process of integrating issues of audience and stakeholder perception into planning and operations at every level.
- MAGTF SC plans and objectives will nest with and support those of higher headquarters.
- Relevant training, education, and exercises will improve MAGTF SC.
- Existing planning processes and the MAGTF Operational Planning Team (OPT) are sufficient to affect the integration necessary in SC planning.
- Constant feedback, analysis and assessment are necessary to ensure that efforts support desired outcomes.

66. JP 5-0, pg II-2.

Background

“DoD is viewing strategic communication as an adaptive, decentralized process of trying to understand selected audiences thoroughly, hypothesizing physical or informational signals that will have the desired cognitive effect on those audiences, testing those hypotheses through action, monitoring the actual result through feedback, and disseminating the best solutions quickly through the Department and the joint force.”⁶⁷

SC has many definitions above and beyond the JP 5-0 definition above. In many respects, it is a new term for an old concept. That is, success in any endeavor is directly related to our level of understanding of the environment we are in; the history, culture, social structures and intentions of all the participants (e.g., allies, neutral parties, and adversaries) with whom we are engaged; and all of our respective purposes, strengths, weaknesses and preferences. Recent conflicts that illustrate an ongoing battle of ideas have demonstrated the value of this broader understanding, and a new term – strategic communication - gives it modern expression. Some consider SC to be synonymous with other terms such as “influence” or “persuade.” Others take the term literally to mean that it can only be done at the strategic level. Regardless, MAGTF actions, words, and images at the tactical level clearly can support or hinder joint force and national level objectives.

Recent publications at the Secretary and the Joint levels have added clarification but have stopped short of spelling out exactly how, when, and by whom SC is performed. In the operational world of deployed forces, the lines between strategic, operational and tactical levels are now blurred, often beyond distinction. Also unclear are the distinctions between friends, enemies and innocent third parties. This blurring adds a layer of complexity to planning and has important ramifications across the range of military operations. This functional concept acknowledges this adjustment in the MAGTF mission set and proposes an approach for developing needed capability.

The SC JIC lays out the general philosophies, definitions, and high-level themes of SC within the Joint Force. As DoD’s view of SC has evolved,

67. December 2009 DoD Report to Congress

the Department has reduced its emphasis on strictly “informational” activities.⁶⁸ The SC JIC highlights “the challenge of [persuading] others to think and act in ways compatible with our objectives, whether this means causing them to adapt a specific course of action or to simply understand us better and accept us more.” At the national level, “effective SC requires the orchestration of multiple lines of operation. Chief among these is policy implementation, force employment, information operations, public affairs, civil affairs, and public diplomacy and engagement.”⁶⁹ Across the levels of war, SC is the synchronization of the those “multiple lines of operation” down to the tactical level to affect perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of key audiences and create favorable conditions in support of MAGTF objectives and ultimately our national strategy. SC is an overarching process and a way of thinking rather than a new functional area. So what does this mean for the Corps as an institution; and for the MAGTF?

Description of the Military Problem

Internal MAGTF Problem

The primary military problem for the MAGTF in the SC arena is that we are not yet adept at maneuvering quickly and effectively in the cognitive domain. Marines traditionally excel in operational plans that are “kinetically” oriented. While we have made significant strides in emphasizing considerations such as cultural learning and key leader engagement, we do not yet excel in meeting myriad challenges in complex cultural and informational campaigns. Kinetic campaigns often are defined by physical goals that permit easy measurement and management. At the most abstract level, these campaigns have a simple goal: we win, the enemy loses. During execution, the supporting staff functions that comprise the totality of an effective operation are largely independent support actions, with their details contained in annexes of the main plan and their actions performed by specialists. In the more information dense environments that we predict in the future, military missions are more complex as the number of affected parties increases.

68. December 2009 DoD Report to Congress

69. QDR; Feb 2010

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What constitutes “victory” is different in CENTCOM these days from what it was in WWII or even Desert Storm.

Instead of a traditional “win-lose” situation, future engagements likely will consist of “win, win, win – lose” environments in which every involved or affected party in the battlespace, except the enemy, expects a positive outcome that fosters a sense of security, growth and hope. These kinds of missions place a premium on the execution of an effectively nested SC plan from the national to the MAGTF level and the integration of actions and messages developed specifically within the MAGTF’s base plan. If we lack the ability to integrate these messages into our base plans or fail to develop the capability to react quickly to fleeting opportunities, we risk losing credibility gained by Marines on the battlefield. Thus, the major challenge: the Marine Corps, largely through training and education, must expand the planning culture of the MAGTF so that non-kinetic tools and the cognitive domain are consistently and completely addressed in every planning problem and throughout each phase of execution.

To help meet this challenge, each staff section and element of the MAGTF must develop supporting plans under an umbrella of cultural understanding consistent with higher headquarters’ intent and guidance. Our plans often do not seek first to understand and address the root causes of the conflict or instability. In some respects, we are treating symptoms but neglecting the disease. By including the expertise and influence of those persons and organizations knowledgeable of cultural considerations and the information environment, we will take a key step to a comprehensive approach to complex security environments.

Another challenge, especially for MAGTF planners, will be mentally switching, when appropriate, from “kinetics supported by all else” to a “kinetics in support of all else” mindset. The ability to balance these two operational mindsets throughout a campaign is a key attribute for any military organization operating outside the traditional “force against force” military scenario. At present, the ability to conduct maneuver warfare in the cognitive and the physical domains, especially as the lead of a coalition and/or interagency task force is personality-dependent. It must be institutionalized throughout the Marine Corps via enhanced PME, training and exercises.

MAGTF Nesting Within Higher SC Problem

“I would argue that most strategic communication problems are not communication problems at all. They are policy and execution problems.”⁷⁰

Other military challenges are apparent across the waterfront of SC, some not exclusively in the military lane. For example, we often see a lack of effective synchronization or staffing of SC goals, objectives, themes, and messages outside of the DoD across the rest of the USG. Regionally focused, deployed commands often tailor SC themes and messages to the local cultures with whom they are creating dialogue and relationships. Depending on the message and the local culture, this can become highly complex and appropriately nuanced. Contrast this with our partners in other USG agencies who sometimes fail to ensure appropriate coordination or staffing of proposed themes and messages to lower levels before going “global.” This execution shortfall often creates a national-to-tactical “say-do” gap when the USG promotes a national or regional message that differs from on-the-ground wisdom, practice and realities. The poppy growth-local economy-corruption topic in Helmand Province provides a good case study. This message alignment challenge is further exacerbated if the MAGTF is employed under a coalition environment in which USG SC efforts are in conflict with that particular alliance’s SC efforts.

“Our messages lack credibility because we haven’t invested enough in building trust and relationships, and we haven’t always delivered on promises.... We hurt ourselves more when our words don’t align with our actions.”⁷¹

Given an increase in the number and the nature of coalition commands, local forces, non-governmental organizations, and interagency groups in a typical MAGTF operating area, we face cultural hurdles as well as technical impediments to unity of effort and mission completion. This is an ongoing reality that we must deal with. With more than a dozen

70. Admiral Mullen; JFQ Issue 55, 4th Qtr 2009; “Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics”

71. Admiral Mullen; JFQ Issue 55, 4th Qtr 2009; “Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics”

different intelligence and communication systems in use throughout the Marine Expeditionary Brigade's assigned operating area in Afghanistan, we strive to ensure that key players are getting the right information at the right time. Amid these challenges, our actions often speak louder than our words, so the goal is to synchronize the actions of all these distinct and often widely dispersed players. One of the more practical ways proposed to help improve this synchronization is through the addition of a clearly stated information end-state, or an aspirational narrative, to the commander's intent.⁷²

Central Idea

"The essence of good communication: having the right intent up front and letting our actions speak for themselves. We shouldn't care if people don't like us; that isn't the goal. The goal is credibility. And we earn that over time."⁷³

In the future security environment, we no longer can concentrate solely on defeating a hostile adversary solely by fire and maneuver. The battlespace of the future will be among people, often with unclear distinction between friend, neutral and foe. Almost every activity performed by Marine units will place them in direct contact with the people indigenous to the area of operations and who will become the primary focus of the battle of the narrative. As the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review notes, "Strategic communication is essential in COIN, CT and stability operations, where population and stakeholder beliefs and perceptions are crucial to our success, and where adversaries often enjoy the advantage of greater local knowledge and calibrate their activities to achieve sophisticated information objectives." Not only in these operations, but across the full range of military operations, all individual and small-unit actions in a complex environment must be guided by SC principles (outlined below) and incorporated as an integral element of the overall campaign design.

72. Parameters, Winter 2009-2010; "In Search of the Art and Science of Strategic Communication"; Dennis M. Murphy

73. Admiral Mullen; JFQ Issue 55, 4th Qtr 2009; "Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics"

By their nature, MAGTFs are exceptionally capable units, “tailor-made” for a broad range of missions. The qualities that make the MAGTF an exceptional fighting organization are its agility and versatility. This is especially so in complex operations in which every Marine must possess the mindset of a fighter, a diplomat, a public servant, a builder, a medic, and a good Samaritan. These operations often demonstrate that building relationships is often as important as building bridges or hospitals. Of all the character traits necessary to operate in these environments simultaneously, arguably some of the most important are the ability to listen, to correctly interpret, to effectively communicate, and to constantly assess feedback. These qualities are so important that consideration of them must be made an integral part of any operations plan. The central idea of this concept is to inspire commanders and planners to make the principles of strategic communication outlined below a baseline consideration of any campaign design, all planning processes, and every operation. The question: How do we do that?

SC Principles and Challenges

Principles

With respect to Marine Corps forces, the MAGTF will be largely responsible for executing or supporting elements of higher headquarters’ SC plans. The MAGTF’s tactical actions and the “face” it presents should support higher headquarters and national SC objectives, themes and messages. The actions of the MAGTF must fit within the words of civilian leaders. The MAGTF’s communication strategy must be commander-driven, proactive, and synchronized with respect to all its actions, themes, messages, and images. As deployed Marine units plan and execute, they should be guided by the following SC principles.

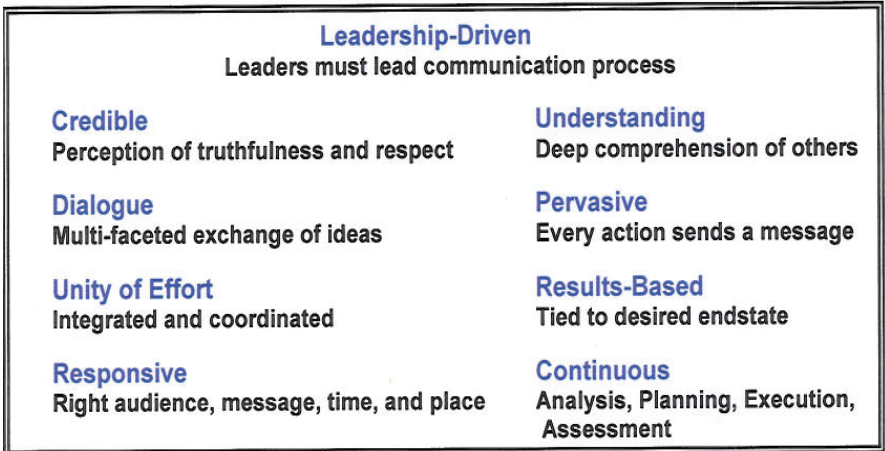


Figure 1. Nine Principles of Strategic Communication

Challenges

Preserving Influence in Environments of Competing Narratives

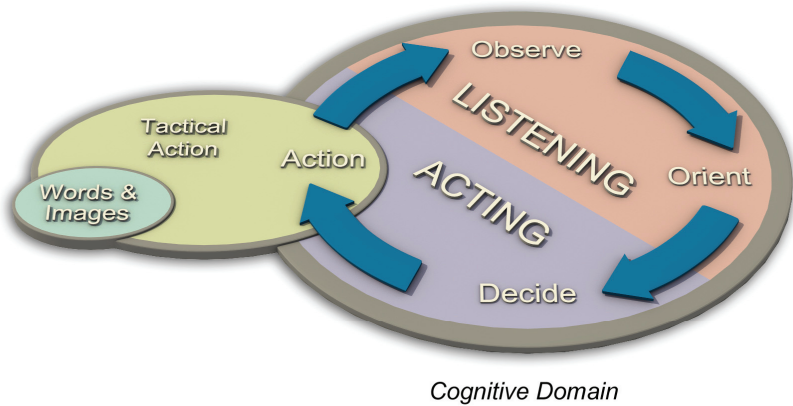
“More than half this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media...we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our ummah.”⁷⁴

Rapid technological change makes the information environment accessible, at the institutional and the operational level, to almost anyone. Individuals and small groups can now rapidly disseminate their version of reality, shape global perceptions, or counter other messages across boundaries and borders. Individual and small unit actions are amplified in an environment in which everything that can be witnessed or heard can also be easily recorded, manipulated and widely distributed.⁷⁵ In this new information environment, Marines must have processes sufficiently agile enough to enable them to anticipate, plan for, and operate successfully. The observe-orient-decide-act (OODA) loop is just as applicable in the information domain as in the physical domain, and relative tempo is critical in both.

74. Ayman al-Zawahiri

75. QDR; Feb 2010

Strategic Communication



Gaining Cognitive Agility and Staying Ahead of the Situation

With respect to this MAGTF challenge, the SC process aims to synchronize and thus maximize the impact of efforts to achieve one or more of the following, depending on the circumstances:

- Improve MAGTF and U.S. credibility and legitimacy;
- Weaken an adversary's credibility and legitimacy;
- Persuade selected audiences to take specific actions that support the MAGTF, the United States or international objectives;
- Cause a competitor or adversary to take (or refrain from taking) specific actions.⁷⁶

The Importance of Listening

One of the challenges is the need to foster a better understanding of the relationship between “listening” and “communicating.” “Strategic listening” is imperative if we are to understand SC as an overarching philosophy intended to guide the way Marines think, organize, and

76. December 2009 DoD Report to Congress

operate, and not simply as an operational option or a staff activity. “Strategic listening” is not an updated euphemism for knowing the enemy, nor does it suggest a new kind of intelligence gathering. If MAGTFs, or individual Marines, are going to operate in complex environments, they must develop a “sixth sense” that permits them to instinctively understand that environment so that they can operate effectively within it. This can only come through increased education and training. At the tactical level, this occurs only after immersive contact with the local population, and typically only after a level of trust is achieved. Active listening is more than paying attention to words or actions of the actors in the operating environment. It is about observing and properly reacting to one’s “body language.” It is about recognizing potential actions or outcomes before they occur and creating circumstances more favorable to a successful outcome. Correctly assessing the situation adds to overall situational awareness.

“Understanding the effect of operations as seen through the lens of the local culture and psyche is the foremost planning consideration for every operation.”⁷⁷ Maneuver Warfare, no matter how expertly executed, can be equated to a game of two-dimensional chess in which one competitor tries to defeat another. Operations in complex environments (those in which SC figures prominently) can be thought of as multi-dimensional chess in which one player tries not just to defeat an opponent but to create conditions favorable for all other players and for observers as well. Success hinges upon the MAGTF’s ability to listen, interpret, and act at a higher level of awareness than before. The key to this heightened level of performance at the operational and the tactical levels rests primarily with a better understanding of SC and how its nine principles can be applied within the MAGTF’s battle rhythm.

Designing Appropriate MAGTF Actions

Since MAGTFs operate mainly at the tactical level, most SC objectives, guidance and directives will be determined at levels above the MAGTF. The MAGTF will be responsible for executing its assigned mission in such a way as to support the higher level SC objectives, themes, and

77. Army Combined Arms Center Handbook on Human Terrain Teams; 2008; LTG Peter Chiarelli quote

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messages and preventing any “say-do” gap from emerging. MAGTF actions can communicate strategically to friends, adversaries and others alike. However, MAGTF commanders must be enabled to better plan and execute specific MAGTF actions that result in positive effects on the actions or behavior of selected populations, governments or other decision-making groups, including the enemy, within an area of operations. Achieving this in socially complex cultures and a globally interconnected information environment often transcends current capabilities in the MAGTF. An SC imperative requires us to better understand how our actions will be received and responded to. We hurt ourselves and the messages we attempt to convey when our actions are inconsistent with what we say.

The following list is representative of some of the progressive and continuous actions that should form the basis of any operations plan for MAGTFs operating in the cognitive environment:

- Conduct a continuous engagement program within the MAGTF operations area with respect to selected key leaders and populations, as the foundation for all other communication efforts.
- Conceive every action based on its potential cognitive impact, consequences and effects on various audiences in the MAGTF operations area and beyond.
- Actively engage in the debate over MAGTF actions and their effects. Seek and encourage bottom-up refinement from battlespace owners.
- Anticipate, monitor, understand and quickly counter or exploit the influence efforts of adversaries and competitors.
- Develop in-depth knowledge of selected publics and their networks and be aware of personal biases.
- Formulate and produce tailored, resonant and culturally attuned signals that reach intended audiences through the surrounding noise of competing messages.
- Adapt continuously and iteratively based on feedback on the effects of MAGTF signals.
- Understand how the information environment affects both the physical and cognitive domains.

Blending SC into Operational Design

Military planning and decision-making are historically studied in both the realm of art and science. It is important that the planning and execution of SC is considered from both perspectives as well. The SC process involves horizontal coordination (across the MAGTF and the joint force as international partners as appropriate) and vertical coordination (up and down the chain of command to include DoD and the U.S. Government). In all cases, such coordination aims to ensure that:

- Cultural, informational, and communication considerations are part of strategy, planning, and policy development from the very beginning (rather than as afterthoughts);
- The potential communication impact of kinetic and non-kinetic actions – their likely "perception effects" -- are assessed and planned for before actions are taken;
- Words and actions are consistent and mutually reinforcing (closing "say-do" gap); and
- "Soft power" options and capabilities are given equal priority and considered in coordination with hard power alternatives.⁷⁸

The revised MCWP 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning Process*, explains design as a fundamental responsibility of command inherent not only in planning but in all phases of execution. The critical first phase of planning is re-titled *Problem Framing* to better convey its purpose and importance. This *Problem Framing* stage is where the MAGTF commander and staff seek to fully understand SC issues and competing narratives at play in a theater and area of operations. A key lesson from previous DoD SC efforts is that processes to develop separate and distinct SC priorities, plans or organizations are ineffective when divorced from existing planning processes.⁷⁹ Since planning is, in essence, envisioning a desired future and laying out effective ways of bringing it about, design as an element of planning is at the heart of effective SC. As the MAGTF OPT is the principal tool to plan and

78. December 2009 DoD Report to Congress

79. December 2009 DoD Report to Congress

integrate combined arms actions, it should plan and implement SC initiatives.

Employing SC as an Integrating Process

The MAGTF commander and his staff are already well prepared to integrate combined arms through the existing Marine Corps Planning Process (MCPP). MEF and MEB OPTs are well trained to integrate lethal and non-lethal fires in their assigned battlespace. From an SC point of view, most of the right functional “players” participate in most current OPTs. What is often missing is the appropriate emphasis on “seeing” and developing appropriate courses of action that take SC considerations into account. The education and training of commanders and their lead planners can help to quickly change this. For example, all courses of action should more explicitly attempt to integrate actions on the ground with explicit delivery and support of national/host country and higher HQ “key themes and messages” to specific audiences. The Marine Corps can ensure its ability to maneuver better in the cognitive domain by requiring the right players in initial OPT activities, approaching the problem from the right conceptual start point, and taking advantage of existing strategic communication primary supporting capabilities and representative organizations, such as the Marine Corps Information Operations Center.

One key to ensuring the commander includes detailed SC objectives within his guidance. Developing quality guidance requires that those in the influence spectrum advise and inform the Problem Framing (cultural IPB⁸⁰, etc) process. In other words, contributing to and shaping the commander’s view of the battlespace is critical, and every iteration of the planning cycle must include considerations relating to the effect of potential, or planned, actions on tactical, operational, and strategic objectives. Considerations must include intended and potential unintended consequences about perceptions in the commander’s AO, Area of Interest, and Area of Influence, the latter of which can go from local to global in an instant. In short, SC priorities must be included in the main plan itself (Commander’s Intent and Concept of Ops) and not

80. IPB as Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace is being considered for change to IPOE as Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment.

merely as an Annex Y or another functional annex. SC functional area experts must become part of the commander's key advisor group.

Understanding the Totality of SC Participation and the Creation of Legitimacy

Because the actions of any Marine or sailor in a MAGTF could have repercussions (i.e., a “CNN moment”), we all acknowledge the increasing importance of culturally sensitive and well-informed Marines. At the basic level, SC begins with the individual Marine. NCOs and unit commanders at all levels are responsible for seeking out, understanding and helping to communicate the full context of why their units are taking or not taking certain actions. Individual Marines and small units are key participants in the SC plan because their actions contribute directly to the perceived legitimacy, character and reputation of the MAGTF as a whole. This truth argues for the inclusion of an information end-state as an important step in proactively managing the information environment in support of military objectives.⁸¹ Internal and external legitimacy is fundamental to SC. Legitimacy is fostered only if the message transmitted is reinforced by the actions of the Marines who interact directly with the population. In almost every situation, actions are more important than words.

At the staff level, functional area expertise enters the equation and raises questions as to how the MAGTF should best organize for success. Because MAGTF tactical units are the most important participants in any action or event, the way they are supported by functional areas of IO, PA, CMO and COMCAM should be viewed as the “supporting arms” of the cognitive environment.

In most situations, representatives of those functional areas must be key participants in the initial and iterative IPB alongside intelligence officers. *Most commanders understand this intuitively, but it is not necessarily happening as a matter of prioritized design.* One goal of this concept is to provide the conceptual start-point for the examination and

81. Parameters, Winter 2009-2010; “In Search of the Art and Science of Strategic Communication”; Dennis M. Murphy

development of critical solutions to this shortfall across the DOTMLPF solution spectrum.

Blending Fires, Maneuver, and SC into a Cohesive Whole

“Marines must approach counterinsurgency prepared to combat armed adversaries as well as influencing the environment through the use of information, humanitarian aid, economic advice, and a boost toward good governance.... With this mix of skills and abilities, the Marine Corps will have the means to more effectively apply its maneuver warfare-based warfighting philosophy to irregular threats and to attack our enemies from many angles at once, wearing them down and drawing away their public support.”⁸²

The draft SC Joint Integrating Concept (JIC) describes communication as a mechanism of influence and presents an “influence spectrum” that ranges from “inform” as the most “indirect” form of influence, to “coerce” as the most “direct” form of influence. This spectrum often creates confusion among commanders who attempt to draw communication coordination boundaries within the spectrum as they would with lethal fires. Absent a clear concept describing roles, responsibilities, authorities and limitations of various influence functions across the spectrum, MAGTF commanders will have only a broad framework for engagement. Blending fires, maneuver and SC actions into a cohesive whole should be the conceptual point of origin for a MAGTF dealing with the complexities of the cognitive environment.

A common notion is that SC can be effected solely through use of a matrix, template or a well-written annex. Such tools are important for detailed planning and coordination, as well as assessment and decision support, but effective SC will require much more than good tools. An Annex Y or a “communication strategy” does not meet the scope of operational need if relegated to the “back page.” The Annex Y should retain its place and role, but SC should be integrated into all operations processes at the outset and throughout planning, preparation, execution, and assessment to ensure the greatest effect in the information environment. Just as targeting boards are used to synchronize MAGTF kinetic fires, synchronizing words and actions across the MAGTF

82. Gen Mattis; Concept for Countering Irregular Threats

operational environment can help the commander close the “say-do gap” and increase the potential to influence intended audiences.⁸³ All Marines and every staff member should understand the overarching strategic purpose and considerations for any MAGTF operation. The MAGTF’s base plan should be written in such a way that it is also the MAGTF SC plan, i.e., MAGTF actions and images will speak volumes more than its words, so everything the MAGTF does should be viewed as an important element of the SC plan.

Assessing Operational Progress through an SC Lens

In the future, the MAGTF would track and assess operations in the same way it does now but with a more informed staff sensitive to the effect MAGTF actions and messages have in the information environment. Both physical and psychological effects have to be measured in order to track how actions, words and images are being perceived within the local culture. Given that culture is, by definition, locally defined, the amount of time and resources required to develop necessary feedback and assessment systems can be daunting. While kinetic or lethal effects in the physical domain can normally be quickly and easily observed, non-kinetic or non-lethal effects in the cognitive domain require much more time and effort to discern – especially with nuanced cultural differences abounding even within a given operational environment. Patience and “time” are not normally on the U.S. force inventory list as being in sufficient quantity.

The MAGTF must develop and maintain a proactive stance with respect to SC planning in order to look for operations, actions and events that can reinforce prioritized themes or messages or to counter existing false perceptions. In similar fashion, the MAGTF needs to build an assessment plan that discerns how actions, words, and images are either supporting or hindering larger objectives. Otherwise, positive actions at the individual and the small unit level might go unrecognized, the effects of ill-considered actions might receive undue attention, and, worse, we could cede the operational advantage to the enemy. One need only recall the vivid images of dead American aviators being dragged through the

83. JFCOM Jt Warfighting Center; “Cdr’s Handbook for Strategic Communication”; 1 Sep 2008

streets of Mogadishu and contemplate the effects those images had on U.S. policymakers. That single example serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of operations at the cognitive level. An important part of the cultural shift in MAGTF staff planning and execution is a more athletic stance that enables the MAGTF to create advantage through actions and operations that have been intentionally integrated and resourced within a top-down communication plan. *“More important than any particular tool, we must know the context within which our actions will be received and understood.”*⁸⁴

Functional Staff Activities in Support of SC

The traditional functional staff sections falling under the doctrinal umbrella of SC will continue to support the MAGTF. These staff members will perform routine day-to-day tasks developed within the Annex Y, man watch sections, and develop the plans, branches, sequels, and immediate responses necessary to take advantage of, or mitigate the effects of, actions that occur within the purview of the MAGTF commander. However, the composition, organization, and location of these staff sections remains a matter of discussion, experiment and, in practice, application of recent lessons learned. Traditional staff sections, SC “cells,” and other kinds of teams all need to be examined closely to determine the optimal way to organize. Who should have staff cognizance over these elements and whether they are best organized for their many tasks is another matter for discussion, experimentation, and continued development.

In addition to the organization of permanent MAGTF SC staff sections, some deployed MAGTFs have had success employing various functionally focused, mission-oriented teams. The Human Terrain Team is one example and has been employed in Afghanistan with positive results. These teams typically include a sociologist or an anthropologist with cultural expertise. In some case, the MAGTF could use similar support teams to great advantage. Key Leader Engagement teams are another possible direct support capability.

84. Admiral Mullen; JFQ Issue 55, 4th Qtr 2009; “Strategic Communication: Getting Back to Basics”

Potential Implications and DOTMLPF Considerations for the Marine Corps

*"The operational and tactical synergy of the MAGTF is what makes it a flexible, effective and feared force on the battlefield. Improving this synergy requires concrete steps that cut across the MAGTF... namely, developing capabilities to better operate in complex terrain, in a decentralized manner, and in the information environment."*⁸⁵

DoD is conducting an SC Capabilities-Based Assessment to determine the degree to which existing capabilities are sufficient or need to be enhanced and to identify best practices for strategic communication at the Combatant Command level.⁸⁶ The Marine Corps has concurrently identified existing gaps in SC related capabilities and capacities needed to improve our ability to excel in the cognitive domain. Several of these gaps are in the doctrine, training and education arenas where it is clear that both Joint and Marine Corps task lists and standards will eventually need to be developed.

With respect to gaps, a consensus is that "effective SC requires an organizational culture attuned to the information environment and a recognition that SC, as a way to achieve information effects, consists of many capabilities (means) that are an integral part of the commander's arsenal. Staff expertise may be available to support these efforts. Still, the trained staff section is less important than a unit culture [in which] the commander both recognizes what strategic communication is (and isn't) and emphasizes SC as important to successful military operations."⁸⁷

From a DOTMLPF perspective, the majority of SC-related improvements appear to fall into the non-material categories of doctrine, training and education. In most cases, only discreet capability increases MIGHT BE needed, but the Corps should consider expanding some of the capacities of high-demand/low-density SC-enabling capabilities such

85. Marine Corps V&S 2025; p35, emphasis added

86. December 2009 DoD Report to Congress

87. Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL) Issue Paper; "The Trouble with Strategic Communication"; Dennis Murphy, Jan 2008; Vol 2-08

as PA, IO, CMO, and COMCAM in order to support the SC process more effectively. Integrating these improvements, both among themselves and into the other capabilities resident in service-level staffs and throughout MAGTFs, is essential and will largely be a function of education and training.

Additional consideration should be given to working with Joint commands and the U.S. State Department to further refine the Joint Capability Area (JCA) lexicon with respect to SC and other non-lethal fires outside the “Building Partnership Capacity” JCA category. Although MAGTFs are not expressly directed to improve the general understanding of the importance of SC capability within operational units at the Joint Level, such understanding is critical to improving interagency SC capability. From an operational point of view, the implications for the Marine Corps, and the MAGTF, are considerable. The new definitions of warfare associated with complex environments, hybrid threats, transnational actors, dispersed operations, and the influence of tactical actions on strategic decision making could be argued to call for a much more prominent role for SC.

Conclusion

Although DoS and DoD understand the importance of SC, proficiency in SC execution from the national level down to the “man on the ground” is lacking. The Corps clearly has an important supporting role to play, both at the institutional level and through our operational MAGTFs.

Institutional adaptability will play a large role in how we respond, and “balance” will need to remain a guidon. Part of the “balance” guidon is the acknowledgment that the world always will have actors who are not dissuaded or deterred by anything other than a strong physical (military) US presence.⁸⁸

Ensuring that kinetic and non-kinetic actions, words, and images are consistently synchronized and deconflicted is similarly challenging.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, the Corps must meet this challenge and be willing to adapt to today’s realities.

88. E-mail discussion with Dakota Wood, CSBA; 31 March 2010

89. December 2009 DoD Report to Congress

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SC should be inherent in all policy making, operational planning, and execution. Details as to how this will best work at the MEF and MEB levels remain to be refined. Joint Forces Command's recently developed *Commander's Handbook on Strategic Communication* contains several examples of how joint forces have experimented with organization to better address SC concerns.

The ideas contained in this functional concept and other related guidance must be critically examined, fleshed out and adopted within our educational institutions, training venues, and exercise critique lists. With our historic predisposition for kinetic action and terrain-oriented objectives, and our focus on a well-defined, well-understood enemy order of battle, the Marine Corps will continue to explore new turf as it moves into this more sophisticated, more cognitively oriented operational domain. The innovation and adaptation being pursued in the SC arena as a matter of operational expediency by exceptional commanders in the field must be institutionalized across the Corps. This concept and emerging TTP will be used over the coming months to develop a pre-doctrinal Marine Corps Interim Publication that will endeavor to further describe Corps "best practice."



This third edition of the *Marine Corps Operating Concepts* supersedes the previous Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment, First and Second Editions.

Marine Corps Supporting Concepts and Manuals:

- Marine Corps Functional Concept for Strategic Communication
- Evolving the MAGTF for the 21st Century
- Amphibious Operations in the 21st Century
- Unified Action through Civil-Military Integration
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- USMC Cyberspace Concept
- Operational Maneuver from the Sea
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- A Tentative Manual for Partnering Operations

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