

**OFFICE OF
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS**

PREPARED REMARKS FOR THE

**GEORGE P. SHULTZ
LECTURE**

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COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS**

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I want to thank the World Affairs Council of Northern California and the Marines' Memorial Association for inviting me here tonight to speak about our Nation's Marine Corps.

I'm also grateful for Major General Mike Myatt's faithfulness to our Nation over many years. His service as a Marine is the stuff of legend. His leadership as the First Marine Division Commander during the first Gulf War is what movies are made about. I also want to acknowledge Secretary of Defense William Perry. We are still reaping the benefits of his leadership and foresight inside the Pentagon and in our Nation's military. And last, but certainly not least, I want to thank Secretary George Shultz, for whom this lecture series is named. He is a renowned leader, diplomat and – most importantly – a United States Marine.

Six months ago, Secretary Gates stood right here at this podium and asked some very pointed questions about the capabilities and future of the Marine Corps. He challenged the Corps to, "define the unique mission of the Marines going forward." When the boss challenges you to do something, you probably ought to take it seriously...and we did.

Prior to becoming Commandant, I spent considerable energy and time with some of our brightest folks to look critically at defining the role of the Marine Corps in our Nation's defense. It was as important for us as Marines to clearly know where we fit in the future security environment as it was for our civilian leadership. The results of those extensive efforts were published in October in my Commandant's Planning Guidance. Our mission set is unambiguously framed and defined as follows...

"The Marine Corps is America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness — a balanced air-ground-logistics team. We are forward-deployed and forward-engaged — shaping, training, deterring and responding to all manner of crises and contingencies. We create options and decision space for our Nation's leaders. Alert and ready, we respond to today's crisis, with today's force...TODAY. Teaming with other services, allies and interagency partners, we enable and participate in joint and combined operations of any magnitude. Responsive and scalable, we operate independent of local infrastructure. A middleweight force, we are light

enough to get there quickly, but heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival. We operate throughout the spectrum of threats — irregular, hybrid, or conventional — or the shady areas where they overlap. Marines are ready to respond whenever the Nation calls...wherever the President may direct.”

In every location that we’ve deployed in the past 10 years — Pakistan, Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Caribbean, the Gulf Coast, Lebanon, South America, the Gulf of Aden, and the Philippines — Marine forces were: engaging with our allies, conducting full spectrum combat and Counter Insurgency operations, enabling the Joint Force, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, evacuating personnel from embassies, deterring aggression, or contributing to assured access. Clearly, Marines have been responding and engaging throughout the range of military operations.

I refer to our Marine Corps of today as a **‘middleweight force.’** I liken it to boxing, where a middleweight boxer can box up into the heavy weight division or box down to the lightweight division simply by changing his weight and training regime. The same is true for the Marine Corps. We fill the void in our Nation’s defense for an agile force that is comfortable operating at the high and low ends of the threat spectrum, or the more likely ambiguous areas in between. Larger than special operations forces, but lighter and more expeditionary than conventional Army units, we engage and respond quickly – often from the sea – with enough force to carry the day upon arrival.

To Marines, the notion of ‘expeditionary’ is a state of mind that drives the way we organize our forces, the way we train and the kind of equipment we buy. This necessitates a high state of unit readiness and an ability to sustain ourselves logistically. We integrate logistics to provide the “middleweight force” the agility to get into position, the endurance to allow it to last all 12 rounds and the power to deliver the knockout punch when the time is right. Our logistics capability is the equivalent of packing up Walmart, Home Depot, AutoZone, and your local pharmacy and being able to place it – ready to go – anywhere in the world in 96 hours.

We are our nation's crisis response force. Crisis response is incompatible with tiered readiness. You're either ready to respond to today's crisis, with today's force... TODAY, or you're late and risk being irrelevant.

Factoring all aspects of our role in the Nation's defense, the United States Marine Corps affords the following three strategic advantages:

- We provide a versatile 'middleweight' capability to respond across the range of military operations.
- We possess an inherent agility that buys time for national leaders and provides them decision space to better analyze developing situations.
- And finally, we bring an enabling and partnering capability to joint and combined operations of any magnitude.

Let me give you a perfect example of the utility of America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness...

Just weeks after 9/11, Task Force 58, under the capable direction of now CENTCOM Commander General Jim Mattis, rapidly aggregated two Marine Expeditionary Units that were already afloat half way around the world, a total of 4,400 combat-ready Marines from six amphibious ships. One Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) (pronounced *MEW*) had been conducting training with the Egyptians, while the other had been providing humanitarian assistance in East Timor. Both raced full speed to the coast of Pakistan.

With all six ships aggregated off the coast of Pakistan, Task Force 58 launched north into Afghanistan in the dark of night, securing three critical lodgments in hostile terrain: Forward Operating Base Rhino, Kandahar Airfield and the American Embassy in Kabul. As important, these actions provided decision space for our National leaders, and facilitated the introduction of follow-on forces. Task Force 58's efforts maintained pressure on the Taliban and Al Qaeda, enabled special operations forces and interagency operations, and facilitated the prosecution of high value targets. This was the versatile and potent *middleweight force* that we are talking about.

You may ask, “Well, that was almost ten years ago, what has the Marine Corps done for our Nation lately?” Let’s turn the clock forward to just this past fall.

The 2,500 Marines of the 15th MEU were operating off the coast of Karachi assisting the flood-stricken people of northern Pakistan. While Marine heavy lift helicopters were rescuing families and providing food and medical support 400 miles deep into Pakistan, Marine Corps Harriers flying off the USS Pelelieu were conducting close air support missions inside Afghanistan. Simultaneously, the USS Dubuque sailed over 1,000 miles west to the Gulf of Aden and rescued the crew of the pirated ship *Magellan Star* from Somali pirates. All of this was happening at the same time, and all of this capability came from a single Marine Expeditionary Unit.

With the flooding in Pakistan worsening, our nation’s leadership sailed the 26th MEU from North Carolina a month early to help mitigate the humanitarian crisis. Not waiting for the twenty-plus day transit to complete, the 26th MEU sent its four heavy lift CH-53 helicopters via Air Force C-17s to Pakistan to support the ongoing 15th MEU relief operations. Once the 26th MEU arrived, it teamed up with the 15th MEU to conclude the flood relief efforts and to assume further CENTCOM responsibilities as the theater reserve.

This past December, the 26th MEU received the CENTCOM Commander’s warning order to deploy two-thirds of its force into Afghanistan to consolidate gains in the Marine Corps’ zone in Helmand Province. Within three days of Secretary Gate’s approval of this action, elements of the 26th MEU – 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, armed with reinforcements and a detachment of MV-22 Ospreys and AH-1W Cobra attack helicopters – were on the ground in Afghanistan.

In short order, the Marines of the 26th MEU had commenced combat operations southwest of Sangin, in direct support of General Petraeus’ winter campaign. Their efforts are further driving a wedge between the insurgents and the local Afghan populace. Meanwhile, the remaining elements of the 26th MEU are still out at sea fulfilling theater reserve responsibilities in CENTCOM for whatever may occur.

In 1957, Lieutenant General “Brute” Krulak wrote, “when trouble comes...there will be Marines — somewhere — who, through hard work, have made and kept themselves

ready to do something useful about it, and to do it *at once.*” Spoken more plainly, and harkening back to the old FEDEX commercial, “When it absolutely, positively has to be accomplished overnite...send in the Marines”

Let me switch gears and speak about our Marine Corps in transition. Over the past six years, we have grown accustomed to large sums of Supplemental and Overseas Contingency Operations funds. We’ve grown into what I like to characterize as a “culture of plenty.”

The Marine Corps has always given our Nation the “best bang for its buck.” In Fiscal Year 2010, the United States Marine Corps consumed only 8.5 % of the DOD budget, while it provided our Nation 31% of its ground operating forces, 12% of its fighter/attack aircraft and 19% of the Nation’s attack helicopters.

In today’s fiscally constrained environment, we must continue to improve our efficiency. Marines have historically been known as “the Penny Pinchers.” At the end of the day, Congress and the American people know that the Marine Corps is a value and that we only ask for what we truly need. During my four years as Commandant of the Marine Corps, we will rededicate ourselves to our frugal roots, while maintaining the high state of preparedness required of America’s Expeditionary Force in Readiness.

In early September, the Marine Corps began an internally-driven, comprehensive Force Structure Review. Armed with the “mission of the Marine Corps” from my Planning Guidance, and using the future security environment as the backdrop in which we will most likely operate, a team of our brightest Marines and Civilian Marines, guided by myself and the top leadership of our Corps, crafted a post-Afghanistan Marine Corps. Yesterday, I briefed Secretary Gates and our senior leadership on the results of this study, and Congress is being briefed, as well. As a result of our review, the Marine Corps will:

- Right-size the Marine Corps for a post Afghanistan world
- Build capabilities that support a “middleweight force” whose role is to respond to today’s crisis... TODAY

- Fully institutionalize the lessons learned during nine years of combat and counter insurgency missions
- Assure access, preserve freedom of maneuver and deny sanctuary against irregular, hybrid and conventional threats
- Maintain a force with a minimum capability to simultaneously deploy two Brigade's worth of assault forces from 33 amphibious ships
- Eliminate unnecessary HQ's and flatten the Marine Corps command structure where it makes sense to do so
- Build regionally-aligned Marine Expeditionary Brigade Command Elements that provide scalable, Joint Task Force-capable, crisis response command and control for our Regional Combatant Commanders
- Maintain Reserve force structure at current levels while internally reorganizing for increased operational relevance with the Total Force
- Increase Marine Cyber-forces by 67% and Marine Special Operations Command by 44%
- Turn high demand/low density forces into high demand/'right density' forces
- Transition 7% of non-operational forces to operational billets
- Reorganize and Consolidate Irregular Warfare Organizations
- Restructure our logistics groups to increase the depth, availability and responsiveness of our combat service support

Last month I recommended to the Secretary of Defense that we cancel the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) program. I recommended this adjustment as an opportunity to cut an onerous fiscal program, thus allowing the Marine Corps the ability to recapitalize on savings from the cancellation of EFV. As the Secretary affirmed last month, the cancellation of the EFV is by no means a rejection of the Marine Corps' amphibious

assault mission. I want all here tonight to know that I remain absolutely committed to develop and field a more affordable solution.

In the complex future security environment, the execution of amphibious operations requires the use of the sea as maneuver space. A New Amphibious Vehicle enables the rapid and seamless projection of ready-to-fight Marine units from sea to land in permissive, uncertain, and hostile environments. Once on land, a properly configured modern amphibious vehicle bolsters the lethality and versatility of the Marine rifle squad. As a result of the cancellation of the EFV, approximately \$2.8 billion of the program's assets will be reinvested in a comprehensive, three-pronged approach for our future ground vehicles.

First, we will immediately begin the process to develop our New Amphibious Vehicle. Second, to ensure continued capability to maneuver from ship-to-shore until the next generation of systems is brought on line, we will upgrade a portion of our existing legacy amphibious vehicle fleet with new engines, electronics, and armaments. Finally, we will accelerate the production of our wheeled Marine Personnel carrier.

In addition, to further demonstrate our renewed commitment to frugality and innovation, we will reduce our total number of vehicles from 44,000 to 32,500, and recapitalize a portion of our legacy HMMWVs. In collaboration with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, we are testing some interesting concepts now at our Warfighting Lab that could markedly improve portions of our existing fleet of HMMWV's, and in doing so, speed up our ground vehicle recapitalization efforts while saving millions of tax payer dollars.

Despite some minor engineering setbacks, the F-35B Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) remains vital to the Marine Corps' doctrine of conducting expeditionary operations. We currently have three different Type/Model/Series aircraft – F-18 Hornets, AV-8 Harriers and E/A-6B Prowlers – that the F-35B will replace. The efficiency gained in training, maintenance, and support realized when the Marine Corps is operating a single aircraft – vice three – will save the Nation over \$1 billion a year.

The capability inherent in a Short Take-Off and Vertical Landing jet facilitates our doctrinal form of maneuver warfare and our need for close air support in the many austere conditions and locations where we will likely operate in the future. When evaluating runways around the globe, there are 10 times as many 3,000-foot runways capable of handling the STOVL JSF variant as there are 8,000-foot runways required for conventional fighter aircraft. The Marine Corps maintains the organic ability to build an expeditionary 3,000-foot runway in a matter of days in support of STOVL missions conducted in uncertain, non-permissive, or remote environments, which are the likely places where we expect to be employed.

We built two of these “expeditionary airfields” in the middle of the desert in Afghanistan, in anticipation of heavy combat operations in Marjah and throughout the Marine zone. The quick sortie turnaround for our Harriers and F/A-18 Hornets resulting from these forward expeditionary airfields significantly changed the tempo of the battle for Marjah.

In light of the decision announced in January relative to the STOVL JSF, the Marine Corps is committed to working closely with industry during the next two years to get this platform back on track in terms of cost, performance and schedule. I am personally tracking the progress of the F-35B on a daily/weekly/monthly basis via meetings with government and industry, and through a detailed set of metrics that I maintain in my office. My intent is to do the same thing with our New Amphibious Vehicle, once it begins development.

Another main effort is a concept called “*Lightening the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF)*.” This means reducing the size, weight and energy expenditure of our forces from the individual rifleman to wholesale components of the MAGTF. Over the past decade of operations, we have become tethered to equipment sets resulting from the emergence of new threats, most notably the improvised explosive device. We have also become overly accustomed to the acquisition of resources that, in some cases, are incompatible with the ethos of an agile, expeditionary force. We are currently developing a plan for reducing the size and weight of Marine Expeditionary Units and Marine Expeditionary Brigades so that

they can begin to fit within likely lift constraints. I intend for this effort to begin this year in earnest and be fully registered in the next two budget cycles.

Finally, the Marine Corps is leading the development of expeditionary energy solutions for the Department of Defense and the Navy; reducing energy demand in our platforms and systems, increasing the use of renewable energy, and instilling an “ethos of energy and water efficiency” in every Marine.

As I close tonight, I want to remind you that your Marines have been busy. They have been providing assistance in Haiti, in Pakistan, capturing Pirates, fighting in Afghanistan, training partner nation forces and forward-deployed throughout the world over this past year. As we gather here tonite in this wonderful Memorial Club, there are roughly 32,000 Marines forward deployed. Many of these Marines are living in hard conditions and in great danger, but all are doing the Nation’s bidding. I ask that you keep them in your thoughts and in your prayers.

Secretary Gates said here this past summer, “The Marines’ unique ability to project combat forces from the sea under uncertain circumstances – forces quickly able to protect and sustain themselves – is a capability that America has needed in this past decade, and will require in the future.” I want to assure you that the Marine Corps will remain our Nation’s Expeditionary Force in Readiness and the force-of-choice for crisis response for decades to come.

Ladies and gentlemen, once again, thank you for having me here tonight. I now want to open the floor for your questions.

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