

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

March 2006

Preface

The 21st Century Marine Corps

Our Vision

To remain the world's foremost expeditionary warfighting organization—always interoperable with joint, coalition, and inter-agency partners. To create stability in an unstable world with the world's finest warriors—United States Marines.

Creating Stability in an Unstable World

We remain the Nation's premier expeditionary combat force-in-readiness. We are primarily a Naval force whose strength is our ability to access denied areas from great distances. We project Marine forces from land or sea bases for operations as part of a joint or combined force. We provide defense of the homeland by operating from forward deployed locations throughout the world. We sustain our deployed forces for extended periods of time.

We fight across the spectrum of conflict. However, we believe that our future will be characterized by irregular wars. We focus on warfighting excellence in everything we do. A guiding principle of our Corps is that we fight as combined-arms teams, seamlessly integrating our ground, aviation and logistics forces. We exploit the speed, flexibility, and agility inherent in our combined-arms approach to defeat traditional, terrorist, and emerging threats to our Nation's security.

Every Marine is a rifleman and a warrior—our link to the past and our key to the future. We train and educate our Marines to think independently and act aggressively, with speed and initiative, and to exploit the advantages of cultural understanding. We thrive in the chaotic and unpredictable environments in which our forces are employed. We are committed to, and sustained by our families, the American people, and our operational partners. We are devoted to each other and the cause of freedom.

INTENT

We will preserve our tradition of being most ready when the Nation is least ready. We will continue to rely on our fundamental tenets of expeditionary maneuver warfare and combined-arms air-ground task forces. We will enhance and expand these capabilities through the aggressive implementation of Sea-basing and Distributed Operations. These transforming concepts will increase our agility and speed in operations from cooperative security to major combat.

Marines—Our Link to the Past, Our Key to the Future

Our successes have come from the aggressive spirit, adaptability and flexibility of our leaders and units at all levels. We will continue to create Marines who thrive in chaotic and uncertain environments. To that end, we will place renewed emphasis on our greatest asset—the individual Marine—through improved training and education in foreign languages, cultural awareness, tactical intelligence and urban operations. We will develop and provide the best individual equipment available. We will train, educate, orient and equip all Marines to operate skillfully across the wide spectrum of operations, blending the need for combat skills and counter-insurgency skills with those required for civil affairs. To do so, we will continue to attract, recruit and retain the best of America's youth.

Distributed Operations

Implementation of Distributed Operations as an extension of maneuver warfare will require a focus on enhanced small units: more autonomous, more lethal, and better able to operate across the full spectrum of operations. This will require investing in the technologies and training that will provide individual communications, tactical mobility, and networked intelligence down to the squad level. Our logistics and fires capabilities must be adaptive and scalable in order to support these small units, whether dispersed across the battle space or aggregated for larger operations.

International Presence

We will rely on our traditional strength of working with partner nations in order to enhance regional security and stability. Additionally, we will place new emphasis on interaction and coordination with key interagency and international forces.

Adapting & Shaping

While ever ready to respond to major combat operations, the future holds a greater likelihood of irregular wars fought in urban environments, against thinking enemies using asymmetric tactics. Thus, we will adapt our tactics, techniques and procedures as well as technology to enhance our capabilities to succeed in these environments. We will shape and enhance the capabilities of our Reserve forces to respond to the 21st Century environment, and improve our integration and coordination with Special Operations Command.

Seabasing

We will continue to enhance and transform our capabilities for forcible entry from the sea. Seabasing will significantly reduce our deploy/employ timelines while also dramatically reducing our footprint ashore. While the Marine Expeditionary Brigade is our primary forcible entry force, our principal contribution to the joint fight in major combat operations will remain the Marine Expeditionary Force.

End State

A Marine Corps that celebrates its culture and ethos, but is never satisfied with its current capabilities and operational performance. A Marine Corps that is a learning organization: embracing innovation and improvement in order to increase its effectiveness as part of the Joint Force.

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration

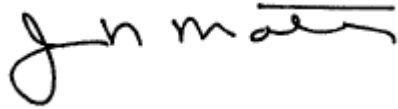
20 March 2006

FOREWORD

In 1998 the Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command published *United States Marine Corps Warfighting Concepts for the 21st Century*. Commonly referred to as “the white book,” it captured in one volume the twelve concepts that collectively framed our view of the operational capabilities we sought to achieve. Foremost among them was *Operational Maneuver From The Sea* (OMFTS). The concepts included in that single volume provided a framework for the ongoing process of innovation and capability development. The ideas contained therein, coupled with our maneuver warfare philosophy, core competencies, and expeditionary heritage, eventually came to be known as *expeditionary maneuver warfare* (EMW). Those initial concepts have served us well, and recent history has proven many of the ideas espoused, such as the “three-block war,” remarkably insightful.

The September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, subsequent world events, and new National Security and Defense Strategies have redefined what the Nation expects of its Armed Forces. *The 21st Century Marine Corps* (ALMAR 018/05) has provided the Commandant’s guidance for the future of our Corps. *Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment* translates that broad guidance and direction into a new family of concepts, evolved from OMFTS/EMW and informed by our Corps’s operational experiences across the spectrum of conflict, which will further guide experimentation, wargaming and assessment. Those activities, as well as continued operational lessons learned and completion of an overarching Naval concept, will lead to refinement and publication of an enduring edition of this book in the near future.

We are a Nation at war and will remain so for the foreseeable future. The concepts presented in the volume are intended as a framework that will focus our creativity, initiative, and judgment toward developing the military capabilities that will ensure our Corps continues to be the Nation's premier expeditionary force in readiness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J N Mattis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line above the "Mattis" portion.

J. N. MATTIS
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps

CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Overview.....1
 Purpose
 Related Efforts
 The National Defense Strategy
 The Continuum of Operations: the Joint Campaign Construct
 The Midrange Threat Estimate
 Operating Concepts

Chapter 2: Forward Presence, Security Cooperation and Counterterrorism.....11
 Introduction
 Description of the Military Problem
 The Central Idea
 Capability and Capacity Enhancements
 Sizing Options
 Naval Element of the Global Defense Posture
 Co-located and Integrated Naval Force Packages
 Summary

Chapter 3: Crisis Response.....25
 Introduction
 Description of the Military Problem
 The Central Idea
 Attributes of Successful Crisis Response
 Crisis Response Enabling Initiatives
 Implications for Capability Development
 Summary

Chapter 4: Forcible Entry.....33
 Introduction
 Description of the Military Problem
 Forcible Entry Re-defined
 The Central Idea
 Gaining and Maintaining Access
 Opening Entry Points
 Transitioning to Follow-on Operations
 Illustrative Example
 Summary

Chapter 5: Prolonged Operations.....43
Introduction
Description of the Military Problem
Prolonged Operations Defined
Relationship to *Sustained Operations Ashore*
The Central Idea
Implications for Capability Development
Summary

Chapter 6: Countering Irregular Threats: A New Approach to Counterinsurgency.....53
Introduction
Future Conflicts and the Nature and Theory of War
The American Approach
Irregular Threats
The Security Environment and Policy Objectives
Some Precepts for Countering Irregular Threats
Description of the Military Problem
The Central Idea
Campaign Components
The Lessons of History
Summary

Chapter 7: Conclusion.....73

ANNEX A: Glossary.....75

ANNEX B: *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* (Extracts).....83

ANNEX C: *Distributed Operations*.....95

ANNEX D: *Seabasing* Joint Integrating Concept, Executive Summary.....103

CHAPTER 1

Overview

*The fundamental element of a military service is its purpose or role in implementing national policy. The statement of this role may be called the strategic concept of the service. Basically, this concept is a description of how, when, and where the military service expects to protect the nation against some threat to its security.*¹

— Samuel P. Huntington, 1954

The 21st Century Marine Corps provides the Commandant's broad guidance and direction for the future of our Corps. The forthcoming *Naval Operating Concept* will describe the evolving role of U.S. Naval forces in defense of the Nation. *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* is our conceptual foundation for littoral power projection. The concept of *Seabasing* advocates a means of rapidly deploying, employing and sustaining globally sourced forces in a manner that provides the President and the joint force commander additional political and military options for overcoming challenges posed by a changing security environment. Another concept, *Distributed Operations*, builds upon our warfighting philosophy and understanding of that environment to generate training, education and equipment innovations that will prepare Marines for the challenges ahead.

Purpose

This publication distills the Commandant's broad guidance and direction into a draft family of operating concepts, informed by *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, and enabled by *Seabasing* and *Distributed Operations*, which describe the Marine Corps contribution to the *National Defense Strategy*. With additional context provided by the joint force campaign construct and the *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate: 2005-2015*, this volume describes Marine Corps forces that will be organized, based, trained and equipped for *forward presence, security cooperation, counterterrorism, crisis response, forcible entry, prolonged operations* and *counterinsurgency*. The ideas presented herein are meant to inspire discussion, debate and feedback concerning how the Marine

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Proceedings), May 1954, Vol. No. 80, No. 5, p. 483.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

Corps will operate in the future. Designed as an interim product, it will be refined into an enduring body of work, nested under an overarching Naval concept, which will guide future capability development.

Related Efforts

Each of the operating concepts published in this volume are supported by one or more *concepts of operation* (CONOPS). These CONOPS are classified products that apply the operating concepts against various scenarios, providing sufficient detail to support wargaming, experimentation and assessment of current and future capabilities in order to make informed capability development and investment decisions. The operating concepts are also complemented by *functional concepts*. Like CONOPS, functional concepts are published separately from this volume and provide an increased level of detail in order to drive changes to doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF) that will collectively refine how we carry out the various warfighting functions. The figure below illustrates how our national strategy, service vision, and threat estimate have shaped our concepts hierarchy.



The National Defense Strategy

To effectively develop relevant capabilities, we must have a firm grasp of the *National Defense Strategy* and the role of the Marine Corps in implementing national policy. The *National Defense Strategy* points out that:

*Uncertainty is the defining characteristic of today's strategic environment. We can identify trends but cannot predict specific events with precision. While we work to avoid being surprised, we must posture ourselves to handle unanticipated problems—we must plan with surprise in mind.*²

The uncertainty described in the *National Defense Strategy* is not a new phenomenon. Our history is replete with examples illustrating how the United States has been surprised by world events, such as the attack on Pearl Harbor, the invasion of South Korea, the precipitous collapse of the Soviet Union, the occupation of Kuwait, civil unrest in Somalia, and the September 11, 2001 attacks on our own soil. Rather than attempting to predict the next crisis, the *National Defense Strategy* describes the nature of the “mature and emerging challenges” we will face. Given our preeminence in **traditional** forms of warfare, our potential adversaries are driven toward **irregular**, **catastrophic** and **disruptive** methods.³ The *National Security Strategy* reinforces this point:

*America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few.*⁴

These adversaries will operate across national boundaries and depend upon support from a variety of state and non-state actors for safe haven,

² Donald H. Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, March 1, 2005) p. 2. Hereafter referred to as NDS.

³ *Traditional* challenges are posed by states employing recognized military capabilities and forces in well-understood forms of military competition and conflict. *Irregular* challenges come from those employing unconventional methods to counter the traditional advantages of stronger opponents. *Catastrophic* challenges involve the acquisition, possession, and use of WMD or methods producing WMD-like effects. *Disruptive* challenges may come from adversaries who develop and use breakthrough technologies to negate current U.S. advantages in key operational domains. NDS, p. 2.

⁴ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: The White House, September 17, 2002) p. 1. Hereafter referred to as NSS.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

financing, recruits, weapons and other resources. In a conflict with such adversaries the judicious application of all elements of national power will be required for the United States to prevail. While military forces will still locate and destroy the enemy, we also will have an expanded role in supporting the diplomatic and economic activities that reduce our adversaries' existing and potential bases of support, especially in failed or failing states. In response to those challenges, the *National Defense Strategy* establishes the following strategic objectives:

- ***Secure the United States from direct attack*** by actively confronting, early and at safe distances, those who would threaten us—especially those who would do so with catastrophic means.
- ***Secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action*** by ensuring that key regions, lines of communication and the global commons⁵ are accessible.
- ***Strengthen alliances and partnerships*** by addressing common challenges in concert with enduring and emerging partners.
- ***Establish favorable security conditions*** by countering aggression or coercion targeted at our partners or interests.

The *National Defense Strategy* goes on to explain that the United States will seek to accomplish those objectives by ***assuring allies and friends, dissuading potential adversaries, deterring aggression and countering coercion*** and, if necessary, ***defeating adversaries***. Given the potential consequences of a catastrophic attack, deterrence includes both defensive and, when necessary, preemptive offensive actions. The uncertainty associated with the current strategic environment calls for more widely distributed forces that can assure, dissuade, and deter regionally, yet possess the agility to rapidly deploy and employ as part of a global response to crises. The *National Defense Strategy* points out that our military forces must possess certain attributes and be postured to execute this strategy. These attributes include forces that are shaped and sized to:

⁵ Gordon England, *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, June 2005), hereafter referred to as SHDCS, defines *global commons* as “international waters and airspace, space and cyberspace.”

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

- ***Defend the homeland***⁶ by identifying, disrupting and defeating threats as early and as far from the United States and its partners as possible.
- ***Operate in and from four forward regions***⁷ (Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian Littoral, and the Middle East-Southwest Asia) to assure partners, deter aggression and coercion, and provide a prompt, global response to crises.
- ***Swiftly defeat adversaries and achieve decisive, enduring results*** by rapidly deploying and employing globally sourced forces into two separate theaters to conduct campaigns that overlap in time; when directed, these forces also must be capable of transitioning one of those campaigns into extended stability operations to achieve more far reaching objectives.
- ***Conduct lesser contingencies*** such as strikes and raids, peace operations, humanitarian missions and non-combatant evacuations.

The force also requires adjustments to the ***global defense posture*** via a system of ***main operating bases, forward operating sites, and cooperative security locations***. Main operating bases are permanent bases with resident forces and robust infrastructure to support command and control, training, and the deployment and employment of military forces for operations. Those located overseas also support long-term security cooperation (e.g., the United Kingdom, Japan, and the Republic of Korea). Forward operating sites are scalable facilities intended for rotational use by operating forces that can support a range of military operations on short notice. They may have a small permanent presence and often house pre-positioned equipment (e.g., Diego Garcia and Norway). Cooperative security locations are a diverse array of austere facilities. They have little or no U.S. personnel assigned and are intended for contingency access, logistical support, and rotational use by operating forces (e.g., Australia). The creation of austere, discrete bases will provide opportunities for

⁶ JP 1-02, *DOD Dictionary of Military Terms*, electronic edition as amended through 31 August 2005, hereafter referred to as JP 1-02, defines *homeland defense* as “The protection of US sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical defense infrastructure against external threats and aggression, or other threats as directed by the President.”

⁷ SHDCS defines *forward regions* as “foreign land areas, sovereign airspace, and sovereign waters outside the US homeland (and its approaches.)”

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

increased security cooperation with an expanded set of international partners, while also enhancing flexibility and speed of response to emergencies.

Significantly, the *National Defense Strategy* also notes that **joint seabasing** “holds promise for the broader transformation of our overseas military posture.”⁸ The *National Defense Strategy* also outlines a new approach to global force management that will be designed to expedite force deployment from dispersed global locations and reduce response times to crisis. Regional combatant commanders will have forces allocated to them as needed from worldwide sources. An important element of this approach involves increasing the expeditionary character of select forces and repositioning them to forward locations that will enhance response time.

The Continuum of Operations: the Joint Campaign Construct

The Marine Corps provides joint force commanders self-sustainable, task-organized combined arms forces capable of operating across the spectrum of conflict. As a sea service partnered with the U.S. Navy, the Marine Corps uses the sea as both maneuver space and as a secure base of operations in the littoral areas of the world. The Navy-Marine Corps team is designed to fight and has repeatedly proven its ability to do so very effectively. The capabilities that make U.S. Naval forces so effective in combat also have great utility in a wide range of activities such as providing humanitarian assistance, conducting peace operations, providing support to nation building, and averting conflict by providing a show of force. Given the security environment described in the *National Defense Strategy*, there is an increased need for forces with such dexterity. That security environment also challenges military professionals to reconsider and expand their view of the applicability of military capabilities across a broader continuum of operations. In November 2004, the Secretary of Defense acknowledged that challenge by initiating a re-examination of the construct used for joint campaign planning. As a result, a six-phase construct has been established:

- **Phase 0: Shape the Environment.** This phase involves those joint, interagency and multinational activities conducted on an

⁸ NDS, p. 19. Note that Annex D provides the Executive Summary from the draft *Seabasing* Joint Integrating Concept, version 1.0 of 1 August 2005.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

ongoing, routine basis to assure or solidify friendly relationships and alliances and/or deter potential adversaries.

- ***Phase 1: Deter the Enemy.*** This phase is focused on deterring specific opponents by demonstrating the capability and resolve to apply force in pursuit of U.S. interests. These actions will likely build upon Phase 0 activities and may include a show of force or initiatives that would facilitate deployment, employment and sustainment of additional forces within the region.
- ***Phase 2: Seize the Initiative.*** Hostilities commence during this phase. The joint force commander will apply combat power to delay, impede, halt or dislodge the adversary as well as to gain access to theater infrastructure and enhance friendly freedom of action. Concurrently, the joint force commander will provide assistance to relieve conditions that precipitated the crisis in order to promote stability.
- ***Phase 3: Dominate the Enemy.*** The focus during this phase is on the exploitation, pursuit and destruction of the enemy in order to break the opponent's will for organized resistance. Stability operations will also be conducted as needed to facilitate transition to the next phase.
- ***Phase 4: Stabilize the Environment.*** The priority during this phase will be on stability operations, the reconstitution of infrastructure, and the restoration of services. The joint force may be required to perform limited local governance and coordination of activities by multinational, interagency and non-governmental organizations. This phase concludes with the transfer of regional authority to a legitimate civil entity.
- ***Phase 5: Enable Civil Authority.*** The joint force will enable the legitimate civil authority and its provision of essential services to the populace. This includes coordination of joint force activities with those of multinational, interagency and non-governmental organizations and promoting a favorable attitude among the population toward U.S. and host nation objectives.

While these phases are often envisioned sequentially, activities from one phase will likely occur simultaneously with or overlap other phases. Joint

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

force commanders may omit some phases or expand others based on mission needs. From a capability development perspective, the significance of this campaign-phasing construct is that it requires military forces capable of sustaining continuous forward operations, working with numerous and diverse partner organizations, responding quickly to a variety of emergencies, conducting wide ranging and often simultaneous activities, effectively dealing with changing operational situations and quickly transitioning from one mission to the next.

The Midrange Threat Estimate

While the *National Defense Strategy* provides a broad view of the strategic environment and the joint campaign construct illustrates the nature and continuum of operations, the *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate: 2005-2015* provides additional insight with respect to the likely causes, locations and adversaries for future conflict. It also describes the demands these factors will place upon Marine Corps forces:

The most prevalent destabilization factor in the world's regions is the growing trend in Islamic extremism. Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Eurasia and the Middle East are all experiencing gradual moves toward extremist Islamist views in many countries in their regions. Although many of these developing regions are riddled with rampant infectious diseases and economic troubles, the primary motivating factors for U.S. Marine involvement in the regions will be ethnic conflicts and increasing terrorist activity.

The U. S. military must develop more agile strategies and adaptive tactics if it is to succeed in this complex environment. While the current U.S. capability overmatch in conventional operations will continue for some time, Marines must be equipped with the requisite regional, cultural and language knowledge to effectively deal with persistent and emerging irregular, traditional, catastrophic, and disruptive threats in the littorals and complex urban terrain. The face of the primary threats to the Marine Corps is changing and the Marines must change with it.⁹

The *Midrange Threat Estimate* also identifies three means adversaries may employ that constitute the greatest cause for concern: **information operations**, **terrorism**, and **weapons of mass destruction**. It forecasts that information operations, to include attack, exploitation, propaganda and

⁹ MCIA-1586-001-05, *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate: 2005-2015* (Quantico VA: Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, August 2005), p. vi.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

media manipulation, will be conducted by a variety of extremist organizations, criminal elements, and nation states. It also predicts that decentralized, self-reliant, innovative, and networked groups will employ terrorism to threaten U.S. interests at home and abroad. Additionally, it notes that ten countries are believed to have nuclear weapons and that extremist groups will seek to obtain and/or develop these and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological agents.¹⁰ Based on this assessment, the *Midrange Threat Estimate* predicts that the Marine Corps will conduct operations that will move well beyond the littoral and will include, at a minimum:

- Stability and Support Operations
- Small Wars and Counterinsurgency
- Humanitarian Assistance, Disaster Relief and Nation Building
- Peace Operations
- Combating Terrorism
- Counter-Proliferation and Non-Proliferation
- Combating Drug Trafficking and Crime
- Non-combatant Evacuation Operations¹¹

Collectively, the strategic environment, joint force campaign construct, and threat estimate provide the context for the conceptual framework that will drive capability development in a manner that meets the Commandant's guidance and the Nation's expectations.

Operating Concepts

Enabled by *Seabasing* and *Distributed Operations*, the Marine Corps will contribute to the nation's defense by providing forces organized, based, trained and equipped for *forward presence, security cooperation, counterterrorism, crisis response, forcible entry, prolonged operations* and *counterinsurgency*. These operating concepts constitute the body and focus of this volume. Chapter 2 proposes options for sizing, shaping, and posturing Marine Corps forces in a manner that supports the **Forward Presence** requirements of the regional combatant commanders. It describes how forward postured Naval forces will proactively conduct **Security Cooperation** with an expanded set of international partners. In addition to conducting security cooperation, these forces will be situated to

¹⁰ Ibid, p. iv.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 33-37.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

provide forward defense of the homeland through preemptive **Counterterrorism** operations. Chapter 3, **Crisis Response**, describes our ability to quickly react to emerging events via a force structure and global posture that is agile enough to deploy and reinforce rapidly, robust enough to sustain itself in an expeditionary environment, and strong enough to prevail in likely missions across the range of operations. **Forcible Entry**, Chapter 4, articulates how forward deployed and crisis response forces can be concentrated from significant distances, on a compressed timeline, to overcome limitations on access within an operating area and open entry points for the joint force commander. Chapter 5, **Prolonged Operations**, addresses the challenges of refining our organization, equipment and training to balance general-purpose capability with those specialized capabilities that may be required to conduct long-duration operations against current and future opponents. Chapter 6, **Countering Irregular Threats: A New Approach to Counterinsurgency**, addresses the need to integrate military operations with other elements of power and influence to support a host nation (government, populace, and military) in its efforts to effectively resolve the conditions that sustain discontent or insurrection.

CHAPTER 2

Forward Presence, Security Cooperation and Counterterrorism

Lying offshore, ready to act, the presence of ships and Marines sometimes means much more than just having air power or ship's fire, when it comes to deterring a crisis. And the ships and Marines may not have to do anything but lie offshore. It is hard to lie offshore with a C-141 or C-130 full of airborne troops.

— General Colin Powell, U.S. Army, 1990
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Introduction

The *National Defense Strategy* provides guidelines for strategic planning and decision-making:

*We will focus our military planning, posture, operations, and capabilities on the **active, forward, and layered defense** of our nation, our interests, and our partners.*¹²

For the foreseeable future, transnational terrorist organizations with global reach and weapons of mass destruction represent the greatest threat to national security. **Terrorism** is defined as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological” while **counterterrorism** is defined as “offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism.”¹³

The **forward regions** are defined as “foreign land areas, sovereign airspace, and sovereign waters outside the U.S. homeland (and its approaches).”¹⁴ The landward approaches include Canada and Mexico, while the sea and air approaches are “the waters and airspace geographically contiguous to the United States.”¹⁵ The *National Defense*

¹² NDS, p. iv.

¹³ JP 1-02.

¹⁴ SHDCS, p. 11.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

Strategy identified four forward regions that U.S. forces must operate *in and from*: Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian Littoral, and the Middle East–Southwest Asia. Since transnational terrorist organizations are generally able to thrive only in weak or failed states, key to this operating concept is the understanding that U.S. forces in general, and Marine Corps forces in particular, primarily will operate in under-governed regions such as the Afghanistan–Pakistan border area; the Iraq–Syria border area; and the Horn of Africa, among others. Additionally, portions of South America, West Africa and Southeast Asia have emerged as increasingly unstable areas. Collectively, this wide swath of territory stretching from South America, through Africa, and on to Southeast Asia is commonly referred to as “the arc of instability.”

Military actions in the forward regions to counter terrorist threats are of central importance to an active, layered defense. According to the *National Defense Strategy*:

*Our most important contribution to the security of the U.S. homeland is our capacity to disrupt and defeat threats early and at a safe distance, as far from the U.S. and its partners as possible. Our ability to identify and defeat threats abroad—before they can strike—while making critical contributions to the direct defense of our territory and population is the sine qua non of our nation’s security.*¹⁶

The *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* establishes a “4D” approach:

- *The United States and its partners will **defeat** terrorist organizations of global reach by attacking their sanctuaries; leadership; command, control and communications; material support; and finances...*
- *We will **deny** further sponsorship, support and sanctuary to terrorists by ensuring other states accept their responsibilities to take action against these international threats within their sovereign territory...*
- *We will **diminish** the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit by enlisting the international community to focus its efforts and resources on the areas most at risk...*
- *Most importantly, we will **defend** the United States, our citizens, and our interests at home and abroad by both proactively protecting our*

¹⁶ NDS, p. 17.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

*homeland and extending our defenses to ensure we identify and neutralize the threat as early as possible.*¹⁷

Marine Corps forces already make important contributions to the 4D Strategy. For example, Marine Corps forces played a key role in attacking terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan during OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM. Forward deployed Marine Corps forces also routinely conduct **security cooperation**, which is defined as “interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.”¹⁸ Marine Corps forces also have conducted stability operations in weak or failed states in order to enable nation building and to prevent the emergence (or re-emergence) of terrorism.

Given the increasing number and global distribution of failed and failing states that may potentially provide sanctuary and support for transnational terrorists, there is an increased requirement for security cooperation and counterterrorism capabilities and capacity. In the past, many of the tasks associated with security cooperation and counterterrorism were assigned exclusively to special operations forces. Prior to the events of September 11, 2001, U.S. special operations forces generally operated independent of conventional forces and held a virtual monopoly on designated security cooperation and counterterrorism tasks; however, that is no longer true today. Marine Corps forces are routinely operating in close collaboration with special operations and paramilitary forces. Additionally, a Marine Corps component has been established within U.S. Special Operations Command. This operating concept assumes that this trend will continue and that forward deployed Marine Corps forces will increasingly perform or support missions once considered the exclusive domain of special operations forces.

Description of the Military Problem

The strategic environment, objectives and approach described in the *National Defense Strategy* clearly call for a greater emphasis on **forward presence**, especially along the wide swath of territory commonly referred

¹⁷ George W. Bush, *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2003) pp. 11-12. Hereafter referred to as NSCT.

¹⁸ JP 1-02.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

to as “the arc of instability.” Those forces providing forward presence must be capable of conducting **security cooperation** with an expanded set of international partners. They must also be capable of conducting a wide range of **counterterrorism** operations to identify, disrupt, and defeat adversaries as far from the homeland as possible. The current size, shape and posture of our forces are not optimized to provide sufficient forward presence and conduct the diverse array of security cooperation and counterterrorism tasks required in this changing security environment.

The Central Idea

Naval forces are ideally suited to accomplishing a wide variety of forward presence, security cooperation, and counterterrorism tasks in support of the combatant commanders’ requirements and the strategic objectives articulated in the *National Defense Strategy*. They command and exploit the ocean as maneuver space to provide demonstrable power and influence while maintaining neutrality. The inherent mobility and persistence of Naval forces allows them to conduct security cooperation with a variety of partner nations, strengthening alliances and establishing favorable security conditions. Given our preeminence in the maritime domain, U.S. Naval forces play a vital role in securing strategic access and retaining global freedom of action. Forward deployed Naval forces provide a show of force to reassure friends and dissuade aggression. When necessary, they can conduct counterterrorism operations to help secure the United States from direct attack.

Naval forces have a long history of providing forward presence. Security cooperation in conjunction with that forward presence has usually consisted of short duration bilateral training exercises afloat and ashore. For example, in August 1992 the Navy and Marine Corps conducted exercises with our Persian Gulf partners in order to demonstrate U.S. commitment to the stability and security of the region in the post-DESERT STORM era. While the participating Marines and Sailors likely perceived these events simply in terms of training exercises, they were actually supporting the higher purpose of security cooperation. Informed by the guidance provided in the *National Defense Strategy*, such exercises take on an operational significance well beyond their training value. Recognizing that value, Naval forces should approach and prepare for security cooperation as an operational commitment, vice a training event that fills time in a deployment pending a “real mission.” Concurrently,

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

Naval forces engaged in security cooperation must be prepared and poised to conduct more direct, offensive counterterrorism operations.

With relatively modest refinements to their size, shape, and posture, Naval forces can provide the combatant commanders significantly greater capability to assure, dissuade, and deter throughout their regions. This increased capability can be widely dispersed to operate in and from a greater portion of the four forward regions, providing concurrent security cooperation with an increased number of long-standing and emerging allies and friends. While the *National Defense Strategy* highlights the importance of Europe, Northeast Asia, the East Asian Littoral, and the Middle East-Southwest Asia, the mobility of afloat Naval forces gives them great utility and flexibility to operate in other regions as well. Increasing the forward presence capacity and security cooperation capability of Naval forces will provide greater opportunity to expand our circle of security partners around the world and develop the key operational capabilities between the United States and partner nations espoused in the *National Defense Strategy*. This expanded coverage also reduces response time to contingencies such as natural and man-made disasters, further solidifying established friendships and building new ones through the provision of personnel recovery, non-combatant evacuation, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

In addition to providing increased visibility of U.S. capability and commitment that will reassure our friends and give pause to our potential foes, these enhancements will provide greater capability to defend the homeland forward through preventive, preemptive, or reactive counterterrorism operations. Refining how Naval forces are organized and positioned will also provide a more immediate response to likely crisis areas and the means to rapidly concentrate globally sourced joint combat power to swiftly defeat adversaries. Chapter 3 will discuss crisis response in greater detail.

Refining how Naval forces are organized and positioned will involve four closely synchronized major actions:

- Determining what Navy and Marine Corps **capability and capacity enhancements** are needed to meet forward presence, security cooperation, and counterterrorism requirements, balanced by a determination of what can be pre-positioned in theater or retained in CONUS to provide rapid crisis response.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

- Establishing additional **sizing options** for the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF), other Marine Corps forces, and associated shipping to provide a greater number of available units for forward presence, security cooperation, and counterterrorism.
- Evolving the **Naval element of the global defense posture** via a new system of main operating bases, forward operating sites, and cooperative security locations, interoperable with sea-based resources, to provide increased security cooperation opportunities, greater forward presence, and enhanced support to counterterrorism.
- Developing **co-located and integrated Naval force packages** of Navy and Marine Corps forces within that system to reduce transit time, develop habitual relationships, and synchronize training, deployment and maintenance cycles.

Capability and Capacity Enhancements

The rise of extremist ideologies and the absence of effective government in various key regions have generated an increased requirement for forward presence, security cooperation and counterterrorism capabilities and capacities. Extremist ideologues seek to effect major change in the global social order. They seek to target and influence local populations by persuasion or coercion, conscious that local grievances and/or ineffective government can provide fertile ground for developing a base of support for terrorism. The number of forward Naval forces can be increased and their organization tailored to enhance their capability to assist partner nations in alleviating the causes of dissatisfaction, thereby countering extremist ideologies. Naval forces can also be refined to better aid the host nation in developing the capabilities required to more effectively protect their populations.

Naval forces have often been committed as a stabilizing presence to counter extremist agitation. In 1958 the pro-Western government of Lebanon, adjacent to pro-communist Syria, was menaced by a Communist supported rebellion. At the request of President Camille Chamoun the 2d Provisional Marine Force landed in Beirut on 15 July, where they remained until 30 September to support peaceful elections and the inauguration of a new president. While Naval forces will continue to maintain the capability for such direct intervention, a key enhancement is

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

improving our ability to conduct foreign internal defense. Enhancing the host nation government's ability to free and protect their societies from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency is a discrete alternative to direct intervention.

Sea-based Naval forces can assist the host nation by training security forces, assisting in the provision or restoration of essential services and infrastructure, enhancing economic development, and conducting related information operations in order to establish an environment that promotes governance and enables social, economic and political development. Doing so will require an increased ability to interact with host nation forces and indigenous populations; improved language capability and cultural awareness; increased ability to conduct foreign military/internal defense training; more capable small units led by mature non-commissioned officers; the addition of construction engineer capabilities; and more health services capability.

The sea-based approach to forward presence will provide persistent security cooperation and counterterrorism capabilities that can be tailored to local requirements while minimizing footprint ashore. This unobtrusive approach will avoid the unintended consequences of a more permanent, landward U.S. military presence. U.S. forces operating overseas have often enjoyed a standard of living and affluence well beyond the means of local residents. As that presence continues, it can result in profound changes to the local economy, culture and society that foment natural resentment among the populace. Security cooperation by sea-based forces can provide discrete, unobtrusive assistance to the host nation while minimizing the risk of becoming a disruptive influence. Naval forces conducting security cooperation from afloat will require a number of supporting capabilities, particularly sufficient operational and tactical mobility. While seagoing vessels are in and of themselves a form of strategic/operational mobility, additional forms of intra- and inter-theater lift may be required to deliver key resources to units already forward postured in order to tailor forces for specific missions. Surface and air tactical mobility will be required to support and sustain both ship-to-shore and ground movement of personnel and equipment. Revised force modules aboard maritime prepositioning ships will likely be required to ensure that support to security cooperation and counterterrorism does not adversely impact our ability to respond effectively to major crises.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

Additionally, increased forward presence and security cooperation will improve our regional understanding, a benefit that should be complemented by an increased intelligence collection, dissemination and reach back capability. The result will be better situational awareness and increased effectiveness at detecting, identifying, and tracking threat capabilities. When directed, forward deployed Naval forces will act on that intelligence and conduct preventive, preemptive, or reactive counterterrorism operations, such as:

- ***Maritime Interdiction/Visit, Board, Search and Seizure.*** This has been a Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) mission since the program's inception in 1985. The Marine Corps' role may be expanded in order to capture or destroy terrorist operatives and assets in both littoral and open waters. This may include innovative ways of task organizing Navy and Marine Corps resources, such as the development of a Marine Corps force module operating from littoral ships.
- ***Raids/Strikes.*** Marine Corps forces will be capable of conducting raids and strikes by surface and air to isolate, capture or destroy terrorists and resources:
 - Sanctuaries, bases, camps, hideouts, transit routes
 - Support
 - Leadership/high value targets
 - Command, control and communications
 - Mobility assets
- ***Safeguard/recover weapons of mass destruction.*** Marine Corps forces may have enhanced capabilities to support and/or conduct non-proliferation operations, crisis response to the potential use of weapons of mass destruction, and consequence management.
- ***Safeguard/recover U.S. and/or Allied Lives and Property.*** Already adept at non-combatant evacuations, Marine Corps forces may expand their capability to conduct in-extremis hostage rescue, protection of shipping and other security-related operations.
- ***Area Denial/Area Security.*** Marine Corps forces will be capable of employing both air and ground assets to deny the use of an area to an enemy or to secure an area from attack.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

- ***Conventional Military Operations to Enforce Sanctions.*** Marine Corps forces may participate in a range of operations, including amphibious assaults and extended land campaigns, to enforce sanctions against state sponsors of terrorism.

To accomplish the missions described above, Marine Corps forces must be capable of operating in concert with other conventional forces, special operations forces, other government agencies, law enforcement agencies, and multinational partners.

Sizing Options

Providing a greater number of available units for forward presence, security cooperation and counterterrorism can be achieved by establishing additional size and capability options for Marine Corps forces and associated shipping. This can be accomplished in a number of ways.

For example, in times of crisis Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU) have occasionally conducted “split operations.” A case in point is OPERATION SHARP EDGE in 1990, where 237 Marines from the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) landed in the American Embassy compound in Monrovia, Liberia, to bolster security and evacuate noncombatants. While that detachment and its associated shipping operated off the West African coast for 62 days, the balance of the MEU conducted other operations in the Mediterranean Sea. The split operations capability previously demonstrated in times of crisis can be applied as a matter of routine to increase our forward presence capacity. An Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG), with its imbedded MEU, could deploy to a region and subdivide into smaller groups. These smaller groups could then disperse to provide forward presence over a wider geographic area and conduct security cooperation with an increased number of partners. These groups would be composed of the various subordinate elements of the MAGTF paired with a mix of amphibious, surface and subsurface ships of the ESG. When mission needs dictate, these dispersed groups could re-aggregate to accomplish missions that require a greater portion of, or the entire, ESG. This option would likely retain the current mix and number of ships, with the result that increases in capability versus irregular challenges would come at the cost of offsetting reductions in traditional capability. It would, however, provide a forward postured mix of capabilities balanced to deal with both traditional and non-traditional challenges.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

Another option would be to establish numerous, small Special Purpose MAGTFs (SPMAGTF). SPMAGTFs have often been formed to perform specialized tasks. In 1988 a 400-man unit was established afloat in the Persian Gulf to support maritime security and enforcement of sanctions. Another was formed in 1993, when 600 Marines and 10 Marine helicopters deployed aboard the carrier *Theodore Roosevelt* to the Adriatic Sea in order to provide tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel capability for OPERATIONS PROVIDE PROMISE/DENY FLIGHT. The same idea can be applied to create various SPMAGTFs designed primarily for security cooperation, similar to those that have conducted UNITAS in Central and South America for many years. These forces would be lighter and consume less vehicle and cargo stowage space aboard ship, permitting the existing number of amphibious ships to carry a greater number of units designed to deal with non-traditional challenges. Over time, the ship mix and designs could evolve to accommodate such forces. This option sacrifices traditional capability forward in favor of increased security cooperation capability. Heavier resources such as artillery, armor, fixed-wing aviation and air defense assets would therefore need to be prepositioned forward either afloat or ashore, CONUS-based, or carrier-based so as to support rapid crisis response. Various maritime prepositioning force modules could also be developed. Each of these potential solutions will impact lift requirements. Amphibious ships, prepositioning ships, high-speed vessels, inter and intra-theater airlift may be used in various combinations to achieve the desired speed of response.

A third option would be to establish small, independent units with specialized capabilities that are applicable to a limited range of operations. Again, there is historical precedence for such units. During 1961-62 a reinforced rifle company was maintained afloat in African waters, visiting and exercising at places such as Monrovia, the Canary Islands, Freetown, Bathurst, and Capetown. Foreign military training, consequence management, maritime interdiction, and direct action are examples of the specialized missions that might be supported by such units. These units might operate independently or in conjunction with other Naval resources such as littoral watercraft.

Whether deployed as part of a split ESG, a SPMAGTF, or as independent units, Naval forces would retain the ability to aggregate into larger groupings in order to fulfill greater forward presence, security cooperation and counterterrorism requirements or to conduct rapid crisis response.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

In all probability, the options described would be used in combination to meet requirements of the various combatant commanders. In some cases, a combatant commander may have an area where traditional challenges are minimal and non-traditional challenges are high, and thus prefer the SPMAGTF option. Conversely, in another portion of his region the combatant commander might face a mix of challenges and prefer the split ESG option. Alternatively, he might have the benefit of sufficient locations for pre-positioned resources that he can rely on heavier forces being provided via rapid crisis response. In any case, Marine Corps and Navy component commanders and Naval planners must assess the combatant commander's requirements and tailor forces to meet those needs.

Naval Element of the Global Defense Posture

Increased security cooperation opportunities, counterterrorism requirements, and greater forward presence will require support from an evolved system of main operating bases, forward operating sites, and cooperative security locations, interoperable with sea-based resources. At any given time Marine Corps forces will be conducting a wide range of activities worldwide. Some may be committed to ongoing combat or stability operations, others will be engaged in providing forward presence while still others will be attending to readiness matters at a variety of global locations.

Regardless of their location or activity, Marine Corps forces will leverage a revised global defense posture to deliver timely, scaled, task organized resources to meet the needs of evolving mission requirements or respond to emerging crises. Those forces providing forward presence must have the agility to quickly reinforce other, ongoing operations or support new operational requirements. In the latter case, forward deployed Naval forces may be the first on scene at an emerging crisis and form the core of an expanding joint or combined force.

Achieving that level of flexibility and responsiveness will require a comprehensive reassessment of how Naval forces are organized and positioned relative to likely employment areas. For example, the main operating bases currently located in Japan (including Okinawa) are well suited to a timely response to crises in Northeast Asia but may not be optimally located to provide forward presence and security cooperation in the East Asian Littoral or the Middle East-Southwest Asia area. Key sea

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

lines of communication such as the Straights of Taiwan and the Straights of Malacca may require a greater emphasis on forward presence and security cooperation. It therefore would be prudent to establish forward operating sites closer to those areas in order to support forward postured Naval forces rotating through or operating in the vicinity. These facilities could also provide the venue for locating pre-positioned equipment to minimize response time. The establishment of a wide array of austere cooperative security locations would promote cooperation with a diverse array of partners without imposing the cost and footprint of a forward operating site. Cooperative security locations would provide additional options for regional access, contingency logistics support, and combined training centers for rotational use by operating forces. Forward operating sites and cooperative security areas will be selected based on their proximity to likely employment areas and availability of suitable infrastructure, to include anchorages, port facilities, airfields, road networks and storage facilities. When established, they must be sufficiently interoperable with joint and combined air, ground and maritime assets to support a wide array of potential users.

Co-located and Integrated Naval Force Packages

To exploit fully the revised Global defense posture, Marine Corps and Navy forces should be co-located as integrated force packages to reduce transit time to employment areas, develop habitual relationships, and synchronize training, deployment and maintenance cycles. Marine Corps and Navy forward basing and deployment must be adequately synchronized to enhance employment of a cohesive Naval team. With our current posture, for example, linking-up Marines based in Okinawa with maritime prepositioning force-future ships based in Guam would require either: additional steaming to move the ships to Okinawa and then on to the objective area; sufficient airlift to fly the Marines to Guam; or enough high-speed vessels to conduct at sea arrival and assembly en route to the objective area.

These deployment, employment and sustainment challenges can be overcome by establishing integrated, co-located force packages of MAGTFs, amphibious ships, maritime prepositioning ships, high-speed vessels, surface connectors and mine countermeasure assets closer to likely employment areas. This would involve home-porting forces together at main operating bases and synchronized deployment of those forces directly to forward operating sites and/or cooperative security locations or

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

to areas where they would be supported from those venues. For example, we currently maintain a maritime prepositioning squadron and geographically pre-positioned resources in Europe, ready to be married up with a MAGTF flown in from the East Coast of the United States. Simultaneously, we routinely deploy an ESG from the East Coast to the Mediterranean, where they participate in multinational training events and receive maintenance and supply support from friendly nations. These arrangements work well for operations in that vicinity, but in recent years these forces have conducted numerous contingencies in West Africa. West Africa is one of the top ten worldwide regions for proven oil reserves and production, with three countries that collectively import more oil to the U.S. than any other provider. It also is a region that is increasingly unstable due to a variety of political, economic, humanitarian and environmental challenges. The Naval force posture should be revised in a manner that provides a flexible and adaptable means of positively influencing this important region.

A comprehensive approach to locating and deploying Naval forces will be especially beneficial with respect to aviation, which requires particularly careful consideration in weighing basing and staging options. While fixed-wing aircraft can self-deploy, the associated maintenance, ordnance and sustainment resources require considerable lift. The use of forward operating sites and cooperative security locations will provide additional options for pre-staging resources and/or receiving and operating assets in a manner that supports integrated deployment, employment and sustainment of the force. Rotary wing assets have their own unique planning considerations. For example, current plans call for future heavy lift helicopters to be based on the West Coast of the United States vice forward in the Pacific. While some of those aircraft will be forward aboard amphibious shipping, any additional operational requirement for will depend upon either strategic airlift or high-speed sealift for timely arrival. Deployment by strategic airlift requires disassembly and a forward site for delivery and reassembly. Deployment via high-speed sealift requires embarkation, offload and transfer or ships designed for flight operations, illustrating the need for an integrated approach to positioning Naval forces.

High-speed sealift is especially critical to enabling at sea arrival and assembly, sustainment, and operational speed/flexibility. Basing and allocation of these connectors to support competing MAGTF, joint

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

command and control, and special operations requirements must be thought out in a coherent way

Summary

Marine Corps forces, and Naval forces more broadly, already have a vitally important role in defending the homeland in the forward regions. This role is expected to increase as the Global War on Terrorism, currently focused in Afghanistan and the Arabian Peninsula, moves into other regions where maritime operations are more suitable. This concept has put forth ideas for sizing, shaping, and posturing Naval forces in a manner that supports expanded forward presence, security cooperation, and counterterrorism operations.

Forward deployed Naval forces play a major role in responding to crisis, either singly or in concert with other globally distributed forces. Chapter 3, ***Crisis Response***, describes our ability to quickly react to emerging events via a force structure and global posture that is agile enough to deploy and reinforce rapidly, robust enough to sustain itself in an expeditionary environment, and strong enough to prevail in likely missions across the range of operations.

CHAPTER 3

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.**"¹⁹*

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.”²⁰

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. 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 spreading to larger proportions.

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:

- Approximately 92,000 Marines, assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force, 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, and 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit

¹⁹Sea Power Magazine, “Almanac 2003,” (Arlington, VA: The Navy League of the United States, 2003), electronic edition.

²⁰JP 1-02.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

(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 22d 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, provided *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.

Chapter 1 described the widespread disorder and potential crises that will characterize the early 21st Century, indicating that 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

The optimal force structure, associated lift, and global posture that balances the requirements for security cooperation and counterterrorism with the competing requirement to effectively respond to crises across the

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

spectrum of conflict has not been determined. Additionally, available shipping will remain constrained for the foreseeable future. The capability and capacity enhancements designed meet security cooperation and counterterrorism requirements described in Chapter 2 may displace other capabilities aboard forward deployed amphibious ships. 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 5.

The Central Idea

Marine Corps forces designed for forward presence, security cooperation and counterterrorism will provide immediate response to an emerging crisis. Working alongside 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 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 will be the first on scene in an emerging crisis, Marine Corps command elements will 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 our 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.*²¹

Flexibility will be obtained through the expansive range of Marine force options, mission capabilities, and task-organization capability. 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. These fundamental attributes provide the foundation for assessing the viability of future Marine Corps crisis response-enabling initiatives such as those described below.

Crisis Response Enabling Initiatives

Chapter 2 proposed 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 more immediate response to likely crisis areas and the means to rapidly concentrate globally sourced joint combat power. Chapter 2 described the importance of evolving the Naval element of the global defense posture and developing co-located and integrated Naval force packages, and these initiatives are equally important to enhancing crisis response capability.

Additional initiatives for improving crisis response capability include: **seabasing, tethering/modularity, enhanced access, crisis response force packages**; and **streamlined command, control and communications**.

²¹ MCDP 3, pp. 39-40.

Seabasing

Our current seabasing platforms provide significant crisis response capability. 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. For additional discussion of seabasing, see Appendix 3.

Tethering/Modularity

Crisis response speed and flexibility can be enhanced through forward deploying only the most readily needed assets, preferably based at sea or cooperative security locations ashore, tethered to forward reinforcement or augmentation²² modules located at forward operating sites or even main operating bases that are further away from the crisis scene. 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 maritime prepositioning ships or forward operating sites. These modules might be delivered directly by the prepositioning ships or by means of high-speed connectors. Likewise, tilt-rotor and heavy lift aircraft might be used to ferry modules from main operating bases or forward operating sites.

Enhanced Access

Crisis response speed and operational effectiveness can be enhanced by increasing access to potential areas of crisis. Frequent exercises and operations at cooperative security locations provide a venue for positioning Marines, equipment, and supplies in or near potential crisis

²² Reinforcement modules provide more of the same capability. Augmentation modules provide significantly different capabilities.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

areas. For example, arrangements with a host nation might be made to store resources ashore for extended periods prior to and after a coalition exercise. Increased security cooperation may also provide the opportunity to enhance access. Such operations build relations with partners and may help shape the operating area by alleviating the sources of discontent that breed extremism. This is especially true when forward postured Naval forces respond to natural disasters. Recent humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations by Naval forces have positively influenced international perception of the United States, an unanticipated benefit that may lead to expanded partnerships and increased regional access.

Crisis Response Force Packages

Crisis response speed can be further enhanced through refinement of high-readiness, “leading element” force packages such as Forward Command Elements, Disaster Assessment Teams, Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Teams, Air Contingency MAGTFs, and Marine Expeditionary Units forward-deployed on amphibious ships. 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, preliminary defense of key U.S. installations such as embassies, first-hand intelligence gathering capability, and initial liaison with local authorities. Over time, these initial-response elements can be augmented or reinforced with follow-on forces if required.

Streamlined Command, Control, and Communications

Crisis response speed and operational effectiveness can be enhanced through streamlining interagency communications and 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 Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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 elements of that effort will include:

- Developing crisis response force modules afloat and ashore.
- 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 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.

Summary

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 challenges to access exist in the operating area. Chapter 5 will describe how Marine Corps forces will overcome those challenges by conducting ***Forcible Entry***.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

CHAPTER 4

Forcible Entry

A comparison of the several landings leads to the inescapable conclusion that landings should not be attempted in the face of organized resistance if, by any combination of march or maneuver, it is possible to land unopposed within striking distance of the objective.

— Major General A. A. Vandegrift, U.S. Marine Corps, 1943
Commanding General, 1st Marine Division

Introduction

Forcible entry has been, and will remain, a core competency of the Marine Corps. In the recent past the United States' continued need for forcible entry capabilities has not been well understood. That lack of understanding is largely due to the mistaken belief that forcible entry, especially the amphibious variety, is only conducted as a direct assault against fixed defenses, within the context of major combat operations, and that none has been carried out since Inchon in 1950. Even a cursory review of history debunks these notions. In the last half-century a variety of forcible entry operations, large and small, have been conducted across the range of military operations. Selected examples include: the Anglo-French landings in response to the Egyptian seizure of the Suez Canal in 1956; the U.S. intervention to safeguard American citizens in the Dominican Republic in 1965; amphibious assaults by both Argentina and Great Britain to seize and recover the Falkland Islands in 1982; U.S. amphibious and airborne assaults to protect American citizens in Grenada during 1983; U.S. airborne operations to force regime change in Panama during 1989; and U.S. airborne and amphibious operations to remove terrorist safe havens in Afghanistan during 2001. These recent examples demonstrate that forcible entry remains a critically important and viable military capability, normally conducted to accomplish one of three purposes:

- ***As the initial phase of a campaign or major operation.*** The 1944 Normandy invasion is the most widely known example of this application of forcible entry, largely because it opened the land campaign to liberate Western Europe. Less well known is the use

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

of forcible entry to open a naval campaign, best illustrated by the seizure and defense of Guadalcanal in 1942-43. That event constituted the first phase of a three-phased campaign to recapture the Solomon Islands from the Japanese and isolate the enemy's major South Pacific naval base at Rabaul.

- ***As a major operation within a campaign.*** The daring 1950 amphibious assault against Inchon, essentially a sea-based turning movement in the rear of the North Korean People's Army already engaged with the Allied Eighth Army at Pusan, is the most prominent example of this application of forcible entry.
- ***As a "coup de main."***²³ Coup de main may be the most widely applied and least understood application of forcible entry. Often conducted by small forces conducting short duration, limited objective attacks against opponents with modest but still lethal capabilities, these operations are seldom studied in detail but may be the most likely type of forcible entry in the near future. Examples abound, from the aforementioned assaults in Panama and Grenada in the 20th Century, to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps destruction of the Malay pirate fortress at Kuala Batu, Sumatra in the early 19th Century, all the way back to the capture of New Providence Island less than six months after the creation of the Continental Navy and Marine Corps.

Description of the Military Problem

Given the strategic environment and requirements described in the *National Defense Strategy*, the United States must be prepared to conduct forcible entry versus a number of adversaries across the globe. They also imply that forcible entry will likely be initiated on a compressed timeline, by forces concentrating from dispersed locations across significant distances, and with varying degrees of access within the operating area. The United States will not be afforded the luxury of time to marshal resources in theater, methodically set conditions for entry, establish lodgments and build up forces in order to conduct forcible entry.

²³ JP 1-02 defines *coup de main* as "An offensive operation that capitalizes on surprise and simultaneous execution of supporting operations to achieve success in one swift stroke."

Forcible Entry Re-defined

*Joint Doctrine for Forcible Entry Operations*²⁴ defines forcible entry as “seizing and holding of a military lodgment in the face of armed opposition.” Given the complexity of the strategic environment and the military problem, that definition is too narrow. It focuses on assaulting objectives without reference to those actions required to set the conditions for entry or the reasons why forcible entry is conducted. A more descriptive treatment of the complex nature of forcible entry is provided in the following definition, which is the basis for this concept:

A joint military operation, conducted with the expectation of armed opposition, which gains entry into the territory of an adversary in order to achieve a coup de main or enable the conduct of follow-on operations.

The Central Idea

Each forcible entry operation will be unique based on the mission, the adversary, the operating environment, and time considerations. It will require a combination of forward-based, forward deployed, pre-positioned and CONUS based forces conducting a coordinated attack via multiple directions and dimensions to achieve the campaign objectives or enable follow-on forces/operations. The conduct of forcible entry is summarized in the following phased, overlapping and interdependent actions:

- ***Gaining and maintaining access*** - controlling sufficient air, sea, land, space and cyberspace to deliver and support forcible entry forces as well as follow-on forces, if employed.
- ***Opening entry points*** - assaulting designated objectives for the purposes of either achieving a coup de main or enabling follow-on operations.
- ***Transitioning to follow-on operations*** - facilitating the rapid build-up of combat power ashore and the acquisition of sufficient maneuver space for follow-on operations.

²⁴ JP 3-18, *Joint Doctrine for Forcible Entry Operations*, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, July 2001) p. vii.

Gaining and Maintaining Access

Gaining and maintaining access is the critical pre-condition for successful forcible entry. In any given operations area, numerous and diverse limitations to access will present themselves. Access may be restrictive due to political, economic, military or cultural factors. Ports, airfields, and infrastructure may also be physically limited. Environmental considerations such as geography and weather may impose additional problems. Collectively, these limitations illustrate the imperative of alternative means to support deployment, employment and sustainment of United States and multinational forces.

Potential adversaries can be expected to employ various combinations of the traditional, catastrophic, disruptive and irregular means at their disposal, including attempts to manipulate world opinion and undermine support for action by the United States and its coalition partners. Potential adversaries will benefit from the ongoing global diffusion and proliferation of anti-access technologies such as air defense weapons, mines, anti-ship cruise missiles, theater ballistic missiles, and supporting information architectures. They can also be expected to employ limited-scale weapons of mass destruction as well as disruptive methods derived from breakthrough technologies. They will likely employ irregular methods to overcome our traditional advantages, including preemptive attacks to impede deployment of U.S. and multinational forces in order to prevent their introduction into the joint operations area.

To overcome these challenges to access, the commander conducting forcible entry will leverage the basing, access and security cooperation agreements established, as well as the regional expertise developed, through pre-crisis shaping activities at the national and regional levels. That pre-crisis shaping will include a revised global defense posture incorporating a system of main operating bases, forward operating sites, and cooperative security locations, interoperable with joint seabasing. It will also include a new global force management process that will expedite force deployment from dispersed global locations and reduce response time to crisis.

The commander conducting forcible entry will focus his own shaping efforts on identifying and neutralizing his opponent's anti-access capabilities and overcoming environmental challenges. That shaping includes the expansion of persistent intelligence, surveillance and

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

reconnaissance capabilities to locate natural and manmade impediments to access. The commander will orchestrate the application of friendly air, space, naval, ground and special operations capabilities, both kinetic and non-kinetic, to overcome natural obstacles and neutralize the enemy's anti-access capabilities. He will do so by rapidly closing and employing joint and multinational combat power to seize the initiative and disrupt the enemy's ability to fully implement and integrate an in-depth, anti-access system. Those friendly capabilities will be globally sourced from a combination of forward postured and CONUS based forces as well as those of our multinational partners. Their employment will be focused on establishing sufficient control of those portions of the air, sea, land, space and cyberspace required to gain and maintain access. Additionally, they will neutralize those select enemy ground forces, such as armor and artillery units, that might be capable of interfering with the opening of entry points ashore.

The commander will also develop and employ "bottom-up" information operations that are germane to local conditions but nested within "top-down" national and regional "themes." These overarching themes will promote decentralized development and implementation of information operations. That decentralization will facilitate flexibility and initiative at the tactical level, closely integrated with the commander's overall concept of operations, while remaining consistent with strategic level messages.

Opening Entry Points

Opening entry points involves the actual assault by various combinations of amphibious and airborne forces for the purpose of either achieving a coup de main or enabling follow-on operations through the seizure of existing ports and airfields or the establishment of expeditionary facilities. These dispersed forces will use strategic and operational maneuver via air and sea to deploy/employ from the global system of main operating bases, forward operating sites, cooperative security locations, and sea base platforms to concentrate on objectives ashore without reliance on established ports or airfields in the objective area. Ideally, they will avoid enemy defenses and seize undefended entry points. Given the uncertainty and risk inherent in war, however, they will conduct their assault with the expectation of, and capability to overcome, armed opposition.

Assault forces may use multiple approaches and entry points to deceive the enemy and diminish his ability to observe, orient, decide and act. To

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

concentrate and apply this dispersed combat power in a manner that achieves the desired tempo of operations, the commander will require inter and intra-theater lift for the rapid delivery and/or repositioning of forces and resources. He will also require multiple, complementary surface and air delivery options as well as adequate ground mobility to mass sufficient forces at the point of attack, rapidly build-up combat power, and support the scheme of maneuver ashore.

The commander must also be able to collect, process, and disseminate relevant information in near real time to support fire and maneuver at the operational and tactical levels, plus the ability to deliver all-weather fires throughout the assault. Given the distances from which they will be deployed/employed, the assault forces will require en route collaborative planning, rehearsal, execution and assessment tools and beyond-line-of-sight, over-the-horizon, on-the-move communications. The complexity and tempo of operations will also require the technical capability and command relationships to support an increased level of lateral coordination and integration between assault and special operations forces.

Transitioning to Follow-on Operations

Unless forcible entry is initiated as a coup de main, assault forces will be tasked with facilitating the rapid build-up of combat power and the provision of sufficient maneuver space for follow-on operations. Like the assault forces, follow-on forces will deploy from dispersed global locations via sealift and airlift. They may arrive through existing ports and airfields, expeditionary ports and airfields, or various combinations thereof. The likelihood of existing facilities being either undefended or captured intact may be remote. The forcible entry commander therefore requires the ability to either conduct rapid repair of existing facilities or to build expeditionary facilities sufficient to support follow-on forces. He also requires strategic and operational lift capable of operating from austere facilities.

To maintain the tempo of operations established during the assault, follow-on forces must also be expeditionary in character and capable of immediate employment upon arrival. Like the assault forces, follow-on forces require enhanced, interoperable, en route communications capability to promote situational awareness, adjust to evolving mission requirements, and adapt to potential changes to command relationships.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

If forcible entry was conducted as a coup de main, then transition may involve conflict termination, stability operations, or withdrawal and redeployment. In such cases the forcible entry commander must be able to facilitate assumption of specified tasks by designated interagency, multinational or host nation authorities.

Illustrative Example

An examination of how the phased, overlapping and interdependent actions described above were carried out in the planning and execution of the World War II battle for Okinawa provides some useful insights. On 3 October 1944 the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff directed Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet/Commander, Pacific Ocean Areas, to seize Okinawa in the Ryukyu Islands. A major operation in the ongoing Central Pacific campaign, the purpose of the operation was to provide an advanced base for the anticipated invasion of Japan. The target date for the invasion of Okinawa was 1 March 1945 and was envisioned as a short operation. American planners expected the Japanese to conform to the pattern previously established on other Pacific Islands: a stout defense of the landing beaches followed by a ferocious counterattack, which could be quickly defeated by superior firepower. In the event, the assault commenced 1 April 1945 and the ensuing battle lasted 82 days.

Okinawa was defended by the Japanese 32nd Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima. Seven months before the actual invasion, Ushijima recognized the significance of Okinawa to the American campaign. Understanding American capabilities and tactics, he accurately predicted the likely landing beaches and concluded his opponent's amphibious combat power and naval gunfire support would make a successful beach defense unlikely. He therefore pulled his ground forces into the interior where he established a system of caves and tunnels that provided an underground defense in-depth, with a heavy concentration of artillery. His plan was to conduct a protracted struggle that would cause the American fleet to remain offshore for an extended period, making it vulnerable to Kamikaze attacks launched from Formosa and the Japanese home islands. Ushijima understood that the Americans ultimately would capture the island; his aim was to make the capture of Okinawa so costly that his enemy would lose the willpower to invade Japan.

American actions to *gain and maintain access* were extensive but not entirely successful. Carrier task forces and long-range bombers from

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

bases in China, India, the Philippines, the Marianas and the Palaus succeeded in neutralizing Japanese airfields on Formosa, Kyushu, and Okinawa itself long enough to provide sufficient air superiority for the invasion fleet to close on the objective. By that point in the war the United States had nearly achieved maritime supremacy, and during the battle for Okinawa the U.S. Fifth Fleet eliminated the last Japanese capital ship by sinking the super battleship *Yamato*. Underwater demolition teams removed extensive manmade and natural obstacles, clearing the way for the surface assault. Extensive amphibious reconnaissance was conducted on the outlying islands in the Ryukyu archipelago. This reconnaissance resulted in the seizure of Kerama Retto and the discovery and capture of 300 suicide boats loaded with explosives. Another offshore island, Keise Shima, was secured as a fire support base. Actions that were less successful were largely caused by failures of intelligence and imagination. U.S. intelligence never identified Ushijima's ground dispositions and thus failed to recognize his defense-in-depth approach. As a result, U.S. forces conducted a fruitless weeklong preliminary bombardment of undefended beaches vice targeting the fixed positions inland, especially the artillery. While intelligence analysts correctly identified that the best Japanese planes and pilots had been destroyed, American planners failed to fully grasp that inexperienced pilots, flying ramshackle planes, could exponentially expand the scope and impact of the Kamikaze effort. Similarly, the existence and potential impact of "Ohka" bombs—piloted anti-ship missiles—were never discovered and neutralized.

U.S. forces were highly successful at *opening entry points*. The largest Naval force ever assembled delivered and supported assault forces against Okinawa from dispersed locations throughout the Pacific, including Espiritu Santo, Manus, Roi-Namur, Oahu, Saipan and Ulithi. While assault forces were heading toward the western beaches in the middle of the island, a major amphibious demonstration was conducted in the southeast. Although Ushijima had previously identified the western beaches as the most likely to be used by the Americans, the demonstration in the south was sufficiently distracting that he retained a significant number of infantry and artillery units in that vicinity rather than reinforcing the defensive belt behind the actual entry points.

The *transition to follow-on operations* was the least successful aspect of the Okinawa invasion. The forces ashore became bogged down in frontal attacks versus fixed positions. While subordinate commanders argued for an attack in depth via an amphibious turning movement behind the

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

defensive belts, the land component commander was unwilling to pursue that option. Okinawa turned into the battle of attrition Ushijima desired, but without the strategic result he intended.

The battle for Okinawa demonstrated that, supported by a mix of regional bases and sea-based resources, we could concentrate forces from dispersed locations across significant distances, and with varying degrees of access within the operating area. A major shortcoming, however, was that we did not do so on a compressed timeline. Given the advantage of time, the enemy was able to prepare a mix of traditional, irregular, catastrophic and disruptive weapons and tactics to offset our strengths. **Speed**—being able to strike before the enemy can prepare—is a key insight. Another key insight is **unpredictability**. At Okinawa, Ushijima predicted what we would do operationally and prepared accordingly. When we conducted an amphibious demonstration we were unpredictable at the tactical level and achieved a measure of success. Later, however, we reverted to predictable behavior by conducting continual high-cost and low-gain frontal attacks. Had we attacked in greater depth, we would have been less predictable and more likely to generate higher operational tempo, thereby reducing casualties ashore as well as reducing the fleet's exposure to Kamikaze attacks. Conversely, we didn't recognize that the enemy might act in an unpredictable way. While advance force operations resulted in successful intelligence collection with respect to the offshore islands, insufficient collection and analysis was conducted on the objective itself.

That failure of both intelligence and imagination—the inability to provide a reasonably accurate **assessment** of what the enemy was capable of doing, and the subset of what he might actually do, surrendered the initiative to the enemy and proved costly. The ultimate lesson of Okinawa is that improving the speed, unpredictability, and assessment of forcible entry operations, or any other military operation for that matter, is essentially dependant upon the human dimension. Technical advances may have the potential for significant capability enhancements, but their successful application will remain dependant upon the knowledge, skill, creativity, judgment and service cultures of the military professionals involved.

Summary

This concept has discussed the continued need for forcible entry capability in the future and described how such operations can be conducted through

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

phased, overlapping and interdependent actions. It has also highlighted the critical aspects of speed, unpredictability, and assessment.

While future forcible entry operations may be initiated on a compressed timeline, they may also serve as the prelude to prolonged operations. Chapter 5, ***Prolonged Operations***, addresses the challenges of refining our organization, equipment and training to balance forcible entry capability with those specialized capabilities that may be required to conduct long-duration operations against current and future opponents.

CHAPTER 5

Prolonged Operations

“BACKLOAD CANCELLED; EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, CHOP TO...”

The message came as an unpleasant surprise for the operational planning team convened to begin mission analysis. “I thought we were going back on the ship,” the operations clerk grumbled. “Didn’t we accomplish our mission already?” asked the communications chief. “We’re halfway through washing-down the vehicles” added the maintenance officer. The operational planning team leader abruptly ended the discussion. “Marines, I know everyone is eager to get back aboard ship. Our original job is done, but we represent 30% of the Nation’s ground combat power and almost 25% of its tactical airpower; no joint force commander is going to allow those resources to be exclusively reserved for a specialty mission. Before we get back to the business of planning I would like to remind everyone that the Marine Corps is a general-purpose force. Prolonged operations are every bit as much a Marine Corps mission as amphibious operations. We don’t only win battles—we help win wars too. I recommend we get going on planning for our new assignment—looks like we’re going to be in this one for the long-haul.”

Introduction

Public law and executive authority assign various roles, functions and missions to each of the Armed Forces of the United States. Congress articulated the *role*, or broad and enduring *purpose*, of the Marine Corps in Title 10 of the United States Code. Key portions of Title 10 direct that the Marine Corps:

- Shall be organized, trained, and equipped to provide Fleet Marine Forces of combined arms, together with supporting aviation forces, for service with the fleet in the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.
- Shall develop, in coordination with the Army and Air Force, those phases of amphibious operations that pertain to the tactics, techniques, and equipment used by landing forces.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

- Shall perform such other duties as the President may direct.

Functions are specific responsibilities assigned by the President and Secretary of Defense to the services that fulfill their legally established roles. Department of Defense Directive 5100.1 *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components* defines the primary functions of the Marine Corps, reinforcing our Naval character and amphibious focus as described in public law. It also reinforces the point that we will perform other duties as directed by the President, and provides similar authority to the Secretary of Defense with the caveat that such duties shall not detract from our primary purpose nor create a second land army.

The President or Secretary of Defense assigns specific *missions* to the combatant commanders in accordance with the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. That law assigns the Service Chiefs responsibility for organizing, training and equipping their respective services for their designated roles, while combatant commanders are responsible for operational mission planning and execution.

Description of the Military Problem

While the Marine Corps is organized, trained and equipped for amphibious operations, the President, Secretary of Defense, and the combatant commanders may assign Marine Corps forces a wide range of tasks for which those forces are not specifically designed. Based on our statutory responsibilities, we have developed our organization, training, equipment, and indeed our institutional mindset, to create a rapidly deployable, expeditionary assault force for high intensity, short duration operations. The characteristics that make the Marine Corps very effective in accomplishing its broad and enduring purpose impose certain challenges when, as has often been the case, Marine Corps forces are assigned tasks they are neither physically optimized for nor culturally inclined towards. These challenges have the greatest impact when Marine Corps forces are committed to ***prolonged operations***.

These challenges to the Marine Corps as an institution are further compounded by the way we Americans often view warfare. As a “can do” society we are naturally pre-disposed toward swift, decisive solutions. In

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

the changing security environment, however, our potential opponents we will likely attempt to use that pre-disposition against us through prolonged conflict. The military theorist Carl von Clausewitz noted that duration is one means combatants have to exert their will on each other. “The decision” he said, “can never be reached too soon to suit the winner or delayed long enough to suit the loser. A victory is greater for having been gained quickly; defeat is compensated for by having been long postponed.”²⁵ While our opponents may design campaigns with a long duration approach, we have been distracted by the promise of rapid decisive operations, “shock and awe,” and a culture requiring instant gratification and immediate results. If war must occur, then reasonable people would wish it over as soon as possible. Unrestrained optimism may, however, unwittingly create a gap for a patient, determined enemy to exploit. Our capability development challenge is to balance the capabilities required to fulfill our enduring purpose defined in public law with those required for prolonged operations.

Prolonged Operations Defined

Marines are engaged in prolonged operations around the world today, as they have been in the past and will continue to be in the future. Prolonged operations are defined as:

Any operation of sufficient scope, scale, or duration to demand significant change in an organization’s normal personnel policies, training, or equipment.

The difference between short and prolonged operations is much like the difference between the cyclic and sustained rates of fire with small arms. The cyclic rate of fire is used to deliver a maximum volume of fire in the shortest period of time, but risks overheating the weapon. The sustained rate intentionally modifies the operation of the weapon in order to keep it functioning indefinitely. Just as the shooter must decide which rate of fire is required in a given situation, appropriate commanders must decide if Marine Corps personnel policies, training and equipment must be modified to suit the mission at hand.

A prolonged operation is characterized primarily by the impact on the deployment and operating tempo of the force. While time is a major factor

²⁵ Ibid, p. 238.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

in prolonged operations, the scope, scale and complexity are also factors. For example, a mission requiring the commitment of a Marine Expeditionary Unit for two years that is met by a standard rotation cycle might not be considered prolonged. While two years may be a long time, the overall impact on the Marine Corps is reasonable and sustainable. The commitment demands no significant changes in personnel policies, training, or equipment. Conversely, a Marine Expeditionary Force committed for a shorter duration may be engaged in a prolonged operation because the scope and size of the operation places greater strain on the operating forces and supporting establishment. The key is to understand the demand placed on the Marine Corps as a service and the corresponding impact on our readiness to fulfill our primary function.

The concepts described in this book address a wide variety of operations, many of which have the potential for becoming prolonged. Prolonged operations may involve any enemy, environment, or mission. They may center on major theater war, a peacekeeping mission or on any other point along the continuum of operations. Some operations such as counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, security cooperation, and peacekeeping are by their nature lengthy and complex and must be understood from their onset as prolonged. The most disruptive situation usually occurs when a mission is envisioned as one of short duration but grows into a prolonged operation. Just as the changing security environment challenges military professionals to reconsider and expand their view of the applicability of military capabilities across a broader continuum of operations, from Phase 0 to Phase 5, it demands that we consider the impact of applying those capabilities in a prolonged way. Shaping the environment, deterring the enemy, seizing the initiative, dominating the enemy, stabilizing the environment, and enabling civil authority all have potential scope, scale, or duration implications for Marine Corps personnel policies, training, or equipment.

Our history is replete with examples of expeditionary operations that turned into prolonged operations. The Boxer Rebellion in 1900 resulted in Marines being committed as a peacekeeping force in China until 1941. The “Banana Wars” saw Marines carrying out counterinsurgency, security cooperation, and peacekeeping missions in the Caribbean and Central America throughout the early 20th Century, the longest example being on the island of Hispaniola (Haiti and Santo Domingo), from 1915 to 1934. Marines returned to China for a peacekeeping mission from 1945-1949, and subsequently fought ashore in Korea for three years. Thirteen years

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

passed between commitment of the first Marine units to Vietnam in 1962 and the evacuation of the last Americans from Saigon by Marines in 1975. The legacy of Marines engaged in prolonged operations continues today in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa.

Relationship to *Sustained Operations Ashore*

Sustained operations ashore were described in a Marine Corps concept paper published in 1998 and mentioned briefly in Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-0 *Marine Corps Operations*. That concept described how the Marine Corps could provide a sea-based, operational maneuver element conducting decisive, enabling, or exploitation operations in support of a joint or combined force ashore. The concept cites historical examples such as Inchon, the Japanese conquest of the Malaya Peninsula, and a proposed but never executed amphibious turning movement during the battle for Okinawa. Employment of Marine Corps forces in such a manner is consistent with the enduring role of amphibious operations that Marines are specifically organized, trained and equipped for. Commitment of an initially sea-based operational maneuver element to extended operations ashore may, in some cases, result in transition to a prolonged operation.

The Central Idea

This concept of prolonged operations seeks to balance other contemporary military concepts that suggest military operations can usually be concluded quickly. The human desire for a “splendid little war” is strong enough to belie the reality of prolonged operations. To be sure there have been enough 100-hour battles and six-day wars to give the hope of rapid decisive operations some credibility. But on the whole wars usually last longer than anyone could have imagined at the start, and therefore must be approached with the capability to stay for the long haul, if necessary.

Prolonged operations can pose a special challenge for U.S. Marines. A proud heritage as amphibious assault troops can leave Marines with the wrong impression of how operations will probably unfold in a prolonged fight. As a force designed for striking swiftly from the sea, some Marines imagine themselves quickly taking control of the situation and then turning it over to the Army or someone else if a longer commitment is required. There is nothing wrong with this image, as it is one model for employing

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

Marines based on considerable precedence during World War II Pacific island assaults and numerous lesser contingencies throughout our history.

Prolonged operations, however, offer an alternative model with equal, though often less recognized, historical precedence. The Marine Corps has participated in prolonged major combat operations in World War I and the Korean War as well as prolonged counterinsurgency operations in Central America and Vietnam. Our history illustrates that Marines are just as likely to remain on station and participate in prolonged operations alongside the U.S. Army or allied forces, as we are to launch an attack from the sea and then return to amphibious shipping when the initial mission is complete. Amphibious operations are a Marine Corps specialty, but not exclusively so. The Marine Corps is a general-purpose force that represents 30% of the Nation's ground combat power and almost 25% of its tactical airpower. While we must focus on winning battles, we must also be prepared to win wars as part of a joint or multinational force.

Understanding prolonged operations is about being mentally and physically ready to endure. The idea is to accomplish the mission as quickly and economically as possible, but not to be surprised by the onset of prolonged operations.

The definition of prolonged operations is subjective and designed as an inclusive term. Absent an absolute definition, many prolonged operations share similar characteristics:

- Stress on personnel tempo and increased reliance on the Reserve component
- Interruption or modification of normal individual or unit rotation cycles
- Unit training more narrowly focused on a specific mission
- Shortened training cycles to meet operational commitments
- Lowered materiel readiness
- Modifications to tables of organization and equipment focused on a specific mission
- Construction of mission specific permanent or semi-permanent facilities
- Increased demand for specific cultural expertise
- Assessment of progress toward long-term goals by measuring near-term, incremental results

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

- Increased demand for incremental successes to counter adversary's information operations and "the cable news factor" in order to maintain domestic resolve
- Increased importance over time on diplomatic, informational, and economic elements of national power in relation to the military.

Implications for Capability Development

Prolonged operations often create heavy demands on the manpower system. Unit and individual rotation cycles will likely be interrupted. There may be a call up of Reserves. Pressure to fill units with the optimum mix of grade and specialty will challenge personnel officers. Discharges and retirements may have to be delayed. There may be calls to replace unit rotations with individual replacement programs. Even if the unit rotation system remains intact, the requirement to fill individual augmentation billets at service, joint, and functional component headquarters will continue. Commanders may be put in the position of filling individual augmentation requests at the expense of the supporting establishment or formal schools. Reserve or recalled retired Marines may provide some relief, but cannot be expected to fill all gaps. Ultimately, manning the force will take creativity, initiative, and a willingness to think beyond normal peacetime routines. Manpower planners may have to seek modifications to personnel policies to provide the right number, grade and military occupational specialty mix of personnel. Reserve policies protect our Reserve Marines from overuse but, considering the implications of the future environment, demands for specific skill sets and augmentation will likely increase.

Over a prolonged conflict, antagonists will adapt their respective weapons and tactics as operations evolve. These innovations must be detected and defeated through appropriate countermeasures, with the associated lessons learned communicated to the training community for absorption into training curricula. Likewise, Marines engaged in prolonged operations must train concurrently with actual operations to ensure the proficiency of the force and dissemination of lessons learned. Prolonged operations may demand foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness that seldom exist to the same degree in shorter operations. There is also a tendency for prolonged operations to force curtailment of pre-deployment and work-up training due to the pressure of maintaining unit rotations. The result is that the limited training time available is intensely focused on that required for

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

the specific commitment, at the expense of training focused on a broader spectrum of potential tasks.

Prolonged operations shorten the service life of the equipment involved. Acquisition and maintenance of equipment must account for a security environment that may see unprecedented use of specific equipment sets, particularly ground and air tactical mobility assets. New equipment must anticipate future threats. Additionally, an adaptive adversary will find weaknesses in our equipment sets and target them for exploitation, as seen with the current employment of improvised explosive devices against soft-skinned vehicles. Modification of existing equipment to better suit the operating environment and mission is critical. Whenever possible, commanders should be allowed as much latitude as possible to modify equipment to better accomplish the mission at hand. However, we must ensure we address how the modified equipment will effect other operating environments and challenges. A critical planning factor that must be prudently evaluated by Marines before any equipment acquisition or modification is the associated impact on amphibious lift. Ideally, our equipment or materiel will be simple, easy to maintain, capable of withstanding the rigors of a long campaign, and adaptable to the unique requirements of various missions and operating environments.

Prolonged operations will often require development of permanent and semi-permanent facilities within the operations area. Planning and budgetary consideration must be given to this requirement. Capability development consideration must be given to deployable semi-permanent facilities capable of meeting the demand.

The concept of prolonged operations complements the joint six-phase campaign construct described in Chapter 1 and must inform operational design. Critical to operational design is establishing incremental objectives that indicate progress toward an end state. While the planning is important in a prolonged operation, we must consider the design as an experiment that may or may not achieve success exactly as we envision. An ability to assess the operation is key to leveraging success and adapting to achieve the desired end state.

While the nature of war is a contest of wills, maintaining that will in a prolonged operation is critical. Key to ensuring the unity of purpose and maintaining resolve is winning the information war. The significance of information/influence operations to strengthen our resolve and weaken our

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

adversary is critical. Our approach to the information war must be inextricably linked to our ability to promote our goals, our ability to counter adversary information operations as well as “the cable news factor,” and our ability to assess results.

Prolonged operations will yield successes in some areas and resistance in others. As evidenced in campaigns throughout our history, prolonged operations will simultaneously involve combat, stability, and reconstruction operations. As the campaign unfolds the interdependence between military forces and other governmental agencies and organizations will be increasingly critical to success. Clearly establishing lines of coordination and role of each organization must be developed in the initial design. Assessment and conditions for transition of responsibility must be negotiated and commonly understood as the operation progresses. Without this level of discourse actions and goals will be misunderstood and our resolve diminished.

Summary

Prolonged operations are any operation of sufficient scope, scale, or duration to demand significant change in an organization’s normal personnel policies, training, and equipment. They may take place in any environment in conjunction with varied missions against any enemy. They may include conventional, counterinsurgency, and peacekeeping operations among others. Marines must be cognizant of their traditional involvement in long-term missions as a general-purpose force and develop the right mindset to counter a persistent and patient enemy. This does not equate to trading away tradition, capability, or the desire for a quick and satisfactory conclusion to hostilities. It is a call for balance and preparedness. It is about flexibility and durability in personnel, training, and equipment. Marines need to be as prepared for prolonged operations as they are for operations of a shorter scope, scale, and duration. We have done it in the past. We are doing it now. We will continue to do it in the future. It is highly likely that future prolonged operations will involve ***Countering Irregular Threats: A New Approach to Counterinsurgency***, which is the subject of Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

Countering Irregular Threats: A New Approach to Counterinsurgency

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.

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

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.

Future Conflicts and the Nature and Theory of War

Future conflict will not be dominated by tests of strength that characterize industrial war.²⁶ 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."²⁷ 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."²⁸ 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."²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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 constantly; it is the same in war.³¹ 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

²⁶ General Sir Rupert Smith, "The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World," (United Kingdom: Allen Lane, Sept 2005.).

²⁷ MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, (Washington, DC: United States Marine Corps, June 1997) p. 3.

²⁸ Ibid, p.3

²⁹ Ibid, p. 85.

³⁰ Antulio Echevarria, "The Trouble With History," (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Quarterly: Parameters, Summer 2005), p.138

³¹ Analogy provided by Dr. Echevarria during an interview conducted on 20 September 2005.

employed. It is the subjective factors that cause the objective to vary in degree.

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.³²

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.³³ 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 that “American readers...will find to their surprise that their various seemingly ‘new’ counter-insurgency gambits, 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.”³⁴ 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

³² Michael Howard, *Clausewitz*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.51.

³³ Bernard Fall, “The Theory and Practice of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” (Newport, RI: Naval War College Review, 1965), p.1.

³⁴ Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1975), p.xiii.

“...hostile, independent, and irreconcilable wills, each trying to impose itself upon the other.”³⁵

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.³⁶ 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.”

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 indigenous 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

³⁵ MCDP 1, p. 3.

³⁶ 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.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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.³⁷ 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.

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.

³⁷ Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 13.

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.³⁸ 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.

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.³⁹

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 income distribution, the vestiges of colonization, weak governmental institutions, ineffective police and military forces, and

³⁸ Max G. Manwaring, “The Inescapable Global Security Arena” (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2002), p. 3.

³⁹ 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.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

difficult terrain—conditions that allow irregular threats to thrive.⁴⁰ 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 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 middlemen.⁴¹ 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.⁴² This global aspect or nature to conflict adds a new dimension of complexity and may substantially complicate the effort to counter irregular threats.

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:⁴³

⁴⁰ Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascual, "Addressing State Failure," (New York, NY: Foreign Affairs Magazine, July/August 2005)

⁴¹ LtCol David Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," (Small Wars Journal web site, 30 November 2004), p.10

⁴² *Ibid.*, P.10

⁴³ 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.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

- ***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 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.
- ***Unity of purpose*** to coordinate the 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.

The 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 information operations.***⁴⁴ 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, that foster unity of effort. The military must not only understand the impact that each component may have on campaign success, they must

⁴⁴ 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.

also be prepared to lead activities 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.⁴⁵ 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?”⁴⁶

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 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

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Insight provided by Ambassador Edwin Corr, telephonically, 4 Oct 2005. In that discussion, the term “lines of operation” was used instead of “campaign components.”

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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.⁴⁷ Political, economic, and social initiatives, with their respective assessment criteria, will take precedence.

These components are relevant to all phases of the joint campaign construct described in Chapter 1, 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 to support security cooperation and counterterrorism, as described in Chapter 2, 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 Marine Corps is optimized for combat operations against a conventional military adversary. 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.

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

⁴⁷ Fall, p. 1.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹ These relationships promote greater cultural understanding and situational awareness among military forces, and also 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 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

⁴⁸ Kalev I. Sepp, “Best Practices in Counterinsurgency,” (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center: Military Review, May-June 2005) p. 10.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p.10.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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.⁵⁰ 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 indigenous 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, 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 indigenous 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.⁵¹ Preemptive

⁵⁰ 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.

⁵¹ Jeffrey Race, *War Comes to Long An*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1972) p. 230.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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. As noted in Chapter 2, 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 the Marine Corps has created a special unit 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 indigenous forces must be designed to suit the purpose and situation of those forces, 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.⁵² 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.⁵³

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

⁵² Insight provided by Dr. Melshen during a presentation at MCCDC on 31 Aug 2005.

⁵³ Sepp, p. 10.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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 indigenous population may require assistance in the development or restoration of a functioning legal system that minimally includes civil and criminal laws, 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, who view corruption within those institutions as the exception and not the norm.⁵⁴

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.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Max G. Manwaring and William J. Olson, editors, *Managing Contemporary Conflict: Pillars of Success*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 85.

⁵⁶ Insight provided by Ambassador Corr, telephonically, 4 Oct 2005.

Economic Development

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.⁵⁷ 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 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.⁵⁸ 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.

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

⁵⁷ Race, p. 190.

⁵⁸ Insight provided by Ambassador Edwin Corr, telephonically, 4 Oct 2005.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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. All actions related to all 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.”⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹

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.⁶² 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.⁶³ Care must be exercised to do nothing that will undermine the perceived legitimacy of the United States or the indigenous government it supports.

⁵⁹ Edgar O’Balance, *The Algerian Insurrection; 1954-1962*, (London, UK: Faber, 1967), p. 205.

⁶⁰ O’Neill, pp. 114-115.

⁶¹ John A. Lynn, “Patterns of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency,” (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center: Military Review, July-August 2005) p. 27.

⁶² 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.

⁶³ Manwaring and Olson, p. 85.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

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.⁶⁴

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 indigenous government and the U.S. forces supporting it.⁶⁵

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 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 indigenous 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

⁶⁴ 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.

⁶⁵ Sam C. Sarkesian, *America's Forgotten Wars: The Counterrevolutionary Past and Lessons for the Future*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984) p. 9.

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment

cases they should do so by leveraging the core competencies of the other government agencies involved.

Summary

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.”⁶⁶ 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.

⁶⁶ Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002), p. xiv.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

*In summary, then, a military service may be viewed as consisting of a strategic concept which defines the role of the service in national policy, public support which furnishes it with the resources to perform this role, and organizational structure which groups the resources so as to implement most effectively the strategic concept.*⁶⁷

— Samuel P. Huntington, 1954

Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment provides a new family of operating concepts, evolved from *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* and informed by our operational experiences across the spectrum of conflict, which will guide development of the capabilities required of the Marine Corps in the future. These operating concepts are intended as the means of focusing our creativity, initiative, and judgment toward developing the military capabilities that will ensure our Corps continues to be the Nation's premiere expeditionary force in readiness.

The subsequent pages of this volume are annexes that present the glossary associated with these operating concepts, as well as extracts from the related concepts of *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, *Distributed Operations* and *Seabasing*.

Additionally, one or more classified CONOPS, published separately, will apply the ideas presented in this volume against various scenarios and provide the requisite level of detail to support wargaming, experimentation and assessment of current and future capabilities in order to make informed capability development and investment decisions.

Collectively, the operating concepts and associated CONOPS will inform supporting concepts that drive doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities solutions.

⁶⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, "National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy," (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Proceedings), May 1954, Vol. No. 80, No. 5, p. 484.

ANNEX A

Glossary

catastrophic challenges—(NDS) Catastrophic challenges involve the acquisition, possession, and use of WMD or methods producing WMD-like effects.

civil affairs—(DOD) Designated Active and Reserve component forces and units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct civil affairs activities and to support civil-military operations. Also called CA.

civil-military operations—(DOD) The activities of a commander that establish, maintain, influence, or exploit relations between military forces, governmental and nongovernmental civilian organizations and authorities, and the civilian populace in a friendly, neutral, or hostile operational area in order to facilitate military operations, to consolidate and achieve operational US objectives. Civil-military operations may include performance by military forces of activities and functions normally the responsibility of the local, regional, or national government. These activities may occur prior to, during, or subsequent to other military actions. They may also occur, if directed, in the absence of other military operations. Civil-military operations may be performed by designated civil affairs, by other military forces, or by a combination of civil affairs and other forces. Also called CMO.

conventional forces—(DOD) 1. Those forces capable of conducting operations using nonnuclear weapons. 2. Those forces other than designated special operations forces.

cooperative security locations—(NDS) A diverse array of austere facilities. They have little or no United States personnel assigned and are intended for contingency access, logistical support, and rotational use by operating forces. Also called CSL.

counterinsurgency—(DOD) Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency. Also called COIN.

Annex A: Glossary

counterproliferation—(DOD) Those actions (e.g., detect and monitor, prepare to conduct counterproliferation operations, offensive operations, weapons of mass destruction, active defense, and passive defense) taken to defeat the threat and/or use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States, our military forces, friends, and allies. Also called CP.

counterterrorism—(DOD) Operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism. Also called CT.

coup de main—(DOD) An offensive operation that capitalizes on surprise and simultaneous execution of supporting operations to achieve success in one swift stroke.

crisis—(DOD) An incident or situation involving a threat to the United States, its territories, citizens, military forces, possessions, or vital interests that develops rapidly and creates a condition of such diplomatic, economic, political, or military importance that commitment of US military forces and resources is contemplated in order to achieve national objectives.

direct action--(DOD) Short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives. Also called DA.

disruptive challenges—(NDS) Disruptive challenges may come from adversaries who develop and use breakthrough technologies to negate current U.S. advantages in key operational domains.

forcible entry—1. (DOD) Seizing and holding of a military lodgment in the face of armed opposition. 2. (USMC proposed) A joint military operation, conducted with the expectation of armed opposition, which gains entry into the territory of an adversary in order to achieve a coup de main or enable the conduct of follow-on operations.

Annex A: Glossary

foreign internal defense—(DOD) Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Also called FID.

forward operating sites—(NDS) Scalable facilities intended for rotational use by operating forces that can support a range of military operations on short notice. They may have a small permanent presence and often house pre-positioned equipment. Also called FOS.

forward regions—(SHDCS) Foreign land areas, sovereign airspace, and sovereign waters outside the US homeland (and its approaches.)

global commons—(SHDCS) International waters and airspace, space, and cyberspace.

guerrilla warfare—1. (DOD) Consists of military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces. 2. (Metz and Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the 21st Century: Reconceptualizing Threat and Response*) Involves hit and run tactics characterized by independent or semi-independent forces operating to harass, delay, or disrupt enemy forces through sabotage, subversion, and raids.

homeland defense—(DOD) The protection of United States sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical infrastructure against external threats and aggression or other threats as directed by the President. The Department of Defense is responsible for homeland defense. Homeland defense includes missions such as domestic air defense. The Department recognizes that threats planned or inspired by "external" actors may materialize internally. The reference to "external threats" does not limit where or how attacks could be planned and executed. The Department is prepared to conduct homeland defense missions whenever the President, exercising his constitutional authority as Commander in Chief, authorizes military actions. Also called HD.

homeland security—(DOD) Homeland security, as defined in the National Strategy for Homeland Security, is a concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur. The Department of Defense contributes to homeland

Annex A: Glossary

security through its military missions overseas, homeland defense, and support to civil authorities. Also called HS.

information operations—(DOD) Actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. Also called IO.

insurgency—1. (DOD) An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict. 2. (FM 100-20, 1990) An organized, armed political struggle whose goal may be the seizure of power through revolutionary takeover and replacement of the existing government. However, insurgencies goals may be more limited. Insurgencies generally follow a revolutionary doctrine and use armed force as an instrument of policy.

irregular challenges—(NDS) Unconventional methods to counter the traditional advantages of stronger opponents.

irregular forces--(DOD) Armed individuals or groups who are not members of the regular armed forces, police, or other internal security forces.

irregular warfare—(USMC proposed) An approach to conflict that seeks to erode an adversary's power and will, primarily by countering or applying indirect, non-traditional means.

low-intensity conflict—(FM 100-20, 1990) A political-military confrontation between contending states or groups below conventional war and above the routine, peaceful competition among states. It frequently involves protracted struggles of competing principles and ideologies. Low intensity conflict ranges from subversion to the use of armed force. It is waged by a combination of means, employing political, economic, informational, and military instruments. Low intensity conflicts are localized generally in the Third World, but contain regional and global security implications.

main operating bases—(NDS) are permanent bases with resident forces and robust infrastructure to support command and control, training, and the deployment and employment of military forces for operations. Also called MOB.

Annex A: Glossary

military operations other than war—(JP 3-07) A wide range of activities where the military instrument of national power is used for purposes other than the large-scale combat operations usually associated with war.

prolonged operations—(USMC proposed) Any operation of sufficient scope, scale, or duration to demand significant change in an organization's normal personnel policies, training, or equipment.

proxy war—(USMC proposed, derived from *Wikipedia*, On-line encyclopedia) A war where two powers use third parties (i.e., governments, terrorists, irregulars, etc.) as a supplement or a substitute for fighting each other directly. Can be fought alongside full-scale conflict. However, it is almost impossible to have a pure proxy war as the groups fighting for another power have their own interests, which are often divergent from those of their patron. Examples: Cold War conflicts like Afghanistan, Angola, and Vietnam; Iran's sponsorship of Hezbollah; Second Congo War between irregular forces employed by the competing governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and Rwanda.

psychological operations—(DOD) Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives. Also called PSYOP.

revolutionary warfare—(USMC proposed, derived from Mao, *On Guerilla Warfare*) Warfare that is never confined within the bounds of military action. Because its purpose is to destroy an existing society and its institutions and to replace them with a completely new structure, any revolutionary war is a unity of which the constituent parts, in varying importance are military, political, economic, social, and psychological.

seabasing—(*Seabasing Joint Integrating Concept* v1.0) The rapid deployment, assembly, command, projection, reconstitution, and re-employment of joint combat power from the sea, while providing continuous support, sustainment, and force protection to select expeditionary joint forces without reliance on land bases within the Joint Operations Area (JOA). These capabilities expand operational maneuver options, and facilitate assured access and entry from the sea.

Annex A: Glossary

security cooperation—(DOD) All Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.

special operations—(DOD) Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require covert, clandestine, or low visibility capabilities. Special operations are applicable across the range of military operations. They can be conducted independently or in conjunction with operations of conventional forces or other government agencies and may include operations through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets. Also called SO.

special operations forces—(DOD) Those Active and Reserve Component forces of the Military Services designated by the Secretary of Defense and specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations. Also called SOF. See also Air Force special operations forces; Army special operations forces; naval special warfare forces. Two types of activities: tasks no one else in DOD can accomplish or tasks accomplished to a unique set of standards and conditions.

terrorism—(DOD) The calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.

traditional challenges—(NDS) Traditional challenges are posed by states employing recognized military capabilities and forces in well-understood forms of military competition and conflict.

traditional warfare—(USMC proposed) Peer-to-peer fighting between the conventional armed forces of two or more countries.

Annex A: Glossary

unconventional warfare--(DOD) A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery. Also called UW.

Annex A: Glossary

ANNEX B

Operational Maneuver from the Sea A Concept for the Projection of Naval Power Ashore

In the white papers, " . . . From the Sea" and "Forward . . . From the Sea," the Secretary of the Navy, with the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps, began the development of a new approach to naval operations. This approach places unprecedented emphasis on littoral areas, requires more intimate cooperation between forces afloat and forces ashore, introduces the concept of the naval expeditionary force, and provides the foundation for Operational Maneuver from the Sea.

Like its predecessor, the approach to amphibious warfare developed at Quantico during the 1930s, Operational Maneuver from the Sea is a response to both danger and opportunity. The danger, summarized by the phrase "chaos in the littorals," consists of a world characterized by the clash of the myriad forces of national aspiration, religious intolerance, and ethnic hatred. The opportunity comes from significant enhancements in information management, battlefield mobility, and the lethality of conventional weapons.

These two changes to the operational environment, a new series of threats and enhanced tactical capabilities, are significant ones. While they change neither the nature of war nor our fundamental doctrine of maneuver warfare, "chaos in the littorals" and the military applications of new technologies will have a profound effect on where we fight, who we fight, and how we fight. This, in turn, will require considerable alterations in the education of leaders, the organization and equipment of units, and the selection and training of Marines.

The details of these alterations are, as yet, unknown. Refocusing the Marine Corps to meet the needs of the next century will, like all successful military innovation, involve a great deal of debate and experimentation. Many ideas will be put forward, discussed, and put to the test in war games, field trials, exercises, and actual operations. And, if history is any guide, the conclusions we draw from this process may well bear little resemblance to the assumptions with which we started.

Annex B: Extracts from Operational Maneuver from the Sea

The purpose of this concept paper is to begin this process of proposal, debate, and experimentation. Building on the foundation laid by " . . . From the Sea" and "Forward . . . From the Sea," it provides our vision of what Operational Maneuver from the Sea is and what naval forces of the near future should be able to do. In doing this, it provides a framework for the actions of many people, Marines, Sailors, civilian employees, and contractors whose work will turn the concept of Operational Maneuver from the Sea into the reality of forces capable of winning decisive victories in littoral areas.

"CHAOS IN THE LITTORALS" - Challenge and Opportunity

In the future, the United States is likely to face a number of very different threats to its security, interests, and way of life. Many of these will be associated with the littorals, those areas characterized by great cities, well-populated coasts, and the intersection of trade routes where land and sea meet. While representing a relatively small portion of the world's surface, littorals provide homes to over three-quarters of the world's population, locations for over 80 percent of the world's capital cities, and nearly all of the marketplaces for international trade. Because of this, littorals are also the place where most of the world's important conflicts are likely to occur.

Close association with the littorals is one of the few things that conflicts of the near future are likely to have in common. In all other respects—goals, organizations, armament, and tactics—the warfare of the next 20 years will be distinguished by its great variety. For that reason, it is imperative that the Marine Corps resist the temptation to prepare for only one type of conflict. To focus on one threat, greatly increases the danger that we will be surprised, and perhaps defeated, by another.

To influence events overseas, America requires a credible, forwardly deployable, power projection capability. In the absence of an adjacent land base, a sustainable forcible entry capability that is independent of forward staging bases, friendly borders, overflight rights, and other politically dependent support can come only from the sea. The chaos of the future requires that we maintain the capability to project power ashore against all forces of resistance, ranging from overcoming devastated infrastructure to assisting a friendly people in need of disaster relief to countering the entire spectrum of armed threats.

The Breakdown of Order

The most obvious challenge faced by the United States and its Marine Corps is the worldwide breakdown of order. From the former Soviet Union to the former Yugoslavia, from the Atlas Mountains of North Africa to the Andes of South America, and from the streets of Washington, D.C. to the streets of Algiers, governments are losing their monopoly on organized violence. The result, as Marines have seen in Somalia, Lebanon, and Los Angeles, will be chaotic situations in which ethnic groups, street gangs, clans, and other non-state actors wage the war of "all against all."

In many parts of the world, this trend towards the breakdown of order is likely to continue. Loyalty will shift, as it has for some time, from states to more intimate groupings, and from organizations that can keep the peace to entities that do a far better job at providing people with a sense of purpose and community. The long-term implications of this realignment of allegiances is hard to gauge. In the immediate future, however, we can be sure of more of the same sort of chaos—famine, terrorism, crime—that we see in our newspapers every day.

One particularly frightening possibility is the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors. States that fail to command the loyalty of significant portions of their population will have difficulty controlling their stockpiles of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

Non-state actors that cannot access traditional means of mass destruction may contemplate such equally destructive expedients as the blowing up of dams and the poisoning of water supplies. Even without weapons of mass destruction, non-state actors wield considerable destructive power. They can disrupt economies to the point of famine and societies to the point of lawlessness.

A World of "Fighters"

Though there is much war in the news, there is very little mention of "soldiers," those who belong to the regularly constituted armed forces of established states. Instead, most of the fighting is done by people in the much broader category of "fighters." At a time when most states are reluctant to risk casualties among their well organized and well paid regular forces, there seems to be no shortage of men who are willing to pick up a weapon and, defend the cause of their ethnic group, religion, clan, or tribe usually as an unpaid volunteer.

Regional Powers

The breakdown of order is not a universal phenomenon. Many areas of the world will continue to be dominated by states whose armed forces, while not always armed with the most advanced weaponry, are still formidable opponents. Regional powers that acquire, as many are likely to, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction will become even more powerful.

Regional powers are not necessarily hostile. Indeed, much of America's foreign policy is based upon alliances with regional powers. Nonetheless, a change of regime, a shift in the international balance of power, or even the perception of opportunity can turn a neutral or even friendly regional power into a hostile one. As a result, the Armed Forces in general, and the naval services in particular, must be able to deal not only with those regional powers that are currently at odds with the United States, but also with regional powers that alone or in combination might pose a threat in the future.

The Next Superpower

At present, the United States is the only superpower in the world. If history is any guide, this enviable position is unlikely to be permanent. At some time in the future, another superpower—whether an existing state, a new state, or an alliance of states—could rise up.

It is unlikely that this new superpower will be a mirror image of the United States. Nonetheless, the advantages so evident in our recent conflicts with regional powers—superior numbers, logistics, wealth, and technology—are likely to be matched by similar advantages in the hands of our rival. It is even possible that the new superpower will possess more of the basic building blocks of military power than we will. In such a situation, the outcome will depend, to a degree unprecedented in recent history, upon the skill with which we fight.

Whether our enemy is a superpower as large and as rich as we are, or a regional power armed with second-hand weapons, or a political entity that has neither a capital city nor coinage, the wars of the near future share a number of important characteristics. Many of these derive from the wide availability of a variety of weapons that are far more lethal than

Annex B: Extracts from Operational Maneuver from the Sea

the weapons used for most of the 20th century. These weapons include existing precision-guided munitions; non-line of sight gunner-in-the-loop weapons such as the fiber-optic guided missile; and improved level-of-effort munitions rockets/missiles, artillery, and mortars.

In war against non-state actors, where the proximity of innocents is often the enemy's greatest advantage, and in operations other than war, more precise weapons will allow a significantly greater degree of discrimination. A guided missile sent through a window, an armed robot turning a corner, and a directed energy weapon covering an exit will often be useful in situations where the delivery of tons of high explosive would be counter-productive.

The Rapid Rise of Dominant Powers

In 1480, Spain was a collection of little kingdoms, as eager to fight each other as to defend their common interests. Twenty years later, Spain held title to half the globe. In 1850, Germany was little more than a geographical expression, a no-man's land between the territory

In a war against regional powers, more precise weapons, whether precision-guided or level-of-effort, will allow greater effect on the target for far fewer rounds. This translates into additional shipping space available for landing force requirements, reductions in overland transport, and reductions in on-shore storage. The reduced logistics footprint of landing forces armed with more precise weapons will also translate into a significant reduction in

the time needed for ship-to-objective and shore-to-ship maneuver.

In a war against a new superpower, new technologies will allow us to compete on equal terms. The infrastructure of 20th century combat power—large dumps of fuel and ammunition, ships waiting for days to unload their cargoes, and crowded assembly areas—will make lucrative targets for the weapons of the 21st century. At the same time, landing forces armed with the C2, tactical mobility, and fire support capabilities of the present will be hard pressed to decisively engage an enemy who is likely to combine the destructive capability of a conventional force with the elusiveness of a guerrilla.

New technologies, whether organic or in support, will give small units unprecedented combat power. Since small units are easier to move than large ones, these new technologies will permit high tempo operations in

Annex B: Extracts from Operational Maneuver from the Sea

and between a wide variety of environments. At the same time, new weapons, which will inevitably be wielded by at least some of our enemies, require that our units be hard to detect, far-ranging, and fast-moving.

Responding to the Challenge

There is no single answer to the many challenges that will present themselves in the future, naval forces will have to adapt as they have done throughout history to changing circumstances. For that reason, it is important that naval forces avoid a narrow definition of their capabilities. At the same time, the fact that the future is uncertain is no excuse for failing to make adequate preparations.

The centerpiece of our preparations for the future is an approach to expeditionary, littoral, and amphibious warfare known as Operational Maneuver from the Sea. While Operational Maneuver from the Sea will not define all Navy/Marine operations, the attitudes, skills, techniques and equipment associated with it will provide naval forces with a solid foundation for future improvisation.

The heart of Operational Maneuver from the Sea is the maneuver of naval forces at the operational level, a bold bid for victory that aims at exploiting a significant enemy weakness in order to deal a decisive blow. Mere movement, which may lead to indecisive results or even be counterproductive, does not qualify as operational maneuver. That is to say, operational maneuver should be directed against an enemy center of gravity—something that is *essential* to the enemy's ability to effectively continue the struggle.

The center of gravity may be a physical object (a military force, a city, a region) or a source of supplies or money. More often than not, the center of gravity will be an intangible, essential element of the political and moral forces that keep our enemies in the fight against us. The purpose of the legitimate use of force, is to convince our enemies that it is unwise and, in the final analysis, wrong to make war against us.

The search for decisive effect is common to all forms of operational maneuver, whether on land, at sea, or in the littorals where land and sea meet. What distinguishes Operational Maneuver from the Sea from all other species of operational maneuver is the extensive use of the sea as a means of gaining advantage, an avenue for friendly movement that is

Annex B: Extracts from Operational Maneuver from the Sea

simultaneously a barrier to the enemy and a means of avoiding disadvantageous engagements. This aspect of Operational Maneuver from the Sea may make use of, but is not limited to, such techniques as sea-based logistics, sea-based fire support and the use of the sea as a medium for tactical and operational movement.

For most of the 20th century, the usefulness of sea-based logistics was limited by the voracious appetite of modern landing forces for such items as fuel, large caliber ammunition, and aviation ordnance. As a result, the options available to landing forces were greatly reduced by the need to establish, protect, and make use of supply dumps. Concerted efforts were delayed and opportunities for decisive action missed while the necessary supplies accumulated on shore.

In the near future, improvements in the precision of long-range weapons, greater reliance on sea-based fire support, and, quite possibly, a decrease in the fuel requirements of military land vehicles promise to eliminate, or at least greatly reduce, the need to establish supply facilities ashore. As a result, the logistics tail of landing forces will be smaller, ship-to-shore movement will take less time, and what were previously known as "subsequent operations ashore" will be able to start without the traditional "build up phase." In other words, landing forces will move directly from their ships to their objectives, whether those objectives are located on the shoreline or far inland.

The significant reduction of logistics infrastructure ashore will also facilitate the rapid re-embarkation of the landing force. This will enable the landing force to avoid combat offered on unfavorable terms, to avoid obstacles that stand in the way of decisive action, and to make use of the inevitably perishable advantage of surprise. In effect, powerful landing forces will be able to do what had hitherto been the exclusive province of lightly armed landing parties.

When combined with a command and control system oriented towards rapid decision-making at all levels of command, the additional speed and flexibility offered by these new techniques translates into a high tempo of operations. Vulnerabilities can be exploited before they are reduced, opportunities seized before they vanish, and traps sprung before they are discovered. In short, we will be able to act so quickly that the enemy will not be able to react effectively until it is too late.

Setting the Course to Make It Happen

Operational Maneuver from the Sea requires that we focus our efforts on those areas which afford us the greatest return. Specifically, we must improve our operations, modernize our capabilities, and strengthen our intellectual underpinnings.

Operational Directions

OMFTS requires significant changes in the way we are organized, in the way we move between the sea and the objective, and the way we deal with the wide variety of missions we will be called upon to support.

Organization. OMFTS treats the littoral as a single environment in which the cooperation of units on land, at sea, and in the air is based on a shared vision of what must be done, intimate knowledge of the capabilities and weaknesses of each type of unit, and an *esprit decorps* that transcends service identity or occupational specialty. This can only be achieved if the naval expeditionary force is organized and trained as a highly cohesive team.

Movement Between Land and Sea. OMFTS requires rapid movement, not merely from ship to shore, but from ship to objectives that may be miles away from blue water and from inland positions back to offshore vessels. While some operations may require the establishment of bases ashore, the practice of separating ship-to-shore movement from the tactical and operational maneuver of units ashore will be replaced by maneuvers in which units move, without interruption, from ships at sea to their inland objectives.

The Spectrum of Conflict. In contrast to previous approaches to amphibious warfare, OMFTS is not limited to the high end of the spectrum of conflict. Indeed, in a world where war will be made in many different ways, the very notion of "conventional" warfare is likely to fall out of use. For that reason, the techniques of OMFTS must be of use in a wide variety of situations, ranging from humanitarian relief to a high-stakes struggle against a rising superpower.

Capability Improvements

Annex B: Extracts from Operational Maneuver from the Sea

Operational Maneuver from the Sea will require us to overcome challenges in the areas of battlefield mobility, intelligence, command and control, fire support, aviation, mine countermeasures, and sustainment. In evolving OMFTS, we will meet these challenges and find solutions using both technology and new approaches in doctrine, organization, tactics, and training.

Mobility. To move units from ships lying over the horizon to objectives lying far from the shore, we will require the capability to cross great distances, reduce the limitations imposed by terrain and weather, and, most importantly, to seamlessly transition from maneuvering at sea to maneuvering ashore and vice-versa.

Intelligence. The high tempo of operations essential to successful OMFTS requires that intelligence be provided to decision makers with a minimum of delay. Technology that permits the rapid dissemination of intelligence products will play an important role in this effort. However, the key to effective intelligence support of OMFTS, lies in the orientation of intelligence specialists. In particular, intelligence specialists must be capable of rapidly making educated judgments about what the enemy is likely to do.

Command and Control. The command and control system best suited to OMFTS will be very different from those developed to deal with previous approaches to amphibious warfare. Techniques previously employed to compensate for the inability of fire support units to see the battlefield will give way to techniques that exploit the fact that combatant units will be better informed than ever before. Communications systems designed to provide a few headquarters with an overall view of the situation will have to be replaced by those that provide units with control over the information they need. The equipment to make this transition from communications nets to information networks has already been developed. Making this new technology work will require fundamental changes to the skills and attitudes possessed by Marines involved with the command and control system. The key to this capability lies more in the realm of education and doctrine than it does in the realm of hardware.

Fires. Successful execution of OMFTS will drive changes in fire support. To improve our mobility ashore, we will increasingly take advantage of sea-based fires and seek shore-based fire support systems with improved

Annex B: Extracts from Operational Maneuver from the Sea

tactical mobility. To support rapidly maneuvering forces, we must streamline our fire support coordination procedures to improve responsiveness. To provide effective fires, forces afloat and ashore require the ability to deliver fires with increased range and improved accuracy and lethality. Finally, we will use fires to exploit maneuver just as we use maneuver to exploit the effects of fires.

Aviation. Our combat aircraft must be capable of operating from a variety of ships and austere bases ashore, perform a variety of missions, and land on a wide variety of surfaces. Our aviation units must be organized, trained, and employed as integral parts of a naval expeditionary force.

Mine Countermeasures. Because of their relative low cost and pervasiveness, mines have become a cheap means of limiting the mobility of ships and landing craft in the contested littoral regions. For that reason, we must develop and enhance our counter-mine/obstacle reconnaissance, mine marking and clearing capabilities, precision navigation, and in-stride breaching to support maneuver at sea, ashore, and during the transition from sea to land.

Combat Service Support (CSS). The requirement to sustain fast-moving, powerful, combined arms forces conducting ship-to-objective maneuver will strain the best logistics system. Speed and mobility comparable to the assault forces' will be necessary for CSS elements responding to the dynamic demands of OMFTS. CSS flow must be efficient, secure, and timely, with the option to remain sea-based or to buildup support areas ashore. Delivery means and material handling demands are great, as is the need for a command and control system capable of rapidly communicating requirements and flexibly managing "right time, right place" support.

Intellectual Foundations

Doctrine. The doctrine of maneuver warfare is fully compatible with the concept of Operational Maneuver from the Sea. On the other hand, many of the techniques and procedures currently used by Fleet and Fleet Marine Force units must be replaced by techniques that are more in accord with OMFTS. This is particularly true in the areas of fire support, logistics, command and control, and ship-to-objective maneuver.

Training and Education. The effective employment of OMFTS will necessitate changes in Marine Corps training and education programs. The

Annex B: Extracts from Operational Maneuver from the Sea

operational environment for OMFTS is characterized by a dynamic, fluid situation. In such a chaotic situation, we require leaders and staffs who can tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty and make rapid decisions under stress. Producing leaders, from the small unit level to the MAGTF commander, who have the *experience* to judge what needs to be done and *know how* to do it can be accomplished only with an extensive amount of training and exposure to operational problems. We must have leaders who can operate effectively in spite of risks and uncertainty; we can develop these leaders by improving their capacity to identify patterns, seek and select critical information, and make decisions quickly on an intuitive basis. This intuitive-based decisionmaking cycle will be enhanced by extensive investments in education, wargaming and combat simulation activities, and battlefield visualization techniques. These investments will produce leaders who can make informed judgments, take decisive action, and thus ensure that OMFTS can be successfully executed.

Conclusion - The Future of Naval Warfare

Just as a littoral is formed by the meeting of land and sea, Operational Maneuver from the Sea is a marriage between maneuver warfare and naval warfare. From maneuver warfare comes an understanding of the dynamic nature of conflict, the imperative of decisive objectives, and the requirement for skillful operations executed at a high tempo. From naval warfare are derived a deep appreciation for the strategic level of war, the advantages inherent in sea-borne movement, and the flexibility provided by sea-based logistics. Operational Maneuver from the Sea will couple doctrine with technological advances in speed, mobility, fire support, communications, and navigation to seamlessly and rapidly identify and exploit enemy weaknesses across the entire spectrum of conflict. When properly united, these elements of Operational Maneuver from the Sea provide the United States with a naval expeditionary force that, while deployed unobtrusively in international waters, is instantly ready to help any friend, defeat any foe, and convince potential enemies of the wisdom of keeping the peace.

ANNEX C

A Concept for Distributed Operations

Introduction

Marines fighting the Global War on Terrorism confront adversaries that are adaptive, decentralized, and elusive. Recognizing the overwhelming conventional superiority of U.S. forces, our enemies will continue to develop new tactics designed to exploit perceived seams in our capabilities, or to otherwise undermine our advantages in mobility, firepower, sensing, and command and control. In order to maintain our dominance on the battlefield, it is essential that we continuously adapt our methods of warfighting, while remaining a flexible, combined-arms force.

Accompanying this emerging challenge is a new opportunity. After a quarter century of unwavering commitment to the maneuver warfare philosophy, we are harvesting a generation of junior officers and noncommissioned officers who are fully prepared to assume much greater authority and responsibility than is traditionally expected at the small-unit level. They have proven their critical thinking skills and tactical competence in combat, achieving results that exceed our highest expectations, and demonstrating a capacity for small-unit leadership that will enable us to realize the full promise of maneuver warfare philosophy, through maximum decentralization of informed decisionmaking, guided largely by commander's intent.

Concept

Distributed Operations describes an operating approach that will create an advantage over an adversary through the deliberate use of separation and coordinated, interdependent, tactical actions enabled by increased access to functional support, as well as by enhanced combat capabilities at the small-unit level. The essence of this concept lies in the capacity for coordinated action by dispersed units, throughout the breadth and depth of the battlespace, ordered and connected within an operational design focused on a common aim.

Distributed Operations constitutes a form of maneuver warfare. Small, highly capable units spread across a large area of operations will provide

Annex C: Distributed Operations

the spatial advantage commonly sought in maneuver warfare, in that they will be able to sense an expanded battlespace, and can use close combat or supporting arms, including Joint fires, to disrupt the enemy's access to key terrain and avenues of approach.

Further, these units will also operate at a temporal advantage. Continuing the trend toward decentralization of authority that has been a hallmark of Marine Corps combat development, this concept posits the distribution of decisionmaking authority across a wide number of junior leaders, who are directly engaged in the fight. By moving authority "downward," we will dramatically increase the speed of command. This distribution of *authority* among many seasoned and well-trained junior leaders will result in a combination of actions that creates for the enemy a rapidly deteriorating, cascading effect, shattering his cohesion. Units conducting distributed operations will use these advantages to focus on the enemy's critical vulnerabilities, exploiting fleeting opportunities, and thereby achieving tactical successes that will build rapidly to decisive outcomes at the operational level of war.

In the tactical application of the distributed operations concept, it is envisioned that maneuver units will operate in disaggregated fashion, with companies, platoons, and even squads dispersed beyond the normal range of mutually supporting organic direct fires, but linked through a command and control network. All units will be organized, trained, and equipped to facilitate distributed operations, with capabilities beyond those historically resident at the small unit level. They will employ the advantage of extensive dispersion to reduce their vulnerability to enemy observation and fire, but will possess significant combat power, enabling them to locate, close with, and destroy the enemy.

Units will possess the capability to rapidly re-aggregate, in order to exploit fleeting opportunities and to reinforce or support another unit in need. Commanders will decide when and where to use distribution and aggregation based on the tactical situation, the terrain, and the nature of the enemy they are facing. Likewise, commanders may intentionally opt to undercut an adversary's asymmetrical advantage by matching and overwhelming the enemy with force symmetrical to his own. On other occasions, commanders will exploit a symmetrical advantage—usually while operating as a concentrated force. Units must be flexible and dynamic, having the ability to quickly respond to a changing situation, evolving faster than the enemy. The ability to re-aggregate will be enabled

Annex C: Distributed Operations

by focused and energetic cross training of small units, the creation and use of a more robust communications capability for small units, and an increase in the number of tactical mobility assets available for small units.

Distributed operations capabilities will be additive in nature, providing Marine commanders a new method for tactical deployment and employment. While the concept will drive the development of the enhancements required to render Marine units capable of functioning effectively in a distributed operations scenario, it will not supplant existing capabilities. All Marine units will retain their capacity to operate effectively using the full range of tactical employment methods.

Similarly, distributed operations capabilities will be complementary in character. Units employing these techniques will deploy and fight in coordination with other units using conventional tactics. For example, sea-based forces will project power using ship-to-objective maneuver, with units operating in an aggregated fashion being complemented by other units using distributed operations procedures. Both elements of the sea-based force will operate under a common commander's intent, within the framework of an operational design, and connected by the extended, sea-based network.

Thus, as an additive and complementary capability, the distributed operations approach will provide Marine commanders the advantage of surprise, by enabling our forces to modify their tactical "shape," rapidly and unpredictably. Armed with the means to employ a range of tactics—concentrated or distributed—Marines will impose asymmetric challenges and crippling uncertainty upon their adversaries.

Distributed Operations in History

During the twentieth century, the military forces of many nations, in many conflicts, have attempted to develop the idea of purposeful separation to influence a vast area of operations. Their experiences provide useful insights that will serve to inform our approach to the development of distributed operations capabilities. The following examples illuminate some principles common to distributed operations scenarios.

In their 1939-1940 winter war against the Soviet Union, the Finns successfully employed widely distributed forces against less mobile Soviet columns, inflicting disproportionate casualties upon a numerically superior

Annex C: Distributed Operations

foe. The Finns used an operational design that relied on independent actions and a mobility advantage to generate a string of tactical level successes. In some engagements, the small units of the Finnish Army fought semi-autonomously, but were guided by a common understanding of the operational aim. The superb individual proficiency of the Finnish soldiers and their junior leaders served as a force multiplier that raised the combat power of their forces well beyond that represented by mere numbers of personnel and quantities of equipment.

During the Second World War, in the China-Burma-India Theater, British and Indian “Chindits” employed long range penetration tactics, in which numerous separated columns simultaneously infiltrated the Japanese Army’s rear areas, in dispersed fashion. These units were large enough to inflict a heavy blow to the enemy, but small enough to avoid decisive engagement if outnumbered. Supplied by air, the columns operated behind Japanese lines for extended periods of time, forming concentrations, in some instances, to establish strong bastions astride Japanese lines of communications.

In Vietnam, U.S. Marines employed a rudimentary form of distributed operations, known as the Combined Action Program. This involved squad-sized Marine units deployed in villages, fighting alongside Vietnamese Popular Force militia. Combined Action units worked in coordination with conventional Marine forces that possessed greater mobility and combat power. In the Combined Action Program, separation and interdependent tactical actions were effective within an operational framework designed for area stability and counterinsurgency.

Implications for Combat Development

This concept will drive the entire range of combat development activities that deliver fully tested, combat ready, warfighting capabilities. Thorough experimentation and wargaming, supported by in-depth analysis, will guide the integration of solutions that address all pillars of combat development, all warfighting functions, and all elements of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

Annex C: Distributed Operations

Focusing on the Marine: The Foundation of a Distributed Operations Capability

One of the principal requirements for development of a distributed operations capability will be the further enhancement of training and professional education for small-unit leaders and individual Marines. Building on our existing ethos and our maneuver warfare philosophy, we must continue to elevate the already high competence of our most junior leaders, educating them to think and act at the tactical level of war, with an understanding of the application of commander's intent to achieve operational level effects. For example, we will provide infantry squad leaders a broad understanding of command and control systems, the intelligence cycle, fire support coordination, logistics, and other disciplines, in which extensive knowledge has heretofore been principally the domain of Marines far more senior. Further, we will provide junior leaders additional technical skills that will enable them to perform combat tasks normally accomplished at higher levels of command. Marines at the infantry squad level, for example, will be trained to direct all forms of supporting arms, to provide terminal guidance for rotary wing and tiltrotor aircraft, to perform casualty evacuation, to maintain access to high-level communications networks, and other functions, without the aid of the specialists typically found at higher levels of command. A greater focus on cultural factors and language training will enhance small units in operating in complex environments.

The addition of extensive and complex new training standards and professional education requirements will demand concomitant adjustments in the personnel policy pillar of combat development. For example, increased training requirements will affect staffing levels in units as Marines attend additional or longer duration schools. Further, the time required to master new skills will potentially be considerable, calling for a review of personnel policies concerning tour length, promotion, and career patterning.

Distributed Operations and the Marine Air-Ground Task Force

The Marine Air-Ground Task Force—the MAGTF—will remain our organizing principle in distributed operations, just as in all other forms of operations. As we explore the range of combat development initiatives necessary to transform this concept into warfighting capabilities, we will involve all elements of the MAGTF: Command, Aviation Combat, Ground

Annex C: Distributed Operations

Combat, and Combat Service Support. Enhancements will be applied to ensure that all elements of the MAGTF develop the range of capabilities required for distributed operations.

Enhancing Warfighting Capabilities Sets

Units employing distributed operations will require capabilities that extend across the six warfighting functions.

Maneuver. Distributed operations will require both air mobility and organic vehicles for ground mobility. In order to exploit intelligence, individual units must move rapidly to maintain positional advantage relative to the enemy, or to enhance force protection measures. Further, units will require the ability to re-aggregate, in order to temporarily mass for missions requiring larger physical concentrations of combat power. To facilitate rapid, coordinated action by dispersed units, new doctrine must be developed to articulate appropriate tactical control measures appropriate to this environment.

Fires. Distributed operations by networked forces will potentially generate significant amounts of actionable intelligence. Small units will exploit this intelligence by using both enhanced direct fire capabilities and supporting arms to neutralize or destroy much larger hostile forces. Additionally, increasing the amount of separation among units beyond mutually supporting range will require the use of supporting arms to supplement organic fires. For these reasons, small unit leaders will be trained in the employment of the full array of ground and aviation supporting arms, to include Joint fires, and will be provided the necessary equipment to perform target identification, location, and designation, as well as communication with fire support elements, and control of indirect fire weapons and aircraft. Further, this concept will require the development of new fire support coordination measures and procedures that will account for the unique battlefield geometry associated with distributed operations.

Intelligence. While the distributed operations concept is not oriented on reconnaissance, it nonetheless underscores the importance of individual Marines and small units in generating intelligence for their own use, as well as for their higher headquarters. Tactical intelligence will drive distributed operations, while the operations themselves will stimulate the collection and reporting of high-quality tactical intelligence. Of particular

Annex C: Distributed Operations

importance is the realization that the human dimension manifested in small units may be the only way to make positive identification of our adversary and gain an insight into his likely intent. Small units at the platoon level and below will require enhanced capabilities to collect, report, and exploit intelligence. These might include employment or direction of unmanned ground or air vehicles, or the ability to access command and control networks for the purpose of extracting specific intelligence pertinent to the unit's local situation.

Command and Control. A robust and resilient network will enable this operating approach. This network will include over-the-horizon, on-the-move, and beyond-line-of-sight communications assets that connect commanders to distributed units, and provide connectivity throughout the force, to include, where applicable, the sea-based elements of that force. The network will provide commanders the ability to coordinate the actions of widely separated small units. Further, it will enable separated small units to "self-organize" by carrying out mutually supporting tactical actions, in accordance with commander's intent. Most importantly, the command and control system will be designed to optimize and exploit the advantages of distributed decisionmaking by empowered small unit leaders, with "command and feedback" characterizing the distributed operations environment.

Logistics. Units operating in widely dispersed fashion will require unique combat logistics support, especially in supply, maintenance, and health services. The supply chain will be highly adaptive and flexible. Through "sense and respond" logistics, we will share logistics information and allow for reconfiguration of the logistics system, when needed. At the same time, ground lines of communications will rarely be secure, in the traditional sense. Therefore, the development of logistics capabilities for distributed operations must take a two-pronged approach. First, we must invest small units with the capability to operate with only limited access to conventional combat logistics mechanisms. For example, man-portable water purification systems and the substitution of alternate power sources for batteries used in communications equipment and sensors can dramatically reduce two significant requirements for periodic resupply. Through the use of Autonomic Logistics, we will sense the development of maintenance problems, and will respond to them before they affect the mission. Marines will be trained to perform quick repairs to equipment by exchanging key components. The second prong of our approach must be to enable our combat logistics elements to perform their mission in a

Annex C: Distributed Operations

distributed operations environment. This will require a common perspective of the battlespace, shared by maneuver, logistics, and intelligence elements, as well as innovations in packaging and delivery.

Force Protection. In the case of protection against enemy action, an increased degree of force protection is inherent in distributed operations, in that dispersion itself is a protective measure. At the same time, however, dispersion beyond the range of mutual support with direct fire weapons is a potential source of increased vulnerability. We must develop capabilities to capitalize upon the advantages of dispersion, while mitigating its dangers. Such measures include enhanced, lightweight ballistic protective equipment, multi-spectral camouflage systems, and the capability to rapidly harden positions with minimal manpower.

Conclusion

Distributed Operations will provide the leverage to move to the next level of accomplishment within the ongoing advance of innovation that has marked the history of the Marine Corps. The implementation of the *Distributed Operations* concept will provide Marine commanders an additive and complementary capability that will further strengthen the power inherent in the combined arms Marine Air-Ground Task Force. Through the employment of distributed operations techniques, Marines will confound the enemy's decision-making processes, while further increasing their own capacity for coordinated and decisive action. Once implemented, the concept will provide additional capabilities applicable to a wide range of adversaries and operational environments. The integration of new doctrine, force structure, training, equipment, personnel policies and leader development initiatives will afford our tactical and operational commanders a much-needed weapon in the brutal, yet increasingly sophisticated, Global War on Terrorism. Most importantly *Distributed Operations* will enhance the flexibility of our units and exploit the capacity of our Marines to more fully implement the principles of maneuver warfare.

ANNEX D

Executive Summary Seabasing Joint Integrating Concept

Introduction

A joint concept is a visualization of future operations that describe how a commander, using military art and science, might employ capabilities to achieve desired effects and objectives. It need not be limited by current or programmed capabilities.¹ **Seabasing** is one of several evolving Joint Integrating Concepts (JIC) that describes, "...how a Joint Force Commander (JFC) 10-20 years in the future will integrate capabilities to generate effects and achieve an objective."² This document describes how Seabasing will complement, integrate and enable joint military capabilities throughout the littorals with minimal or no access to nearby land bases. It defines joint Seabasing, explains its relevance to strategic guidance and joint concepts, lays out assumptions and risks, identifies essential capabilities, defines attributes, and provides guidelines of how joint Seabasing can be executed to support national military objectives.

U.S. forces must react promptly to theater needs from a posture that minimizes footprint. DOD is changing U.S. global basing policy, placing more emphasis on the ability to surge quickly to trouble spots across the globe, and making U.S. forces more agile and expeditionary. The new challenge is to project joint power more rapidly to confront unexpected threats.

DOD Congressional Testimony, 2005

"Statement Of Secretary Of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld FY 2006 Department Of Defense Budget Senate Armed Services Committee", February 17, 2005, p. 3

This JIC outlines the concept for Seabasing. It describes closing, assembling, employing, sustaining and reconstituting joint forces from a sea base during a range of military operations in the 2015 to 2025 timeframe, including:

- Major Combat Operation (MCO)

¹ Joint Concept Development and Revision Plan approved by CJCS July 2004

² IBID

- Preemptive MCO with limited forward access
- Humanitarian Assistance (HA) Operation
- Counterinsurgency Operation (COIN)

Seabasing is defined as the rapid deployment, assembly, command, projection, reconstitution, and re-employment of joint combat power from the sea, while providing continuous support, sustainment, and force protection to select expeditionary joint forces without reliance on land

These scenarios can be conducted as stand-alone operations or in a near-simultaneous scenario. Success in these operations requires a rapid global response with an integrated array of capabilities, from combat capabilities to defeat the forces that threaten stability and security, to capabilities integrated with DOD and non-DOD agencies for stability and security operations.

Seabasing enables early arrival and synchronization of joint force capabilities providing strategic speed, access, and persistence for military operations including presence, through combat against conventional as well as irregular threats. Capitalizing on the capabilities of forward deployed, pre-positioned and immediate/rapid response forces, Seabasing improves operational tempo while seizing the initiative without an operational pause. Seabasing also reduces force protection challenges ashore, especially during the early stages of a crisis, and increases joint force operational maneuver by allowing the JFC to fully exploit the sea as maneuver space to enhance capabilities and gain advantage over the adversary. Some operational capabilities attributed to Seabasing are not available today; however once realized, Seabasing will:

- Complement overseas presence and forward basing strategy.
- Provide the ability to rapidly assemble forces at the sea base with minimal or no in-theater host and coalition nation support. This enables force closure and employment of joint force capabilities when forward access is denied.
- Enable joint force access, complement existing basing, and enhance power projection. Seabasing provides commanders with greater flexibility to rapidly and effectively build and integrate joint capabilities during the early stages of operations particularly when the political situation restricts basing, overflight or US

presence. Seabasing supports setting the conditions for the immediate integration of follow-on sustainment of personnel, equipment, and supplies while minimizing footprint ashore.

- Support parallel and concurrent execution of all phases of forcible entry by enabling shorter response times and the simultaneous defeat of multi-dimensional threats.
- Provide a dynamic, mobile, networked set of platforms from which selected joint forces can operate in relative safety, while reducing risk to vulnerable facilities ashore. It can also diminish the political implications of host government support for US forces by reducing insurgent ability to exploit our presence as a propaganda tool.
- Provide an array of joint force options and sustained employment through the flexibility afforded by projecting and sustaining forces through the sea base (strike, forcible entry, security operations, special operations, freedom of navigation, humanitarian assistance or disaster relief).
- Enhance the sustainment of future expeditionary joint force operations and minimize the operational pause associated with the build-up of large logistic stockpiles.
- Support high tempo, distributed joint operations and the capabilities for unit recovery, replenishment, reconstitution, re-positioning, and reemployment allowing rapid response to emerging asymmetrical and conventional threats within or outside the area of operations.
- Provide three force employment options that can be exploited by the Combatant Command (COCOM): 1) preemptive battlespace shaping through early joint integration of immediate response forces; 2) seizing the initiative through accelerated closure and sustainment of rapid response forces; and 3) seamless preparation for decisive operations³ through rapid reinforcement by follow on forces.

³ The current 4 phases of a campaign is being revised to include 6 total phases: 1) Shape; 2) Deter; 3) Seize the Initiative; 4) Dominate; 5) Stabilize; and 6) Enable

These advantages are embodied in the principles of joint Seabasing:

- 1) *Use the sea as maneuver space.*
- 2) *Leverage forward presence and joint interdependence*
- 3) *Protect joint force operations.*
- 4) *Provide scalable, responsive joint power projection.*
- 5) *Sustain joint force operations from the sea.*
- 6) *Expand access options and reduce dependence on land bases.*
- 7) *Create uncertainty for our adversaries.*

Through joint Seabasing, the President and/or the Secretary of Defense and military leaders have the capability to rapidly build and integrate credible joint combat power and command and control (C2) forward to deter escalation, enhance security, and provide assistance. In an MCO this includes seizing the initiative, and providing synchronized projection of joint force capability to achieve initial military objectives. This may include defeating anti-access challenges and setting conditions to enable the rapid build-up of joint combat power through the use of simultaneous force flows by air and sea across multiple entry points.

The Seabasing JIC integrates capabilities from Joint Operating Concepts (JOCs), Joint Functional Concepts and Joint Integrating Concepts, and distills them into five lines of operation with associated tasks, attributes, conditions and standards.

Lines of Operation

- ***Close*** – rapid closure of joint force capability to an area of crisis.
- ***Assemble*** – seamless integration of scalable joint force capabilities on and around secure sea-based assets.
- ***Employ*** – flexible employment of joint force capabilities to meet mission objectives supported from the sea base.

- ***Sustain*** – persistent sustainment of selected joint forces afloat and ashore, through transition to decisive combat operations ashore.
- ***Reconstitute*** – the capability to rapidly recover, reconstitute and redeploy joint combat capabilities within and around the maneuverable sea base for subsequent operations.

Lines of operation are discussed in greater detail throughout the document. In addition, the following attributes of Seabasing capabilities assist in qualifying metrics, conditions and standards:

Capability Attributes

- ***Capacity*** – the measure of how much joint force capability can be supported.
- ***Rate*** – how fast things can be accomplished to support joint force capability over a given time under standard sets of conditions.
- ***Infrastructure*** – the measure of a family of systems and capabilities that provide essential services toward accomplishing the mission.
- ***Interoperability*** – the degree to which Seabasing can seamlessly integrate and support joint force capability.
- ***Survivability*** – the degree to which Seabasing can protect joint force capabilities.
- ***Accessibility*** – the flexibility to bypass or operate within the physical constraints presented by terrain, hydrography, weather, depth of operations, and threat.

The Seabasing JIC, amplified by four detailed, illustrative Concept of Operations (CONOPS), supports the following top-level measures of performance to assist Capabilities Based Assessment (CBA), joint experimentation (e.g., Sea Viking, Nimble Viking, Unified Course, Unified Quest, etc.), acquisition, and future concept development.

Top-Level Measures of Performance (Threshold)

- ***Close*** joint sea-based capabilities, including elements of JC2, to a JOA to support major combat operations within 10-14 days of execution order.
- ***Assemble*** and integrate joint capabilities from the sea base to support major combat operations within 24-72 hours of arrival within the JOA.
- ***Employ*** over-the-horizon from the sea base at least one (1) brigade for JFEO within a period of darkness (8-10 hrs).
- ***Sustain*** joint sea-based operations, including up to at least two (2) joint brigades operating ashore, for an indefinite period using secure advanced bases up to 2000 nm away; also support selected joint maintenance and provide level III medical within the sea base.
- ***Reconstitute*** one (1) brigade from ashore to the sea base and reemploy within 10-14 days of execution order.

Seabasing provides a new paradigm from which to examine and balance the strategic mobility triad (airlift, sealift, and pre-positioning). Current strategic mobility cannot project and sustain US forces in distant anti-access or area-denial environments without reliance on land bases within the Joint Operating Area in order to seize the initiative within minimal or moderate risk. A balanced strategic mobility triad that includes additional high-speed sealift and operationalized maritime pre-positioning capabilities is needed to improve future mobility and sustainment capabilities. This document illustrates interdependence between a balanced strategic mobility triad and a compressed timeline to rapidly close, assemble, employ, sustain and reconstitute joint forces.

Seabasing is a transformational joint concept that provides a means to achieve strategic military goals. Our national leaders will use Seabasing as a strategic enabler combining the aspects of forward presence and engagement with the capability to rapidly deploy and employ forces to meet the future security challenges presented by traditional, disruptive, catastrophic, and irregular threats within the range of military operations. As an operational enabler, Seabasing exploits the maneuver space and sovereignty of the sea to provide the COCOMs with greater operational independence.

