

## WHY GENERAL KRULAK IS THE MARINE CORPS' GREATEST STRATEGIC LEADER

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**WHY GENERAL KRULAK IS THE MARINE CORPS' GREATEST STRATEGIC  
LEADER**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This Strategic Research Paper (SRP) will analyze the decisions made by General Krulak during his tenure as the Commandant of the Marine Corps using the U.S. Army War College Strategic Leadership Primer and outline the strategic leadership competencies possessed by General Krulak that makes him the Marine Corps greatest Strategic leader.





## WHY GENERAL KRULAK IS THE MARINE CORPS' GREATEST STRATEGIC LEADER

In the years following the conclusion of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1992, the Marine Corps faced many challenges, despite the immense successes that U.S. forces experienced during this war. Fortunately, General Krulak was serving as Commandant of the Marine Corps and would eventually emerge as the strategic leader who had the vision to prepare the Marine Corps for 21<sup>st</sup> Century warfare. His decisions and visionary concepts introduced the 1990s translated into mental and physical preparation for what would be required at the turn of the century in battles that Marines would engage in throughout the Middle East. Krulak coined the term “Strategic Corporal” and this term continues to highlight the importance of the non-commissioned officer’s actions and decisions on the battle field. His transformation of Marine Corps Recruit Training that embraces a “Crucible”<sup>1</sup> event remains in place today and still serves as the defining event for every Marine Recruit who goes on to earn the Eagle, Globe and Anchor emblem prior to graduating from recruit training. The “Three-Block War”<sup>2</sup> mindset still prevails today and references the mindset of how each Marine must have the flexibility to adapt to different situations on the battlefield.

General Krulak’s decision to move Marine Corps Headquarters personnel into the Pentagon continues to be essential to building relationships today. General Krulak implemented the experimentation element and Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF). During these lean budgetary years and draw down in endstrength, how was he able to develop and implement so many initiatives? This Strategic Research Paper (SRP) will show that General Krulak provided superior strategic leadership and

prepared the Marine Corps for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century because of his leadership competencies. The U.S. Army War College provides instruction on Strategic leadership and provides a comprehensive overview of Strategic leader competencies in their publication titled *Strategic Leadership Primer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, which will be referred to as the *Primer* throughout this paper. In addition to explaining each competency, this Primer publication explains how the synergy of possessing a myriad of strategic leadership competencies remains crucial to strategic decision making and leading military organizations in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) environment. This research paper will analyze the decisions that General Krulak made while serving as Commandant of the Marine Corps using the following three strategic leadership competencies found in the *Strategic Leadership Primer*: Envisioning the Future, Communications, and Political and Social Competence.

General Krulak successfully guided the Marine Corp into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through his unparalleled vision for the future, his highly effective communications abilities, and a political and social savvy. This happened during a time period when the Marine Corps could have remained in the Cold War mindset in terms of tactics, techniques, and procedures that were relevant during the successful Desert Shield and Storm campaigns.

Before examining General Krulak's decisions using the aforementioned three strategic leadership competencies, it is important to look at his personal and professional development prior to assuming command of the Marine Corps.

## General Krulak through the Years

Strategic leaders such as General Krulak develop over long periods of time. Their experiences and lessons begin early in life and continue to be refined throughout their military careers.

General Krulak was born on 4 March 1942 in Quantico, Virginia to Victor<sup>3</sup> and Amy Krulak.<sup>4</sup> His mother raised him and his two brothers from 1942 to 1952 while his father was deployed to wartime assignments.<sup>5</sup> Following graduation from Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, General Krulak attended the U.S. Naval Academy where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering. Krulak also earned a Master of Science degree in Labor Relations from George Washington University in 1973. He is a graduate of the U.S. Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School; the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; and the National War College.<sup>6</sup> Krulak's first assignment was in Vietnam where he commanded a platoon and two rifle companies during two tours of duty in Vietnam.<sup>7</sup> Krulak describes this period of the mid-1960s as "a bad time for the Marine Corps."<sup>8</sup> During this period, at least 90 percent of any given battalion in the Marine Corps abused drugs. Racial tensions were high and led to cases of Marines being murdered in their tents.<sup>9</sup> Then, during the early 1970s the Marine Corps experienced a period of low morale where, in addition to the numerous casualties in the Vietnam War, the Marine Corps experienced more than 1,000 violent racial incidents.<sup>10</sup>

As relayed by General Krulak, General Chapman said, "We didn't promise you a rose garden and we're going to hold firm."<sup>11</sup> It was at this point that Krulak believes that the Marine Corps experienced a big turning point and went back to their roots and ethos of being a breed apart.<sup>12</sup>

During the 1970s and early 1980s General Krulak commanded various units across the Marine Corps: the Counter-Guerilla Warfare School, Northern Training Area, Okinawa, Japan; Company Officer, U.S. Naval Academy; Commanding Officer, Marine Barracks, Naval Air Station, North Island, CA; and Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 3d Marine Regiment.

In 1987 he was assigned duty as the Deputy Director, The White House Military Office and was subsequently promoted to Brigadier General, assuming the duties as Commanding General, 10<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 2d Marine Division. Then, in 1990 he assumed duties as the Commanding General, 2d Force Service Support Group, Camp Lejeune, NC. He was then assigned to serve as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (Personnel Management) in August 1991. Krulak was promoted to Major General in March of 1992 and then in August 1992 he was assigned to Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA. Following his promotion to Lieutenant General in September 1992, he was assigned to Commander of Marine Forces Pacific, Camp Smith HI. In June 1995, General Krulak was promoted to General and assumed duties as the 31<sup>st</sup> Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Upon assuming his post as the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Krulak immediately communicated that Marines must maintain the ability to be innovative, and that building upon our past does not mean doing things the old way.<sup>13</sup> In 1995, Krulak compared the situation in the United States to the situation following WWII: a sole superpower, dominant in the world marketplace, and military without peer.<sup>14</sup> This comparative analysis led him to his charter as Commandant: how the Corps should

build and maintain U.S. national security posture for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. During this era, success in Operation Desert Storm became a persistent impediment since there is a tendency on the part of the winners to cling to the tactics, techniques, and procedures that won the previous war. Changing this post-war mindset, coupled with dealing with a budget and organization that was not ideally suited for transformation, would prove to be one of the most significant endeavors of Krulak's time as Commandant.

General Krulak's experience and the impact of his strategic leadership becomes clearer using the three strategic leadership competencies outlined earlier in this paper.

### Strategic Leadership

The *Primer* provides the following description for strategic leadership:

The process used by a leader to affect the achievement of a desirable and clearly understood vision by influencing the organizational culture, allocating resources, directing through policy and directive, and building consensus within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment which is marked by opportunities and threats.

Before expanding on the varying aspects of strategic leadership, it is important to differentiate between having the assigned title as "strategic leader" and being a "strategic leader." There are times when senior leaders will be granted the title of "strategic leader" because they work at the strategic level and have the responsibility to provide advice to senior leaders as part of their job. It's important to note that statistically, only one or two percent of the members of an organization will ever attain the strategic leader position. For further clarification of what defines a strategic leader, understanding the specific characteristics and abilities is necessary.

Although it is clear from the above description that shaping the future of an organization is essential to providing the best strategic leadership possible, there are three major focus areas that constitute the characteristics of strategic leadership.<sup>15</sup>

The first focus area is alignment. Alignment is the ability of the strategic leader to develop a vision, and then enable his organization to apply this vision to the best estimate of the future environment.<sup>16</sup> Because vision without resources is hallucination, it is crucial that the leader develops vision with the appropriate level of resources in mind.

The second characteristic of strategic leadership is visioning. Visioning is the ability to articulate a vision that is compelling to the organization.<sup>17</sup> Many scholars and strategic leaders view this as the most important of the three characteristics.

The third characteristic of strategic leadership is change. John Kotter explains this strategic leadership trait in his book *Leading Change*. According to both the Primer and Kotter's book, change involves three processes: unfreezing (stakeholders find current situation as unsuitable), changing (enacting the changes of the situation), and refreezing (make the changes a permanent aspect of the organization).

The final characteristic essential to a strategic leader is the strategic leadership team.<sup>18</sup> While the number of strategic leaders in an organization is few, there are many who serve on the staff that must be well-versed in strategic thinking in order to effectively carry out duties such as information gathering, assessment, and knowledge management.

In addition to the characteristics that are outlined above, strategic leaders must have certain competencies in order to be an effective strategic leader. The competencies that will be used to analyze General Krulak's decision making throughout his tenure as Commandant of the Marine Corps are envisioning the future, communications, and political and social competence. Through these three lenses, it is

clear that Krulak did well at each one of these competencies while effectively bringing all three into harmony in order to provide the best strategic leadership possible to the Marine Corps.

### Envisioning the Future

The first competency needed by military strategic leaders is the ability to envision the future. Defined as “the capability to formulate and articulate strategic aims and key concepts,”<sup>19</sup> this competency is essential to the development and future change of any organization. The application of this competency is through vision.

Vision is a leader-focused activity that provides identity, purpose and sense of direction.<sup>20</sup> Vision sets the tone for the future of an organization and is the first step in the development of the plans and strategies that are needed for change. Additionally, the characteristics of an effective vision are important to keeping an organization relevant.

The first characteristic of vision needed for an organization to remain relevant is feasibility.<sup>21</sup> Strategic leaders must be capable of convincing an organization to embrace the components of the vision and that every aspect is attainable in a logical time frame. Once this is accomplished, the organization will be able to set intermediate objectives that are required for the future changes needed to remain relevant.

The second characteristic is flexibility.<sup>22</sup> In order for an organization to gain and maintain relevancy, it must be able to adapt and develop creative business practices in relatively short period of time. Additionally, because of the social and environmental pressures that constantly force organizations to assess change, those who maintain a flexible vision will have a higher success rate of remaining relevant.

Shortly after Krulak assumed the duties of Commandant in 1995, he promulgated his vision to the Marine Corps. This vision statement began with a quote from the 82d Congress, some 45 years earlier, which he stated was a starting point for his vision:<sup>23</sup>

...[history] has fully demonstrated the vital need for the existence of a strong force in readiness. Such a force, versatile, fast-moving, and hard-hitting, will constantly have a very powerful impact in relation to minor international disturbances...Such a force can prevent the growth of potentially large conflagrations by prompt and vigorous action during their incipient stages...The nation's shock troops must be the most ready when the nation generally is least ready...to provide a balanced force in readiness for a naval campaign and, at the same time, a ground and air striking force ready to suppress or contain international disturbances short of large-scale war.

Krulak went on to outline his Commandant's vision and continued to reinforce throughout his tenure as Commandant, with two major elements in his vision.

The first element of Krulak's vision was to create a force of innovators and improvisers. Although Krulak stressed the importance of being prepared for the challenges and complexities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, he also reinforced that the Marine Corps must "equip the man" vice "man the equipment."

In 1990, Commandant of the Marine Corps General Alfred Grey, established the Marine Corps Gaming and Assessment Center in order to provide significant ties to the Marine Corps test units and joint development activities.<sup>24</sup> In October 1995, shortly after assuming the duties as Commandant, Krulak expanded upon the innovative investment by General Grey and activated the Marine Corps' experimentation unit: the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL).<sup>25</sup> Subordinate to the headquarters was the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Experimental (SPMAGTF-X). While the MCWL Headquarters addressed traditional higher headquarters responsibilities and interfaced with Headquarters Marine Corps and other senior external organizations, the



SPMAGTF-X interfaced with the operating forces and was responsible for executing experimental exercises. Although there was a higher headquarters and a MAGTF, both of these units were known as the “Warfighting Lab.” Krulak’s intent for this unit was to be an organization that embraced innovation and integrated technology that was available but not fielded in the Marine Corps. It also included new organizations, doctrinal concepts, training, and education in order to develop the way the Marine Corps will need to fight in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>26</sup> He demonstrated flexibility in his vision by reminding Marines of two points: first that there must be a balance struck between the schools of thoughts of “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” and “rest on your laurels.” The second point that he conveyed was to not be afraid of failure.<sup>27</sup> He would point out that early innovators in the Marine Corps, such as Major Earl Ellis and BGen Eli Cole, did not perfect amphibious operations and landing force doctrine on the first try and that there would be times that an experimentation force would need to reset its efforts.<sup>28</sup>

During the mid-1990s, the U.S. military was still discussing the lessons learned from the Desert Shield/Storm. Krulak sensed the stigma of this war and realized that he had to quickly move the Marine Corps into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. One way in which he conveyed his vision of the preparations for the next century’s war was by communicating the type of war that the Marine Corps would likely fight in the future and the type of Marine who would need to fight that war.

The type of war that Krulak described was the “Three Block War.”<sup>29</sup> This war would place enormous pressure on young Marines due to the diffusion of technology, a number of transnational factors, and increased globalization. This three block war consists of contingencies in which Marines will be confronted by the entire spectrum of

tactical challenges in the span of a few hours and within the space of a few contiguous city blocks.

When Marines deploy into urban areas today and in the future, they will need the flexibility to address a wide variety of crises. In one city block, a Marine will provide food, care, and comfort for an emaciated child. In the next block, you will see this Marine with outstretched arms, separating two warring tribes. Then, in the third city block, this same Marine will engage in intense house-to-house fighting with hostile forces.

Therefore, Marines must be prepared to engage in combat on one block, humanitarian assistance on another block, and peacekeeping operations on the third block. To provide a clear vision of the type of Marine needed to fight this future war, Krulak coined the term “Strategic Corporal.”

Krulak states that the individual Marine would be the most conspicuous symbol of American foreign policy in many cases during future wars and will potentially influence not only the immediate tactical situation, but the operational and strategic levels as well.<sup>30</sup> Because of these circumstances and the ubiquitous presence of the media on future battlefields, any young Marine at any given time could become a “Strategic Corporal.”

With a strong vision established that provided a clear image of the Marine Corps’ mission, the future battles, and the type of Marine that will be needed to fight that battle, Krulak used his exceptional communications skills to ensure that the Marine Corps understood his vision and what it would require to continue to provide relevancy of the Marine Corps in tomorrow’s battles.

### Communication

Communication is the most important strategic leader competency in the military. Effective communication consists of those messages rooted in the values and cultures

of an organization that are of significant importance.<sup>31</sup> When carried out effectively, the leader delivers the intended message which results in trust between the leader and his constituency.<sup>32</sup> General Krulak epitomized this competency and served as an example for all strategic leaders in the military to emulate. Although there are many types of leadership communication styles, the bottom line is that communication produces results.

Communication is the mechanism leaders use to ensure that everyone understands the issues and what needs to be accomplished in order to achieve the organization's goals.<sup>33</sup> To achieve these results, the message must prompt two actions by the organization.

First, the message must affirm organizational vision and a mission.<sup>34</sup> As with all effective messages, strategic leaders must consistently communicate the organization's goals and how to achieve them. For example, General Krulak's message to the Marine Corps in December 1996 encouraged all Marines to have the courage to communicate their innovative ideas through the chain of command. In addition to educating Marines about his vision concerning the nature of battles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, General Krulak insisted that they become proficient in these types of operations.

The second action that a message should produce is a drive towards transformational initiatives and change.<sup>35</sup> Because of the social and environmental forces that drive change, it is no longer acceptable for a military organization to be complacent. In order to keep an organization relevant, there must be a persistent effort to assess and implement evolutionary or revolutionary ideas in a proactive way.

Krulak's messages embraced these elements and were communicated to the Marine Corps in a variety of ways.

General Krulak uniquely crafted every aspect of his communications so that they synthesized his vision with the vision and mission of the Marine Corps and how the Marine Corps intended to execute this mission while embracing transformational initiatives. He communicated these elements of effective communications in numerous ways during his tenure as Commandant.

On a regular basis, General Krulak published speeches and interviews in professional periodicals. Through this means of communications, Krulak effectively conveyed his vision to transform the Marine Corps and remain relevant in future battles of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of his articles that serves as an example of this was an interview that was published in the November 1988 edition of *Sea Power*. In this article he articulated his vision of innovation and the type of Marine essential to win America's battles in the next century.<sup>36</sup> Krulak outlined the concept of Sea Dragon experiments and the importance of continuing to leverage operational training to exploit new technology. Krulak often challenged Marines to "ride the dragon" into the 21<sup>st</sup> century;<sup>37</sup> a phrase that caught on throughout the Marine Corps and served as a reminder for Marines to think about how future battles will be fought, and to embrace innovation. Krulak also published numerous articles in periodicals that reinforced his vision of innovation on the battlefield and preparing Marines to fight these future battles.

In August 1997 Krulak issued his Planning Guidance Frag Order. This same order was published in the October issue of the *Marine Corps Gazette*.<sup>38</sup> This document was designed to provide all Marines, and non-military people who serve in

the Marine Corps, a strategic direction that the Marine Corps would follow in building a force for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of the primary areas of this document describes Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS). In this article, Krulak described in detail what he envisioned as the strategic and operational environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Moreover, he described the operational concept of OMFTS and how this concept would shape future doctrine, training and education.<sup>39</sup> In addition to outlining the ways of achieving his vision, Krulak also instituted the means for accomplishing the ways.

In his article titled “*The Crucible: Building Warriors for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*,” Krulak discusses why he directed that the Crucible<sup>40</sup> be incorporated into the Recruit Training Program of Instruction, and how it serves as one of the pillars of transformation.<sup>41</sup> Krulak’s implementation of the this defining event in recruit training provided the means of reinforcing core values and team building, as well as prepare Marines for the operating environment they were likely to encounter.

General Krulak also demonstrated vision and innovation by providing all Marines with a way of making their voices heard at the highest levels in the chain of command. Shortly after assuming the office of Commandant in 1995, General Krulak established Marine Mail to encourage creativity throughout the Marine Corps.<sup>42</sup> For the first time, Marines, and those serving in the Marine Corps, had access to a revolutionary way of communicating their thoughts to the senior Marine in the Corps regarding technology, transformation, and other ways to improve Marine Corps innovation. This new way of contributing to the direction of the Marine Corps opened the door for transformation and feedback initiatives and is still operational today.

## Social and Political Competence

The ability to establish and maintain relationships is a technical competency that strategic leaders must understand and maintain in order to operate effectively in a multicultural environment.<sup>43</sup> Since strategic leaders will likely lead organizations composed of several cultures and subcultures, it is imperative that these cultures are understood in order to gain a full appreciation for subordinates.<sup>44</sup> Strategic leaders must also have an understanding of organizational systems, an appreciation of functional relationships outside the organization, and knowledge of the broader political and social systems within which the organization operates.<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, this competence enables the strategic leader to participate effectively with government interdepartmental processes to formulate and execute policy. Only through achievement of social and political competence can the strategic leader of an organization fully achieve his vision. Krulak recognized the importance of establishing bridges between individuals and organizations both internal and external to the Marine Corps. Moreover, his understanding of effectively communicating with congress and other law makers was essential to competently defending Marine Corps budget and policies.

General Krulak conveyed his vision in every aspect of his job, including his discussion with Senators regarding budget. During his testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in September 1998, Krulak eloquently communicated the dilemma of the overarching budget concerns.<sup>46</sup> He posited that, while the government works to maintain an adequate level of readiness under the current budget, the country may be mortgaging the capabilities of tomorrow's readiness. He went on to explain how the current readiness costs had come at the expense of investment in modernization, and stated that as leaders, the Marine Corps must "keep our eyes on the prize" of 21<sup>st</sup>

century warfighting capabilities.<sup>47</sup> Using a recent example of his point, Krulak cited that more than fifty percent of Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) engines required replacing over the past year during Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) deployment. This, along with other maintenance issues that surfaced, roughly cost \$309 million until the budget approved the next generation AAV: the Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle.

In addition to citing vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Krulak also based his words on his integrity and conviction for doing the right thing. One example that best illustrates this followed his receipt of a memo that was sent to the Joint Chiefs of Staff from Secretary of Defense Cohen during the Clinton Administration. The memo suggested that adultery should be removed as a punishable offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), along with a couple of caveats to the law.<sup>48</sup> Krulak replied to the Secretary of Defense that if this line of reasoning continued from the Secretary of Defense or the White House they would have his uniform in the morning. While some may disagree with his response, Krulak always remained true to his beliefs and stood by what was best for the Marine Corps regardless of the personal repercussions that he might have endured. While always proving effective with political competence, one could argue that Krulak excelled even more at social competence.

Recruiting proved to be an area where Krulak enjoyed exceptional success in terms of social competence. During the early 1990s when the United States was relishing the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, Krulak decided to raise the percentage of high-school graduates entering the Marine Corps from 90% to 95%.<sup>49</sup> The reason Krulak stated was “that we were going after the elite of the elite, and it paid off.”<sup>50</sup> During a time when the Navy and the Army had lowered the standard in the

percentage of high school graduates and failed to accomplish assigned contracting missions,<sup>51</sup> duplicating other services' policies would have been understandable. Instead, Krulak remained socially connected to young Americans and maintained a very keen awareness of what would attract them to military service.

Another example that illustrates Krulak's social competence was his decision to merge and move portions of his Headquarters Staff. In January 1996 he moved his office, the assistant commandant and other parts of his staff to the Pentagon. He also moved a portion of the Headquarters to Quantico, Virginia and Crystal City, Virginia.<sup>52</sup> After more than 50 years of having a consolidated headquarters, Krulak's vision to integrate staffs has facilitated communal bridges and effective communications throughout the interagency. The benefits of this move are evident today through the coordination that Aviation, Programs, and Resources are able to affect with their service counterparts. An additional efficiency provided by this relocation of key staff is the infusion of a persistent presence of the Marine Corps Judge Advocate, Director of Public Affairs, and the Commandant's personal staff within the Pentagon.

### Conclusion

The Primer states that strategic leadership is generally a team sport that requires a strategic leader led vision to balance the organization's strengths and weaknesses with the demands of the external environment. It was through General Krulak's synthesis of these three strategic leader competencies that the Marine Corps remained relevant while posturing itself for the battles of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

General Krulak's ability to synthesize these competencies serves as a roadmap for future strategic leaders to follow. Regardless of branch of service or type of corporation, the synergy created by these competencies provides the foundation for a



relevant and innovative military. Envisioning the future is one of the most important military competencies. General Krulak demonstrated how a leader must delicately balance anticipated requirements with the ability to provide the necessary resources. Second, there must be a message that reinforces this vision while also providing the inspiration for the team to pursue innovation. Thirdly, the strategic leader must demonstrate social and political competence in order to understand numerous cultures and subcultures, as well as navigate complex social hurdles that are prevalent in government and other large bureaucratic environments.

It would have been easy for Krulak to remain content with addressing the challenges of the 1990s. Instead, he took on the challenges of implementing vision and subsequent difficult decisions that would prove crucial to building a relevant Marine Corps for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Krulak's unique ability to embrace innovation and establish an experimental environment throughout the Marine Corps set the tone for other leaders in the Marine Corps to follow suit. This innovation continues as a key attribute of the Marine Corps. Krulak reinforced his innovative vision with a masterful ability to communicate and his adept communications skills moved the Marine Corps towards innovation. His ideas engendered the transformational initiatives that the entire Marine Corps embraced. Although Krulak was faced with competing interests within a multicultural defense department environment, he successfully achieved his mission of transformation by skillfully developing and maintaining social and political competence.

Krulak's strategic vision and ability to successfully implement transformational initiatives across the Marine Corps prepared the Marine Corps for battles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. During Operation Iraqi Freedom U.S. forces immediately found themselves

engaged in city fighting and in an environment that reflected Krulak's three block war concept—proof of his strategic vision and innovation.

From his most early days Krulak was always awed by the character of the Marine Corps and inspired by the passion and sacrifices of men such as his father, Victor Krulak.<sup>53</sup> General Krulak often wondered about the source of pride and selflessness of some of his father's friends, such as "Howlin Mad" Smith and Lemuel Shepherd who would often join his family for a meal or visit.<sup>54</sup> At the end of Krulak's tour as the Commandant of the Marine Corps, he stated that the words of his father ring just as true today as when he wrote them over 50 years ago:

We exist today – we flourish today – not because of what we know we are, or what we know we can do, but because of what the grassroots of our country believes we are and believes we can do...The American people believe that Marines are downright good for the country; that the Marines are masters of a form of unfailing alchemy which converts unoriented youths into proud, self-reliant stable citizens – citizens into whose hands the nation's affairs may safely be entrusted...And, likewise, should the people ever lose that conviction – as a result of our failure to meet their high – almost spiritual – standards, the Marine Corps will quickly disappear.<sup>55</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Crucible is the defining event during Marine Corps recruit training that requires recruits to endure a 52 hour field evolution the week prior to graduation.

<sup>2</sup> The "Three Block War" was coined by General Krulak during his tenure as Commandant of the Marine Corps. It represents the three missions that Marines should be prepared for: warfighting on one block, humanitarian assistance on the second block, followed by peace keeping operations on the third block.

<sup>3</sup> Victor Krulak retired from the Marine Corps as a Lieutenant General in 1968.

<sup>4</sup>General Charles C. Krulak, *Statement of General Charles C. Krulak Commandant of the Marine Corps Before The Senate Armed Services Committee Acquisition and Technology Subcommittee 15 March 1996 Concerning Emerging Battlefield Concepts For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Washington, D.C: Senate Armed Services Committee).

<sup>5</sup> Len Marrella, *In Search of Ethics: Conversations with Men and Women of Character* (Sanford, FL: DC Press, 2005), 119-138.

<sup>6</sup> Krulak, *Statement of General Charles C. Krulak Commandant of the Marine Corps Before The Senate Armed Services Committee Acquisition and Technology Subcommittee 15 March 1996 Concerning Emerging Battlefield Concepts For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

<sup>7</sup> Len Marrella, *In Search of Ethics: Conversations with Men and Women of Character* (Sanford, FL: DC Press, 2005), 119-138.

<sup>8</sup> Coleman R.D., *Recruiting the Strategic Corporal*, Strategic Research Project (Quantico, VA: U.S. Marine Corps War College, March 20, 2008), 15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Marrella, *In Search of Ethics: Conversations with Men and Women of Character*, 119-138.

<sup>11</sup> This rose garden quote from General Chapman would go on to serve as a very popular recruiting slogan on Marine Corps recruiting posters.

<sup>12</sup> Coleman, *Recruiting the Strategic Recruiting*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Krulak, *Statement of General Charles C. Krulak Commandant of the Marine Corps Before The Senate Armed Services Committee Acquisition and Technology Subcommittee 15 March 1996 Concerning Emerging Battlefield Concepts For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

<sup>14</sup> Charles C. Krulak, "A Matter of Strategic Focus," *Airpower Journal* (Spring 1997): 1.

<sup>15</sup> Colonel (Ret) Stephen J. Gerras, *Strategic Leadership Primer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Army War College, 2010), 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School, 1996), 72.

<sup>22</sup> Gerras, *Strategic Leadership Primer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College*, 31.

<sup>23</sup> Charles C. Krulak, "A Marine Corps for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Marine Corps Gazette* (August 1995): 12.

<sup>24</sup> Allan R. Millett and Jack Shulimson, *Commandants of the Marine Corps* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 13-16.

<sup>25</sup> Charles C. Krulak, "Innovation, the Warfighting Laboratory, Sea Dragon, and the Fleet Marine," *Marine Corps Gazette* (December 1996): 14.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> William Berris served with the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory from June 1996 until June 1998. He briefed General Krulak on two different occasions and heard firsthand the guidance provided by Krulak.

<sup>28</sup> Krulak, "Innovation, the Warfighting Laboratory, Sea Dragon, and the Fleet Marine," 21.

<sup>29</sup> Charles C. Krulak, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War," *Marine Corps Gazette* (June 1999): 20.

<sup>30</sup> Krulak, "The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War," 22.

<sup>31</sup> John Baldoni, *Great Communications Secrets of Great Leaders* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>36</sup> Charles C. Krulak, "A Defining Moment in Marine Corps History," *Sea Power* (November 1998): 11-13.

<sup>37</sup> While serving with Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, this phrase was often used among the Warfighting Lab and the operating forces conducting the experimental exercise. General Krulak would also reinforce the essence of this phrase when he would visit an experimental exercise site.

<sup>38</sup> Charles C. Krulak, "Embracing Innovation," *Marine Corps Gazette* (January 1996): 1-7.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>40</sup> The Crucible is the defining event of training at both Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and Parris Island. It's a 52 hour event that is conducted in a field environment and consists of several team challenges. Once a recruit has successfully accomplished the Crucible, he/she will earn the title "Marine" prior to finishing the last week of recruit training.

<sup>41</sup> The four pillars of Marine Corps transformation are: recruiting, recruit training, cohesion, and sustainment.

<sup>42</sup> *The United States Marine Corps Home Page*, <http://www.usmc.mil/news> (accessed October 15, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Baldoni, *Great Communications Secrets of Great Leaders*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Gerras, *Strategic Leadership Primer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College*, 32.

<sup>45</sup> Gerras, *Strategic Leadership Primer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, United States Army War College*, 49.

<sup>46</sup> General Charles C. Krulak, *Statement of General Charles C. Krulak Commandant of the Marine Corps Before The Senate Armed Services Committee September 29 1998 Concerning Posture* (Washington, D.C: Senate Armed Services Committee).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Marrella, *In Search of Ethics: Conversations with Men and Women of Character*, 123.

<sup>49</sup> Major Coleman interview with Krulak April 1999

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, interview by Coleman

<sup>51</sup> Coleman, *Recruiting the Strategic Recruiting*, 18.

<sup>52</sup> Millett and Shulimson, *Commandants of the Marine Corps*, 13.

<sup>53</sup> Charles C. Krulak, "A Farewell to the Corps," *Marine Corps Gazette* (June 1999): 16.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 17.

