

An Argument for the Foreign Internal Defense-MAGTF  
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The Administration's strategy for addressing regional conflicts includes three levels of engagement: conflict prevention and resolution; conflict intervention; and post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

With its history of innovation, ability to sustain a forward deployed global presence at sea, and inherent joint interoperability the Marine Corps is suited to be the United States Governments' leading Department of Defense (DoD) organization in conducting foreign internal defense (FID)<sup>2</sup>.

### **The Changing World and "The Long War"**

The nature of warfare has not changed. It remains, according to MCDP 1, "a violent struggle of irreconcilable wills, each trying to impose itself on the other"<sup>3</sup>. The United States is now fully engaged in a world where the participants and the definitions of victory of war are changing. "The Long War,"<sup>4</sup> a phrase coined recently by General James Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, is characterized by action taken across all lines of operation by state and non-state actors who

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<sup>1</sup> *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (President George W. Bush, March, 2006) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/sectionI.html>

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Internal Defense. The 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. (Joint Publication 3-07.1, 30 April, 2004) I-1.

<sup>3</sup> *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1 Warfighting* (U.S. Government, Secretary of the Navy, June, 1997) 3.

<sup>4</sup> News Transcript from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Presented by the Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James Conway, 5 December 2007) <http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=4101>

rarely adhere to the conventional methods of warfare, as well as Law of Land Warfare. United State's military dominance, globalism, and instability of countries and regions of the world make wars of insurgency an enemy's preferred method of imposing will on populations by non-state actors.

In this long war, the definition of victory is a legitimate government's ability to provide security and address grievances of a population rather than imposing its will on them. In the type of warfare the United States now faces, a new focus has emerged on aiding governments and protecting a nation's stability; ultimately protecting regional stability itself. According to the National Security Strategy of the United States, "Regional conflicts do not stay isolated for long and often spread or devolve into humanitarian tragedy or anarchy ...This means that even if the United States does not have a direct stake in a particular conflict, our interests are likely to be affected over time"<sup>5</sup>

The Navy and Marine Corps, by their very nature, are connected with the seas and littorals of the world. As presented in the Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower<sup>6</sup>:

- 90% of the world's commerce travels by sea.

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<sup>5</sup> *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (President George W. Bush, March, 2006) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/sectionIV.html>

<sup>6</sup> *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* (Department of the Navy, 17 October, 2007) 2.

- The vast majority of the world's population lives within a few hundred miles of the oceans.
- Nearly three-quarters of the planet is covered by water.
- United States' seapower will be globally postured to protect our homeland and citizens from direct attack and advance our interests around the world.

The Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower highlights the importance of the sea and littorals, but more importantly gives insight for where the Navy-Marine Corps team will be postured. This puts the Navy-Marine Corps team in a unique position within the United States Government to be the leader in effecting our Nations Security Strategy.

### **The Method**

While being ashore in unstable countries is rarely difficult for U.S. military forces, doing so can become a catalyst to a failing government. The Navy-Marine Corps team possesses a unique capability, and opportunity, to exploit the littoral environment with its ability to seabase, task organize, and provide a sustained forward presence, as outlined in the 2006 Naval Operations Concept<sup>7</sup>. To affect the Nation's Security Strategy, the Marine Corps, in partnership with the Navy, can

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<sup>7</sup> 2006 *Naval Operations Concept*, (U. S. Department of the Navy, 2006 Washington D.C.)

provide a scalable, forward-deployed presence to each region with a focus on foreign internal defense (FID) and Security Cooperation. This concept is already a reality for Marine Corps planners with the Security Cooperation-Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SC-MAGTF)<sup>8</sup>. The innovation, capability, and adaptability, the Marine Corps possesses is the chief argument for placing the U.S. Marine Corps as the lead agency to act along the three levels of engagement; conflict prevention and resolution, conflict intervention, and post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction<sup>9</sup>. The success of the standing Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU) demonstrates how the Marine Corps already has the lead as the nation crisis response force. This new MAGTF would become the nations leading force for persistent shaping of regional security.

The United States Government could employ this standing Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) with other United States Government agencies (such as the Department of State) already integrated for stability assistance, combat operations planning, command and control framework, and the required military civic actions. It would be a forward deployed and habitual MAGTF that would not only conduct the above responsibilities, but also be responsible for the coordination and integration with: the host

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<sup>8</sup> "Send in the Marines, A Concept for Employment of the Naval Operations Concept" (Plans Policies and Operations Division, June 2007) PowerPoint Brief.

<sup>9</sup> *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (President George W. Bush , March, 2006) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/sectionIV.html>.

nation, joint and combined forces, International Organizations (IO), Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), and United States Government agencies. Captain David Cooper observes in his article "The military is in a unique position with its logistics, communication, security, and manpower assets to make interagency happen."<sup>10</sup> This type of MAGTF will provide that capability to the United States for synchronizing actions of multiple agencies and militaries in a region or country.

Conceptually this MAGTF could perform functions like a Civil Military Operation Center, acting as a place to coordinate, communicate and unify action to achieve shared goals with those whose interest is like that of the United States; regional stability and security. The SC-MAGTF would not take the place of the Department of State's country team, but rather, it would augment it with vital capabilities to integrate multiple agencies and actions that take place along lines of operation that are outside the influence of the country team while still being unified under a single supporting or supported commander. This concept is similar to an Information Operations Cell, which does not have tasking authority over units, but coordinates and synchronizes actions of others in a MAGTF to achieve the higher objective with unified action.

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<sup>10</sup> Captain David E. Cooper, *An Organizational Model for Marines Fighting an Insurgency* (Marine Corps Gazette, 2007), 49.

Being ashore may be required for certain situations and only in limited durations, this MAGTF would be based at sea, acting in the littorals of countries and regions where the Department of State does not have a standing influence or where security would prohibit a shore based presence. Typically it is these "hotspots" that require the greatest focus of effort. This capability only offered by the Navy-Marine Corps team would provide a limited capability organically but would offer the skeleton of command and control assets for greater military, diplomatic, economic, and informational structure depending on the need and level of engagement.

### **The Marine Corps Out Front**

Traditionally, the Marine Corps has been innovative, particularly when developing new warfighting concepts. General Victor Krulak points out, "The Marines' combatant function was and is unique. Nobody has ever been interested in providing the necessary operating techniques...so they had to do it themselves."<sup>11</sup> When faced with different or evolving styles of warfare. A few historical examples are:

-Close Air Support during the Banana Wars

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<sup>11</sup> Victor H. Krulak, Lieutenant General USMC (Ret.), First to Fight: An inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps (Annapolis MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984) 67.



- The development of Amphibious Doctrine prior to and during World War II
- Combined Action Platoons of Vietnam
- Maneuver Warfare, Sea basing and Operational Maneuver from the Sea<sup>12</sup>

Again, the Marine Corps is challenged by the style of warfare being waged against the United States. Again, the Marine Corps is prepared to lead the nation in an innovative way to fight this evolving style of warfare.

Conducting FID is not a task that can be performed solely by the Marine Corps, however the Marine Corps is ideally suited to lead off and provide the framework for this type of action. Every MAGTF is designed to provide the capability of a Joint Operations Center and because of this is perfectly suited to adapt with a follow-on Joint Task Force (JTF) with the desired capabilities or the next task organized size MAGTF. The dynamics of the conflicts we face require that level of adaptability and flexibility. Opponents would argue that the Marine Corps does not have the force size or capability to perform this type of global FID.

The counter argument is that the Marine Corps, along with our sister service Navy, are already doing this type of action but it is not structured and currently has forces bogged down

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<sup>12</sup> Krulak, 69.

campaigning in Iraq to do it efficiently. The Navy-Marine Corps goes from conflict and crisis across the globe facing a world and enemy that is consistently inside our decision loop, making it difficult for the United States to get ahead and conduct the shaping actions required to give nations and states the ability to implement their own plan for defense and development.

Tactically, the Marine Corps has units that are capable of acting across different warfighting disciplines depending on the phase of the conflict. Whether it is an Artillery Battery establishing a CMOC, or a Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company Supporting Arms Liaison Team (ANGLICO SALT) providing Fire support for a combined force or training the supported nation, or a Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team (FAST) Company enhancing security at a tactical point until an essential service is restored and then turn to training the host nations security force in security operations. This is the vision for the Security Cooperation-MAGTF<sup>13</sup>

The shifting focus of the Marine Corps in Iraq, to being our nation's forward deployed force in readiness, with the increased force size to 202 thousand would permit the Marine Corps the Structure, to employ this concept of a U.S. Government/USMC FID-SC MAGTF, quicker than any other service. It

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<sup>13</sup> "Send in the Marines, A Concept for Employment of the Naval Operations Concept" Plans Policies and Operations Division, June 2007

would also bring Navy-Marine Corps Forward presence online in parallel to the Navy's 2006 Operating Concept<sup>14</sup> and the Maritime Strategy<sup>15</sup>.

The Marine Corps' strength and future in performing this is not its organic capability but its ability to unify our nation's capabilities and services across all lines of operation.

### **Commitment, A Course Of action**

For this MAGTF to be successful the Department of Defense must commit to making this interagency MAGTF an enduring effort, much like Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) and Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESGs), These units are standing forces whose presence is a matter of national security and international stability so to would be this MAGTF.

There will inevitably be a time when forward deployed presence and security cooperation will be called into question as to its utility; much like the Marine Corps' existence has been called into question. As stated in the new Maritime Strategy, "Trust and cooperation cannot be surged. They must be built over time so that the strategic interests of the participants are continuously considered while mutual

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<sup>14</sup> Department of the Navy, *Naval Operations Concept*, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* (Department of the Navy, 17 October, 2007) 1.

understanding and respect are promoted."<sup>16</sup> Commitment to this standing force would not eliminate conflict, lawlessness or subversion but would give the ability to the United States to decide and act faster than belligerent non-state actors or third-state sponsored adversaries. Also, as shown recently from the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ability to adapt is a substantial advantage that would be enhanced by a forward persistent presence.

Additionally, a long-standing element sends a message to would-be allies and enemies of the United States that it is committed to its goals, as well as gives the United States legitimacy, another powerful weapon in fighting instability and subversion.

### **Conclusion**

The charge of the Marine Corps is being ready when the nation is least ready. One of the greatest ways of fulfilling this charge is to fight wars before they can begin. The Marine Corps, along with the Navy, is by nature, postured forward to protect the nation's interest and security from the sea. The Marine Corps is already developing and implementing itself to be the nations force in readiness and action in the long war, it

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<sup>16</sup> *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* (Department of the Navy, 17 October, 2007) 11.

possesses the capability and characteristics to perform in the littorals and expeditionary environments while integrating the other services and agencies. It should be the lead in doing so within the Department of Defense and along with the other departments of the U.S. Government.

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