

Building a Corps for the 21st Century

A National Force-in-Readiness

By Gen Charles C. Krulak, USMC, Commandant of the Marine Corps

In 1952, the 82nd Congress, armed with fresh memories of near disaster in the opening days of the Korean War, wrote into law the Marine Corps' role in our national security.

"American history, recent as well as remote, has fully demonstrated the vital need for the existence of a strong force-in-readiness. Such a force, versatile, fast-moving, and hard-hitting...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 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."

For the past 46 years, the Marine Corps has been that force-in-readiness—in peace and in war. The task before us is to remain so for the future. In this era of evolving national security interests, it is essential that we, as that "force-in-readiness," anticipate and adapt to changes looming on the horizon. In this light, allow me to describe to you the strategic

environment I see looming off our nation's bow, and what the Corps is doing to make sure we are ready for it.

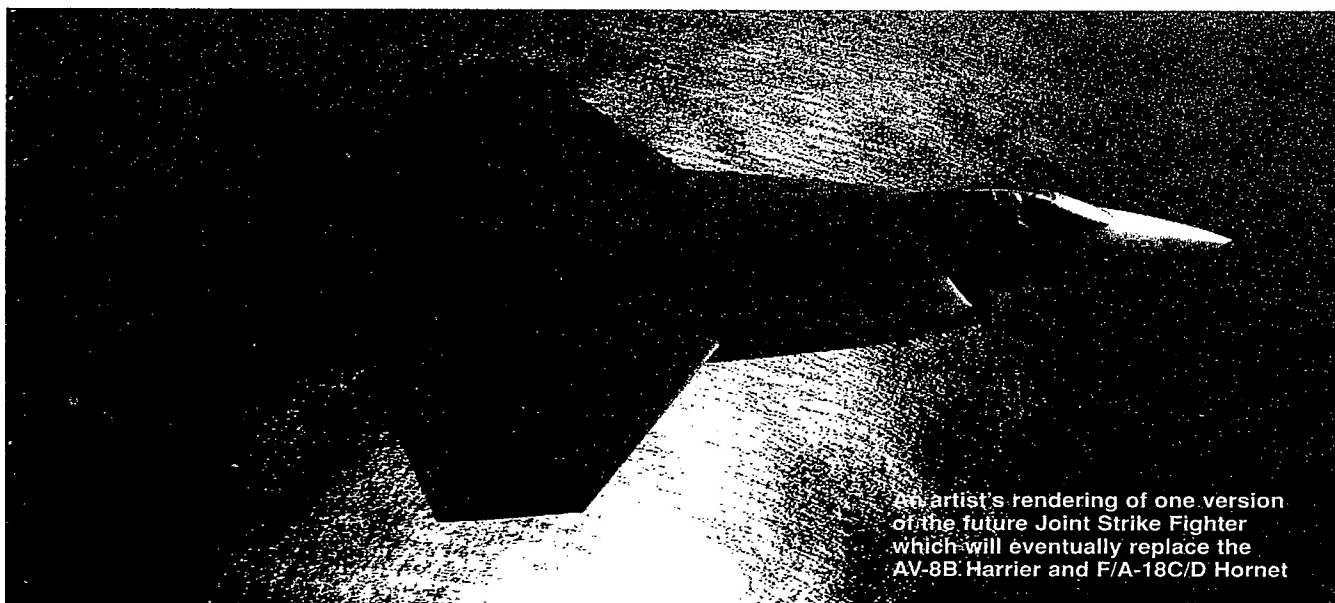
Preparing for an Uncertain Future

The 21st century battlefield will be vastly different than those we faced during the Cold War. The battlefield will move from open, rural terrain to crowded third-world urban slums, where our Marines will face chaotic, multidimensional and often highly lethal combat. This is the landscape upon which the 21st century battle will be fought. It will be an asymmetrical battlefield. Our enemies will not allow us to fight the "Son of Desert Storm," but will try to draw us into a fight on their own terms, more

resembling the "Stepchild of Chechnya." In one moment in time, our Marines will be feeding and clothing displaced refugees and providing humanitarian assistance. In the next moment, they will be holding two warring tribes apart, conducting peacekeeping operations, and, finally, they will be fighting a highly lethal mid-intensity battle, all on the same day, all within three city blocks. We call this the "three-block war." In this environment, conventional doctrine and organizations may mean very little. It is an environment born of change and adaptability. It will also be an age born of advanced technology and weapons that are readily available to friend and foe alike.

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 80 percent of the world's capital cities and nearly all of the market places for international trade. Because of

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An artist's rendering of one version of the future Joint Strike Fighter which will eventually replace the AV-8B Harrier and F/A-18C/D Hornet

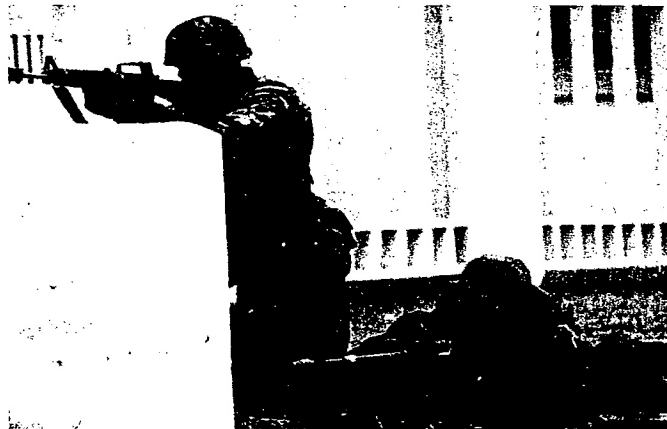
this, littorals are also the place where most of the world's important conflicts are likely to occur.

In recognition of this changing security environment, the Navy and Marine Corps revised its strategic direction with the publication of "...From the Sea" in 1992 and "Forward...From the Sea" in 1994. These two documents frame the Navy-Marine Corps vision. The Marine Corps will execute this vision using the operational concept, "Operational Maneuver From the Sea" (OMFTS)—published in January 1996. The heart of OMFTS is the maneuver of naval expeditionary forces at the operational level of warfare to exploit enemy weakness and deliver a decisive blow. It combines high technology with maneuver warfare and is enabled by the advantages of seabasing. These forward-looking responses to evolving world events are designed to ensure naval forces maintain superior capabilities in the projection of decisive power and influence ashore...from the sea...across the spectrum of peace, crisis and war into the 21st century.

In order to create the agile, adaptable, combined-arms force the nation will need in the 21st century, the Marine Corps is focusing on three areas. We are enhancing the individual Marine; we are modernizing with advanced technologies; and we are institutionalizing our commitment to innovative change.

Enhancing the Individual Marine

Our number one modernization and product improvement program will continue to be *the individual Marine*. The



Urban operations will continue to require unique and demanding training for tomorrow's Marines.

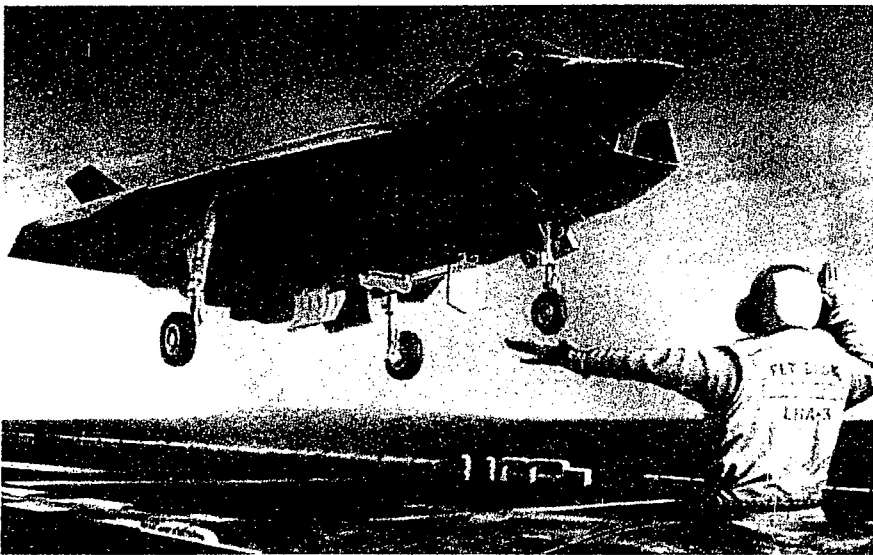
Marine Corps knows that it is people, not machines, who ultimately determine our success in peace and in war. Accordingly, we will equip our Marines, not man our equipment. The cornerstone upon which we will build our force-in-readiness is the world's finest military professional: the United States Marine—a disciplined, motivated and dedicated warrior. On tomorrow's battlefield our junior enlisted Marines will have access to, and use, more information than a battalion commander does today. To prevail on the future chaotic battlefield our Marines must be imbued with the values that have served us well throughout our history. All Marines, enlisted and commissioned, junior and senior, will be educated to act intelligently and independently, trained to seek responsibility and expected to act with boldness and individual initiative. Our Marines must be improvisers, innovators and, above all, team players. Regardless of special-

ty, all Marines will be trained first as riflemen, able to defend themselves and their units. We will forge these highly capable individuals into flexible yet unbreakable teams and into a single cohesive Marine Corps, embodying our unique esprit.

Transformation: We have preserved the tried and true method of making Marines—high standards, tough recruit training and instilling the ethos of selflessness in each recruit. Yet, at the same time, we need to ensure our methods accommodate the requirements of the 21st century battlefield, a battle where the actions of a 19-year-old Marine not only will have tactical and operational significance, but possibly strategic as well. To fight and win the three-block war will demand men and women who are not only warriors without peer, but are uncompromising in judgment and character. That is why we developed the process we call "Transformation."



The Corps is focusing on enhancing the individual Marine, modernizing with advanced technology and institutionalizing its commitment to innovative change.



While aggressively acquiring advanced technology like the Joint Strike Fighter (above) or revamping amphibious war-fighting strategies (below), Marine leaders know it is people, like the recruit pictured at right, not machines, who ultimately determine success in peace and war.



The first step in the transformation process is to recruit the finest young men and women the nation has to offer. Once at the recruit depot, our drill instructors instill in each recruit the self-discipline, core values and ethos of the Corps. Male and female recruits undergo the same training programs—but separately. We believe that the cultural change from civilian to Marine is best accomplished by training our male and female recruits separately, integrating them once they get to Marine Combat Training (MCT). The goal is to transform these individuals from many diverse backgrounds into Marines imbued with a common set of values and standards. We know we cannot re-engineer the value system of an 18-year-old, but we do believe we can teach them our Marine values, then hold them accountable for meeting those values and for maintaining our high standards. The culmination of recruit training is the “Crucible.” The Crucible is 54 hours of mental, physical and moral challenges exacerbated by food and sleep deprivation. It is designed to build team integrity and strengthen unit cohesion. It is a defining moment which takes these young recruits and moves them beyond self-discipline into selflessness.

Upon graduating from recruit training, Marines are assigned to teams based upon their military occupational specialty (MOS). Once grouped, Marines attend either the School of Infantry (SOI) or MCT and then their follow-on occupational school. They are then assigned together to a unit and remain with that unit for their entire first enlistment—further strengthening the now well-established bond. For the rest of their time in the Corps, these values and bonds are reinforced through training at our service schools and nonresident courses of study.

The objective of the transformation process is to develop Marines who are stronger, smarter, more capable and have the maturity and flexibility of mind and body to meet the challenges of the future battlefield. An added benefit of this transformation process is that it serves to reinforce the traditional American work ethic and dedication to the team. Therefore, upon completion of military service, these Marines will return to society as more responsible and productive citizens.

Education: Safely navigating from the Marine Corps of today to the Marine Corps needed in the 21st century demands creative and innovative leadership. To ensure we retain an adaptive and flexible force capable of winning when committed, we must educate our

Marines so that they have the intellectual agility essential for combat decision making. Therefore, it is imperative that we extend our education initiatives to all Marines—not just a select few. To support these objectives, Distance Learning Centers have been implemented, each employing the latest information technologies. These include the Navy's Program for Afloat College Education (PACE), the Marine Corps' Satellite Education Network (MCSEN) and the Military Academic Skills Program. Further, we are exploring a variety of advanced technologies for developing and delivering learning products just in time, when and where they are most needed. In the near future, Marines can expect to use the Internet and intranets, Learning Resource Centers (LRC), Interactive Multimedia Instruction (IMI), Video Tele-Training (VTT), and Embedded Training (ET) to learn and master new skills.

Training: Marine Corps training has always focused on winning in combat. However, the complexity and speed of combat operations on the decentralized, lethal, urban battlefield of the 21st century mandates that we improve the standard and efficiency of our training. The Marine Corps has aggressively instituted new and improved training programs during the last two years. We have added the Crucible to recruit training; we improved the syllabus at MCT and the SOI; the MAGTF Staff Training Program (MSTP) is giving our warfighting staff the training they need to fight their MAGTFs more effectively; the Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One (MAWTS-1) is developing the aviation tactics we will need to support the MAGTF in the 21st century; and we have a new Marine Aviation Campaign Plan (MACP) that improves how we train in aviation. Additionally, the Marine Corps is applying new concepts and technologies in modeling to develop the simulators and simulations that will make our training as realistic as possible.

Aggressive Modernization

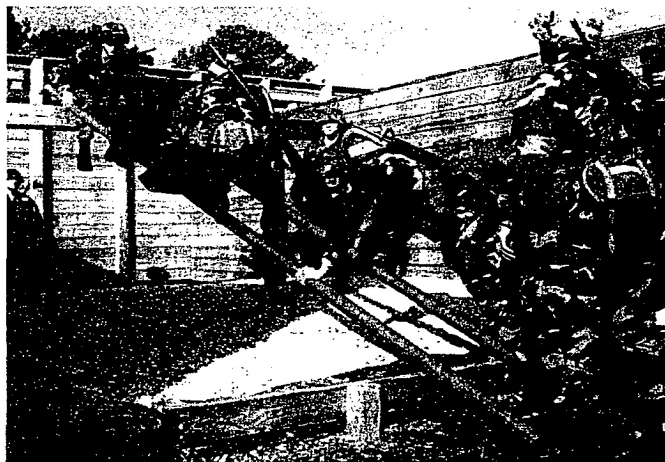
The Marine Corps is aggressively modernizing our forces to enhance our ability to conduct OMFTS. Toward this end, the Marine Corps, with the Navy, is developing and procuring several key programs which will enhance our ability to fight on the 21st century battlefield. These efforts include:

MV-22 Osprey: OMFTS requires the projection of land forces deep into the enemy's interior from over the horizon. The Marine Corps' current medium-lift

helicopter, the CH-46, lacks the range to accomplish this mission. The MV-22 allows Marine forces to penetrate the entire operational depth of our opponents, thus exploiting their vulnerabilities. Our opponents will know that wherever they try to maneuver, they will be in range of MV-22 transported ground forces.

Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAAV): The over-the-horizon (OTH) assault was developed by the Navy and Marine Corps to complicate

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In all training, leaders will emphasize intellectual agility that's essential for combat decision making.

enemy defenses, to exploit weaknesses and to improve the survivability of Navy ships. The AAAV's unique capabilities include (1) over three times the water speed of the current AAV7A1, (2) nearly twice the armor protection of the current AAV7A1 (already enhanced by appliqué armor), (3) the ability to defeat future threat light armored vehicles, (4) land mobility equal to or greater than the M-1A1 tank, (5) lift and carrying capacity for a reinforced rifle squad and (6) the only combat vehicle system for infantry in the U.S. inventory that provides NBC protection for both the crew and embarked personnel.

The ability of the AAAV to rapidly transition from sea to land operations gives the Marine Corps a tremendous increase in its ability to apply force

throughout the depth of the battlespace. Together with the MV-22 and the existing landing craft air cushion (LCAC), the AAAV completes the mobility triad necessary for the execution of OMFTS. Each component of the triad is critical because together they provide the Corps with offense in depth which will be difficult for opponents to counter.

Amphibious Shipping: Adequate, state-of-the-art, amphibious shipping is essential to the prosecution of OMFTS. The current modernization plan enables the formation of 12 amphibious ready groups to meet forward presence, contingency and warfighting requirements. This program will provide the most modern over-the-horizon launch and recovery platforms for the MV-22, the AAAV, the LCAC and the short takeoff and vertical-landing (STOVL) variant of the Joint Strike Fighter—all of which are critical to execution of OMFTS. Sea-basing also provides protection to the land force, for it reduces the vulnerabilities associated

with large logistics footprints ashore.

Joint Strike Fighter (JSF): The JSF program will provide the Marine Corps the next generation aircraft, replacing the AV-8B and F/A-18C/D with a single STOVL platform. It will solve our TACAIR age and attrition problems and meet Marine aviation's goal to neck-down to a single type of fixed-wing aircraft. But more importantly, it will provide the Marine Corps with a superior performance, stealthy, state-of-the-art technology, multimission jet aircraft that can operate with full mission loads from amphibious class ships or austere expeditionary airfields. This blend of stealth, superior performance and basing flexibility will enable the ASTOVL JSF to perform a broad range of OMFTS missions. They include escorting the MV-22,



With the MV-22 Osprey Marines will be able to expand their combat punch deep into enemy lines from over the horizon.

striking critical deep targets, providing armed reconnaissance and close-air-support, suppressing enemy air defenses and conducting active air defense missions. With the ASTOVL JSF, Marine aviators will be able to support the full range of OMFTS mission profiles, providing Marine ground forces with the precise and timely fire support they will need on the 21st century battlefield.

To maintain the Marine Corps force-in-readiness responsibilities, Marine aviation must sustain the capabilities of its legacy aircraft until they are replaced in accordance with our long-standing neck-down strategy. The Marine Aviation Campaign Plan provides this blueprint for finding new ways to bring together technology, increased manning and sustainable operational tempo to make Marine aviation units more robust. It provides a bridge to the 21st century when STOVL JSF, MV-22, 4BN/BW and KC-130J will be the backbone of the Marine aviation combat element (ACE).

Marine Enhancement Program (MEP): This program is geared toward developing more lethal infantry weapons and improved field equipment for the individual Marine. Enhanced survivability, reduced fatigue and greater lethality are all MEP objectives, particularly in unpredictable weather and terrain conditions. Specific items of equipment under this program include an improved infantry combat boot; Gore-Tex parkas and trousers; a Gore-Tex bivvy sack; a vapor-permeable, lightweight, shelter system as a replacement for canvas tents; an integrated load-bearing vest and modular pack system with quick release and

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drink-on-the-move capability; and a new family of body armor. Other new individual equipment includes improved navigational aids and night vision devices.

Institutionalizing Reform

Preparing the Marine Corps for the 21st century requires far more than recruiting and training the best America

has to offer and modernizing our equipment—it requires an institutional commitment to change. The accelerating rate of change in our operating environment requires us to continually anticipate this change and stay in front of it. Just laminating technology on current doctrine and equipment will not suffice. We have begun this journey by institutionalizing the process by which new and promising concepts are invented, tested and transformed into innovative capabilities to meet the demands of future conflict.

Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory: In October 1995, we stood up the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL) at Quantico, Va. This laboratory serves as the conduit for operational reform in our Corps. It is investigating new and potential technologies and evaluating their impact on our doctrine and

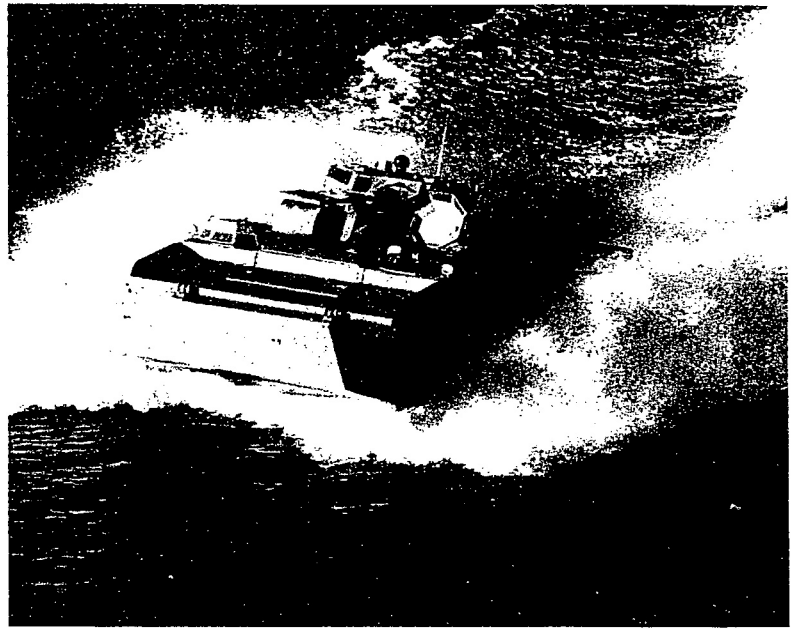


A new Aviation Campaign Plan provides the blueprint to make aviation units more robust.



Above: Recruit training is more demanding than ever before.

Right: The high-speed Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle will enter the fleet in 2004.



on how we organize, train, and equip to fight in the future. The MCWL is the vehicle that will help us build a Corps for the 21st century.

Sea Dragon: "Sea Dragon" is the Marine Corps name for the MCWL's open process of exploitation and development of new concepts, tactics, techniques and procedures. Sea Dragon is not one particular innovation or idea, but rather a commitment to innovation. It derives from an Oriental metaphor for how to aggressively adapt to change. It energizes and encourages challenges to the "business as usual" approach. It is a process of concept development and experimentation that seeks to build on existing strengths to create new and competitive advantages in future combat. It encompasses inquiries into multiple technology and warfighting areas, including fires, biological/chemical defense, command and control, nonlethal weapons and technology, expeditionary logistics and advanced training and education techniques. These core areas enable the Marine Corps to interface with and leverage similar organizations within DOD, universities and private industry.

In February 1997, the MCWL conducted the first of three advanced warfighting experiments at Twentynine Palms, Calif. This initial effort was called Hunter Warrior and was designed to see if a light, combined-arms force, such as a Marine expeditionary unit (MEU), could seize the initiative from a superior force when supported by organic air and long-range precision weapons. We had some spectacular successes, and we also had some failures. The concepts,

organizations, tactics and equipment identified during the Hunter Warrior Advanced Warfighting Experiment (AWE) have been fed into our Combat Development System for institutional testing, development and possible procurement and implementation.

Our next Advanced Warfighting Experiment—Urban Warrior—is in progress now. Throughout modern history, we have consciously avoided fighting in urban areas. But by 2010, over 70 percent of the world's population will live in urban areas, and most of these are within 300 miles of a coastline along the world's littorals. Conventional forces are not currently designed, equipped or adequately trained to fight in urban environments. That is exactly why our future opponents will take the fight to the cities. They will attack us asymmetricaly, pitting their strengths against our weaknesses. They saw what our conventional forces and technology did to the Iraqis in Desert Storm. They also saw our Achilles heel in Somalia. Therefore, it is highly likely that our enemies will challenge us in the cities, and the United States Marine Corps, the nation's force-in-readiness, will be ready. Urban Warrior will help us test and develop the doctrine, tactics, techniques, procedures and equipment to win that battle. We have already begun conducting limited objective experiments (LOEs) at Quantico, Va., and Camp Lejeune, N.C. Urban Warrior is scheduled to complete its AWE during FY 99.

The final Advanced Warfighting Experiment—Capable Warrior—is the culminating phase of our five-year Experimentation

Plan. It will focus on fleet and force-level operations across the entire spectrum of war, including Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). Applicable concepts, tactics and technologies from Hunter Warrior and Urban Warrior will be incorporated. Capable Warrior is scheduled to begin in FY 99.

The Corps in the 21st Century

The words from the 82nd Congress remain as sound and relevant today as they were in 1952. Marines have always had a global outlook which transcended any particular scenario or threat. Instead, we have steadfastly focused on our statutory role—to serve as the nation's premier crisis response force. Our role is to be prepared to be the first on the scene, first to fight, first to quell disturbances and first to help, both in the United States and abroad. Our experience has taught us that the only common denominator for the sort of missions expected of a force-in-readiness is an immutable commitment to be ready for worldwide commitment 365 days a year. Anything less is inconsistent with our ethos, our core capabilities and the expectations of the American people. We have not failed them in the past—and the Marine Corps will not fail them in the future. The United States Marine Corps is, and will remain, our nation's premier force-in-readiness.

