

MajGen Richard C. Schulze Memorial Essay

# The Marine Corps 20 Years Hence

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by Michael Vlahos

***One of the major changes likely to result from the collapse of the Soviet Union and our victory in Southwest Asia is a long era of peace. There are, however, dangers that lurk in periods such as these, dangers that can see Marines grow complacent, basing their force structure decisions on old concepts of fighting rather than emerging technology, replacing old weapons systems with new, improved versions instead of rethinking their employment entirely. To combat this mindset, what is needed is an appreciation of what war could become in another 20 to 30 years, something far different from what we now know.***

When lines of sullen BMPs rolled over Red Square, our groans were those of the sleeper waking after the ball, head throbbing, returned to the real world. So it had been a dream after all, and now the cruel Cold War world was back.

But it wasn't. Yesterday the Party with its frozen statues came toppling down; today's republics, once rock-solid-Soviet, call out for independence. The bad old days are gone, but more than that, our last link to them has been broken.

The world transition that began with a fallen Wall ends 21 months later with a fallen idea. For 50 years our lives have

been driven by a struggle between two ideas: *our reality was that struggle*. Now only one idea rules—by acclamation—and, at last, we enter a new world reality.

But how can reality be described from an idea? Is not our reality better cast as a world system? "System" gives

off comfortable sensations of solidity, like a big building. But then, just what is the world system?

When we say "world system," we mean relationships: how states, enterprises, and people do business outside their own society. We know these relationships are built on shared organizing principles. We just don't think much about these principles. They are part of the global landscape, as though they came with the territory. States have always interrelated, but who makes the rules? Better yet, where do the world's rules of the road get their authority? And beyond simple rules, what *moves* the world?

Ideas. Big ideas, shared ideas, energizing and inflammatory ideas. The world moves according to visions that give meaning, that regulate actions, that endow authority.

The ideas that make things come together are often cloaked with an amorphous term: "the spirit of the age." Ideas that shape a world reality *are* amorphous, yet like an ether, they diffuse everywhere. Their greatest power is that of legitimation. In this sense the ideas

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that inform the spirit of an age must go beyond national laws. For example, Europe's spirit at the turn of the century both organized and excused an "age of imperialism." Europe's powers, moreover, shared many of the premises that allowed imperialism to flourish. Different national cultures and contending political systems perversely could work together even as rivals, promoting their common vision of Europe's destiny.

The spirit of the age we have just departed was ruled by two visions, each defined by the other's antithesis, and by the irreconcilability of their struggle. Each had its own true story about the nature of Man and the meaning of existence, in which the other was both source of evil and obstacle to fulfillment of the good. This fundamental clash of truths, black against white, good against evil, created a bifurcated yet interdependent world reality. The all-consuming struggle defined everything else.

We grew up in the spirit of the Cold War world. However alien its premises seem now, it still lays claim to our thinking. Its hold on our imagination blocks our understanding of a new world and a new spirit of the age. To unblock, we must remember what the Cold War spirit demanded.

We were engaged in a kind of war. We lived for 50 years in a mobilization state, and we expected the worst. We also believed that the struggle would go on for generations, perhaps forever. Others who shared our vision were expected to pledge their lives and honor in its defense. Those not with us were against us. We had to be ceaselessly vigilant against encroachment by our adversary, and our situation was weighed remorselessly against the tides of History: Were we gaining or losing? Pessimism was easy.

Both adversaries in that age reached for mutual metaphors: commitment, sacrifice, steadfastness, heroic transcendence. We, the constantly self-critical American democratic idea (for are not democracies inherently weak and irresolute?) were in the end far more with the metaphor—*with the force*—than our comrade-enemy.

We now carry our heroic metaphor with us into a new world. No one else—

Russian, Japanese, or Iraqi—brings into a new age such a warrior's focus. But the *champs d'honneur* is being dismantled. We—the bringers of war and peace—are not prepared for the spirit of this new age. We are hardly ready for the impact.

What is the spirit of this age likely to be? Can it be described yet, and can its effect on war and things military be gauged?

The two big stores of 1991 hold the clues we need: the Soviet metamorphosis, and the war against Saddam. Each fills in pieces of the transition puzzle from one age to another, colored tiles marking themes for the new age.

### **Soviet I: The Big Threat Dies**

Like true warriors, when the Wall came down we thought not—*It's over!*—but rather—*whew! Now our strategic warning time extends to two years!* We talked earnestly about "reversal" and developed a strategic "pillar" we called "reconstitution" to deal with any future Soviet recidivism. And were they not still building x new nuclear missiles, 2x attack submarines ... ?

As the union breaks up, so does its military machine. But that was eroding already from within. The theme for a new age is not that the "Russian steamroller" finally departs the historical scene, but the manner of its departure.

At the last moment, the war machine was ordered into Moscow. There it refused to prop up a dying idea. It refused to legitimize the coup with a "whiff of grapeshot." Even in the seat of modern militarism, its military society had joined the new idea.

The Red Army's (and even the KGB's) self-subordination to the will of the people suggests the first theme: *War is no longer a legitimate extension of politics.* Conflict persists, but without moral dispensation as part of a greater struggle between good and evil. The West now speaks with one voice in its aversion to force, either as international aggression or as domestic tyranny.

### **Soviet II: The Empire Comes Apart**

Our Cold War vision called the Soviet Union the last colonial empire. But Lenin's vision called for much more than simple empire. It was the final ex-

ension of European nationalism, which after all was less about liberating nations than it was about creating great powers. Nineteenth century nationalism was actually antinationalistic: the bigger tribes made themselves into nations, and the smaller tribes just learned a new language. Serbia as Yugoslavia is the shining model of this process, but Czechoslovakia, France, and even Belgium make nice examples.

Soviet breakup is really a signal for others, for tribal realization everywhere. The nation-state as great power driver is dead, and people look for meaning more among their extended family, their local-national community. This is the second theme: *National kinship diffuses, great power focus declines.* Of the remaining great powers, only Japan and the United States may avoid this diffusion of identity: Japan through its xenophobia, the United States through the dominance of *national idea over nationality* in its makeup.

### **Soviet III: The Rise of Europe**

When people talk about the post-Soviet Union, the image they often evoke to advise eaglet republics is the European Community (EC). The EC is more than a model, however; it is an inheritor. As NATO, Western Europe asked the United States to put together and run a safe little world. The original EC fit snugly into that world. The Soviet fall has freed Europe. Unexpected, but now accepted, the EC is its own place—the new Europe—soon to own the economies of the East, including the once-Soviet republics.

Nineteenth century geopoliticians were fond of reciting the dictum that: "He who dominates the Eurasian heartland will dominate the world." Americans fretted for decades that *he* was Germany, and then that *he* was the Soviet Union. Within a decade, it is the EC that will be Eurasia. But not Halford MacKinder's Eurasia, the world conqueror, but at worst the world's biggest bloc—and merely economic—and at best its richest market. So the third theme: *A world of great powers as competing economic blocs.* Or, how the EC, North America, and Japan replace the old world's superpowers.

### Saddam I: The Little Threat Dies

He had the world's fourth—or was it fifth?—largest army, and he cut a fine figure as the new threat: the crazed tin pot potentate with modern, maybe even nuclear, weapons. He was the new “man you love to hate,” and the future of U.S. national security.

The war did away with that changing for the Soviet threat, even if it did not do away with Saddam himself. We now have some new “Third World” truths. Modern weapons don't mean squat if you don't know how to use them. Most states we burden with the sobriquet of Third World are too deep in hock to afford the best anyway. And in upfront war, only lots of the very best will do. And finally, weapons alone are not enough. Even if you can afford them and know how to operate and maintain them, you still have to be able to link them together into a campaign. You must know what the Soviets call “operational art.” And in today's war, this means much more than getting the Panzers rolling and the fighters vectored. No Third World military has shown itself capable of conducting a modern campaign—that is, at the level of theater integration we showed in DESERT STORM.

And in destroying Saddam's military machine, we made our fourth theme: *Big Third World militaries have no war-fighting utility.*

### Saddam II: A New World Order

The spirit of the age endows its own world order. We call it “The New World Order” as though it will operate with the nanny-like force Woodrow Wilson imagined for his League of Nations. It won't.

The war against Saddam, however, returned the United Nations to U.S. tutelage. No longer the Cold War's debating society or the Third World's Star Chamber, the United Nations serves again as a vehicle for voicing the spirit of the age, and in America's words. The fifth theme, then: *The age reaffirms the world authority of U.S. values.*

### Saddam III: A New Way to Make War

Saddam brought us to do even more than dash the dreams of tyrants and

assert a working world system. He had us make war as we had not for a generation. He offered us all the production and rehearsal time we needed, so the actual performance was not the test it might have been. And when the curtain rose on the theater of battle, he played his role poorly. So again, it was not the test it might have been.

But it was something to see. And it showed us how far we have come since the last war. It confirmed our suspicions, growing through the 1980s, that we had in fact been changing the way war is made, that the Soviet theorists were correct, that we were forcing a revolution in military affairs. What is this revolution anyway?

It begins with sight. Where once the commander encompassed the battlefield only as far as his eyes could see, obscured by smoke and his own infirmity, now the entire theater is laid naked and exact for us to measure. We see the enemy everywhere.

And what we see, we hit. Putting the munition right on its target is what counts, not bomb loads carried or weight of shells unleashed. Smart weapons the media called pricey are now praised; they save money by easing the munitions equation: one target, one weapon.

Everything we have is linked, netted together so that we can put the best capability for the job just where it will do the most good, and everyone on our side knows what's going on. Instead of Army, Air Force, Navy, and even Marines fighting solo battles on separate turf, the force we bring to bear is a single capability, a *toolbox* from which we draw the right tool for each job.

We fight inside the enemy's decision-loop. Our neural network for war is faster than his, our operational synapses *see-plan-hit* before his eyes even open. We use this speed to quickly build the burden of friction for the enemy, while easing it for us. Just as we see the enemy, we rob him of his sight.

Granted, for each of these concepts the conditions for execution were almost exercise-ideal. Yet, however imperfectly realized, they are concepts no one else can execute. However prototypical, they are the embryos of war's evolution. They

are the future of war. Sixth theme: *Technology is again transforming war.* We are leaving then more than an age with its own peculiar spirit and world system; we are leaving the familiar features of military operations and even the familiar fabrications of war: from machines to routines.

### The Meaning of the Themes

What do these themes say? What is the bottom line?

- *A collegial West in control.* Europe, North America, and Japan define power in this world; they can manage economic development together; and they are unlikely adversaries, though energetic competitors. As long as they are in general accord, the United Nations works well as an honest broker in regional disputes. Other developed economies—from East Europe to East Asia—are so tracked into the system, and so much its beneficiary, that there is no boat-rocking incentive built in.

- *Limited Third World development.* India and China, the Third World's biggest, post breakneck growth rates, but the unhappiness of their people—and the civil strife they wreak—offset the sense of gain. Rogue (almost) regional poseurs, such as Iraq, Iran, Syria, Pakistan, just won't grow enough to make a power comeback. The Third World can afford fewer superweapons, finds them harder to find, and may even ask why they are still needed.

- *U.S. reputation.* For how could arms alone improve their lot? Any aggressive use would bring in America. War, then, is hopeless. We know this is the big payoff from our desert war. Everyone else knows we will fight an aggressor, and everyone knows in advance the final score.

- *No war for 20 years.* Try not to attack this assertion yet. It is not prediction; it is certainly prophecy. Sure, accidents happen, and there is always the unexpected. But the world tide is running against the old, classical use of force we call war. The spirit of the age is against it, and that spirit is embraced by all those who could start something serious. Those remaining just aren't up to the task of getting serious.

## The Impact for Marines

What does this mean for the Marines?

Peacetime has arrived—not cold war, not prewar, not postwar, not interwar. In fact, for the first time in almost a century the word *war* need not be in the title. Strife continues, with rage and violence, and the succeeding world tremors will still cause us to fret. But the battle of ideas that built a world primed for all-out war is over.

And U.S. military strength has never been greater. Not just tables of troops or orders of battle, but proven capability. We have no challengers, and no one is about to come close. Do we need such strength? Does the world?

The best case for peace is in keeping up U.S. military power. We have earned a special place as first among equals, and the world trusts us to use our power for good. Our power's presence should not only deter others from making war, it should discourage their interest in war's instruments.

Deep defense cuts upcoming need not undercut our ability to keep the peace. We will still wield more real power than anyone else can imagine. In fact, looking ahead is pretty simple: a Navy of 300+ ships, a Marine Corps of 3 Marine divisions and wings, an Army of 10 divisions, and an Air Force of 15 tactical fighter wings. Smaller, surely, but freed from the big war in Europe, more capable globally.

And with the passing years, the peacetime force will grow comfortable like a big armchair, just as the world grows comfortable sitting in it. New programs will keep it flush with modern ships and planes—say, four destroyers, one nuclear sub, and one major amphib each year; a carrier every four years: a steady state, reliable routine that occupies a declining niche in the national budget, but big enough to discourage any challengers.

Is there anything wrong with this picture of defense bliss?

The answer is counterintuitive. There is something wrong, but it's not a military mirror of us, not a lurking challenger or a new enemy. The threat to our military power, and thus to a stable world, is not among other militaries,

from *ersatz* Saddams to lingering Kim Il Sung to some unnamed messianic tribe. Those are mere strategic residues, shards from the trash heap of History yet uncollected.

The problem is the process of change itself. There have been peacetimes before, but their spirits were different. If we look to long "happy" periods in history—1815 to 1848, 1871 to 1904—they fall short as guides for the new age. Then, balance-of-power politics ruled; military competition paced economic and political rivalry. We can look now to a world whose guiding spirit spurns any return to great power business-as-usual. Great power posturing now frightens us.

Instead, the new age celebrates competition like an athletic meet: by the rules, where the rules themselves symbolize shared values. So how, in a world where war is forbidden, do we find a threat?

The future threat lies in the very situation we have created. We have not done this intentionally; we are unlikely even to see it as it happens. The story may go like this:

The Soviets pushed us into a revolution in military affairs, but their threat did not make the revolution happen. The transformation of war that is but beginning is only one aspect of a bigger economic revolution. Information is the midwife; it lets us build things better, faster, and more efficiently. We know better how to use what we make.

In 20 years technology will bound ahead—in the civilian world. In the military world it will stagnate. Why? The money will all get tunneled to familiar forces that in themselves, like totems, define the identity of each Service. Maintaining force levels will be the prime directive. Research and development (R&D) will shrink, and why not? Will there be a MiG-29 follow-on any time soon? Who will challenge the Advanced Tactical Fighter? With the Russians and Ukrainians dropping their big sub programs, who will best the SSN-21?

Even though technology breakthroughs will scream out for military attention, they will be shunted off to minor study. Trying out technology se-

riously means big money. This means money taken away from core force programs. Worse for the champions of old guard forces, new ways of doing military business imply new forces.

The technology push of the next 20 years has the potential to transform war, remaking the forces that make war. Then the old identifying headgear of the Services may no longer make sense, whether carriers or tactical fighters or tanks. But the betting line will always favor tradition over change in peacetime. Without an active threat, there is no incentive to change, and there are commanding social disincentives to avoid change entirely.

In fact, the revolution in war may go unnoticed . . . until the next war. History tells many stories. For example, a military revolution occurred in 1900. Did anybody see it? It was the internal combustion engine. Inventing the tank and the warbird was made inevitable then; it simply took a great war to give potential, life. Meanwhile, the U.S. and British armies introduced new pattern cavalry sabers in 1912!

Repeating this is exactly what the United States must avoid.

U.S. military strength in this new world will be measured by its psychological effects on others. It is sufficiently strong if it dissuades others from using force, *if it persuades others that force is politically useless to them*. Part of that psychological effect flows from the image of force we asserted in DESERT STORM: where technology was like a great magic and we the magi. Our mastery of war *in peoples' minds* will be forever a function of our technology mastery. Therefore, as technology changes, we must change war in peace. We must preempt the revolution in war without the ratification of war. Doing this demands a defense policy in peace that puts change ahead of force structure. Here are some more reasons:

*Absent a threat, we have room to experiment.* What is today's warfighting threat? Can one show how we must size forces to it? We will have lots of slop room for R&D—if we are able to break out of the old numerology of military power built around magic numbers of forces. Do 10 carrier battle groups mean

a lesser fleet simply because a Cold Warrior Secretary of the Navy said anything less than 15 was second class? That was then, this is now. Are 10 carriers in fact too many if the future has no place for them?

*Technology is pulling us there anyway.* The four themes for future war suggested by DESERT STORM—*seeing the theater, hitting what you see, fusing your forces, working inside the enemy's reflex*—are not platform-specific. They don't necessarily require an F-16 or a nuclear carrier or an M1A1, or even necessarily improved versions of each. The revolution in war is pulling us to a capability-centered vision of what we do, not a platform-centered vision.

*Old forces are too expensive for what they will give.* Old forces today mean ground power still built around massing armor and artillery, airpower still built around hundreds of flying trucks ferrying bombs from one point to another, and Navy strike still built around a handful of attack aircraft sustained and defended by a dozen ships and 10,000 men. Much of our current military power is manpower intensive. A long peacetime future means military manpower will be as constrained as the potential threat. The capability we seek must also seek the fewest, if the best, people.

*It keeps key technology in the United States.* We knew where we had to go, hat in hand, for more cruise missile chips during DESERT STORM—Japan. Do we want those with the top technology in the civilian market to rule our military roost? Do we think we can accept this situation and still believe ourselves secure? What good does it do us in 20 years to marshall thousands of weapons of past glory if they are obsolete? After the Civil War, Congress ignored all pleas for military modernization—for decades. In a world where power came to be gauged by Europe's breechloading guns and steel ships, these legislators would protest: Do we not still have hundreds of great 15 Dahlgren and Rodman smoothbores? Do we not still have 20 ironclad monitors? Were they not after all the most powerful weapons of their day?

*Don't yield the advantage to the next threat.* So a final warning: As we cher-

ish down the decades the weapons and platforms that brought us victory, others will develop strengths in the new enabling technologies. We don't know who those others might be, but they could be our technology equals. They might even have an edge there. When, and if, they decide on paths that may come to confront us, they will do so with military power that is zero-based. They need not build old benchmark systems, they will have no internal constituencies pushing them. *They will seek out capability alone.*

### Twenty Years After

I realize that I have offered no concrete pieces of future war to scrape away at; I criticize keeping our current force structure forever when in fact it may serve for 50 or a 100 years unchallenged—a pretty good cut at forever. But if it doesn't go on that long, if it does change and it is challenged, how might war look? I have argued from the premise that the next war is far away, and that when it comes it will not be a rerun of our recent past. Then what might it be like? Here is a very impressionistic snapshot, as might be reported by a future Marine sergeant.

*"The V-22s landed three hours before sunrise. We were one of three RCTs [regimental-size combined arms teams] put into Purple. Our job was to neutralize their armored corps, 30 clicks north of the capital. The big barges had done their work. We call them battle-ships, but they are really just hulls full of holes; and what they shoot—what we tell them to shoot—they hit. So they had already worked their bull's-eye magic on the area around our LZ [landing zone]. We knew they had taken out 98 percent of Purple's total electrical grid, ditto their C<sup>3</sup> [command, control, and communications] (the B-2s had hit them first). The three tank divisions, well, their surface stockpiles were all smoking. We could see the thermal scars in our head-up helmet displays, when we flipped to check the latest satellite feed. We also had good fixes on all deployed units and each bunker complex still not confirmed as killed.*

*"Purple had been planning to foil our hit for a long time. They had turned their local seas into a mesh of sensors and*

*smart mines. It took every robot sub we had to clear a path. They had worked to really harden their C<sup>3</sup> nodes, but our EMP [electromagnetic pulse] bolts blew them out easily. Its nice to be the only one with full-service battle satellites. Their counter to our space systems was mere antisatellite missiles—cleverly disguised to be sure—but no match for our precocious little pebbles.*

*"But their ground forces were something else again. They were big, dug in real deep, and covered and camouflaged to the hilt—the whole nine meters from infrared masking to surface AP [anti-personnel] mines that had been taught the melody of our boots. The LZ needed mucho FAEs [fuel aerosol explosives]; they pretty much cleared the surface. Then we had to pick out the pattern of tunnels and start telling the barges what they had missed. Purple was good; they could get a chunk of heavy armor out of the ground fast. I guess that was their only hope: to catch groups of Marine infantry before we could call down our Carronades. Well, we were so well netted that they would have needed split-second timing to pull that off; the barges were always zeroed in, each man on the ground was GPSed [fitted with Global Positioning System equipment] and squawking back to the ships. We used our flying minicams to advantage here: each of us carried 10; you'd chuck them like an old Frisbee and then guide them with little head jerks. They gave us just the advance warning we needed, every time. The Carronades would come screaming in, out would pop the grapeshot submunitions . . . and adios one armored column. Purple had pretty nice stuff too, only about 10 years old—electrothermal guns, composite and reactive armor—but it was designed with other tanks in mind, not hardass infantry like us."*

This little tale need not be science fiction. It's almost here. The key message for the Marines is the role they play. They are still the assault force; they just don't come by sea. They open up the terrain for Army follow-on forces ... if such forces are needed. The Army can come in by air within hours, but not into a hot LZ, especially when the whole country is the LZ. Marines can be inserted promptly and finish what the space-air-sea strike interface has started.

The themes are straightforward:

*Strike is done from the sea.* In this picture, battleships have displaced carriers, but as the sergeant was telling us, they are affectionately just “barges.” They carry the stuff for long-range strikes, Tomahawk missile follow-ons with multiple warheads and much longer ranges; and they carry stuff for battlefield interdiction, big Navy tactical missile systems with a smorgasbord of submunitions. A battle force of 20 barges means 40,000 missiles and several times that number of submunitions—enough to cover just about any national target set. The barges carry antisubmarine weapons and advanced tactical ballistic missiles too, so they don’t need escorts. The Navy now is just ships: battleships for fire support, big SSN “mother ships” with robot subs for clearing littoral sea barriers (a nasty mix of SOSUS, smart mines, and subs), and flush-deck V-22 amphibs with about 1,000 Marines. Give each ship a 35-year life, build two battleships, one nuclear submarine, and one amphib a year and you have a very capable core force.

*Ground forces are completely tied into the command, control, communications, intelligence (C<sup>3</sup>I) net*—they see everything, and everything they see, they can kill. The era of ground forces massing is over; fire support comes from the sea, and the old big tank units are no longer needed. The insertion mission can now truly be done by air, and quickly. Sealift, however fast, is unnecessary for the battle. Peg lift requirements for the Army at about 300 C-17 equivalents.

*Space makes everything else happen.* It sees everything, pulls everything together. And the space mission becomes the Air Force mission. This theater-wide C<sup>3</sup>I net looks to familiar systems like AWACS (airborne warning and control system) and JSTARS (joint surveillance and target attack radar system). The Advanced Tactical Fighter is the premier air superiority tool; the B-2 the special interdictor. Gone is the tactical fighter, the bomb truck, its place taken—like field artillery’s—by the barge. To protect the space net, weapons in space are needed. Perhaps space could be made off-limits to battle; but if the outcome of battle hinges on what space does, and

if others can quickly put weapons in space, then we had better reexamine our archaic sentimentality on the subject or prepare to be at someone else’s tender mercy.

**P**ersonal visions will always reflect personal dispositions. There is no inevitability to this evolution. I am sure carriers and tactical fighters and tanks will all be around in force 20 years hence, as they should be . . . *only if they are the best tools for the job.* Whatever platforms carry the munition, the way that munition is delivered is changing. It will become less necessary and less efficient to put the sources of firepower close to their target. My vision includes the possible obsolescence of the tactical fighter as well as the carrier and the tank for just this reason: the strike job will not simply go to the Air Force by default. Their airbases in-theater are just as expensive, slow to build-up, vulnerable, and archaic as divisional depots.

Action on the ground, to tweak Churchill, will mean that even more will be owed by the many to even fewer. Each infantryman will become a unit of force on the battlefield: totally tied in, his global position keyed in moment to moment. He sees everything our satellites see in realtime. He extends his vision with very small remotely piloted vehicles; and what he sees, he can kill.

Major math is not needed to see what all this means for the Marines. A small number of Marines will do the job once given to MEFs. Amphibious assault also goes away. The Marines become the centerpiece of battle, they integrate what the other Services bring from the toolbox. This makes sense; don’t Marines already do it with close air support? And a transition to all-infantry operations should be easy for a force with an all-infantry ethos. There is no real competition with the Army here: Marines do assault, then the Army can come in. You can’t assault a place from 10,000 miles away with C-17s anymore than you can storm a beach with, say, the *Seaspeed Arabia*. Marines are also prompt; they will always be prompt. A future bonus is that smaller assault forces—light regimental combat teams subbing for unwieldy Marine expedi-

tionary brigade packages—can be carried in the lift likely available, about 35 LX (the Navy’s amphib of the future) equivalents.

This essay has been an attempt to tie world change to future war to tomorrow’s Marines. Remember: it’s a long way off, longer than our careers. But it’s not long by historical time. And if 20 years is too short for the kind of change in war suggested here, then what about 30? Is even that so long off? Thirty years go quickly. We can all replay in our memory the grainy footage of JFK’s inauguration: “We will pay any price, bear any burden. . . .” That was only 30 years ago.

But it was a world ago. And we have a world to go.



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