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Young, Taylor, N, Major, USMC

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The Marine Corps can best serve the Joint Force and our nation's security leaders by adding capabilities that will enable the Marine Corps to conduct Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) in support of an integrated naval campaign. EABO is a solution to assist the Navy in the conduct of its sea control mission with a force structure optimized for the conduct of crisis response missions. Through historical analysis and a review of existing capabilities and concepts EABO is revealed as both historically significant, operationally relevant in the current environment, and plausible with the addition of existing capabilities.

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United States Marine Corps
Command and Staff College
Marine Corps University
2076 South Street
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

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TITLE:

A TRUE RETURN TO OUR AMPHIBIOUS ROOTS: AN EMERGING CONCEPT FOR EXPEDITIONARY ADVANCED BASE OPERATIONS

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AUTHOR:

Major Taylor N. Young

AY 15-16

Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Lynn Tesser
Approved: Lynn Tesser
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Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Anne-Louise Antonoff
Approved:
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Sample Executive Summary

Title: A True Return to Our Amphibious Roots: An Emerging Concept for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations

Author: Major Taylor Young, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: The Marine Corps can best serve the Joint Force and our nation's security leaders by adding capabilities that will enable the Marine Corps to conduct expeditionary advanced base operations in support of an integrated naval campaign.

Discussion: Beginning in the 1920's the United States Marine Corps began to more fully integrate itself with the Navy. The result of a series of experiments and doctrinal development led by General Lejeune and LtCol Ellis created the foundations of the Marine Corps that excelled during the Pacific Campaign of World War II. As the Marine Corps faced a new threat environment following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, it began pursuing a mission of crisis response while maintaining a forcible entry capability. Following the conclusion of extended operations ashore in Iraq and Afghanistan the Marine Corps leadership once again looked to return the organization to its amphibious roots. While we have remained adept at conducting entry operations, the Marine Corps has become less integrated as a naval force. In order to fully return to its roots, the Marine Corps must reexamine what it means to "seize and defend advanced naval bases". Additionally, we must consider how Marine forces can support the JFMCC as well as the JFLCC.

Conclusion: Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations is a viable solution to assist the navy in the conduct of its sea control mission with a force structure optimized for the conduct of crisis response missions.

DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

Acknowledgements

This paper began as an idea that I was exposed to while working at Combat Development and Integration Command, a time in which I had the unique privilege of being exposed to the institutional knowledge that resides in the Davis building. Overhearing and participating in conversations with the Marines that shared a cube wall with me made me think more about the past of the Marine Corps and what it means for our future then I ever had.

I am indebted to gentlemen that so graciously shared their time and experience with me including Eric Doyle, John Berry, Doug King, Jim Strock and the Marines of the Ellis Group and EFD. Equally I would like to extended my gratitude to Col Tim Mundy and LtGen Glueck for having trust in my abilities to grant me more autonomy and leeway then an officer of my experience usually allowed. A special thanks to Mr. Art Corbett, the expert on Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations, for allowing me to ride his intellectual coat tails, and shepherding this important concept through the grueling staffing process.

Finally, I owe a large debt of gratitude to my wife, Amy, who tolerated my insufferable procrastination and incessant complaining as I reaped what I sowed. Throughout this process she remained supportive, and inspired me with her strength as she suffered trials and tribulations that sufficiently humbled me and put any obstacle I believe I faced into perspective.

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Introduction

The Marine Corps faces the unique challenge to be both a generalist force and amphibious specialists. Much of its recent past has been in the support of the current demands of The Department of Defense (DoD), but has drawn the service away from the legal mandate that should guide the service's responsibility to prioritize resources to man, train, and equip the force. The central question facing Marine Corps force developers is this: how can the Marine Corps balance its role as a force postured for global crisis response, and one organized and equipped for its traditional missions?

The DoD faces the unending challenge of trying to predict the nature and location of future conflict, avert it through deterrence, and when necessary apply force to end it. Planners are asked to contemplate both where and how future war will occur. More often than not their predictions have been shaped by projecting trends identified through historical analysis forward. The current force development model creates programs to address capability gaps identified through an analysis of a threat scenario. The United States has historically suffered in responding to strategic surprise. By their definition these events are difficult if not impossible to predict. The Marine Corps can never eliminate the risk but has taken on the role within the DoD as mandated by Congress to "provide the Nation with affordable insurance and a strategic hedge in an era of uncertainty and unprecedented complexity"[1] to respond quickly to unforeseen crisis to buy time for decision makers to find the right solution to the problem.

Understanding the future security environment is daunting. Understanding the Marine Corps' role in that environment should be simple but has proven equally challenging. Since its inception the Marine Corps has fulfilled many roles in conducting the business of defending the nation. From its Revolutionary War background as ships companies and role as the United States first expeditionary force against the Barbary pirates it has first and foremost been a naval

service. While it has served for prolonged periods ashore as both a constabulary force and as a conventional land army, the Marine Corps has recognized that these are not primary missions. Title X of the U.S. Code provides the Marine Corps with a clear set of responsibilities:

> The Marine Corps shall be organized, trained, and equipped to provide fleet marine forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign. In addition, the Marine Corps shall provide detachments and organizations for service on armed vessels of the Navy, shall provide security detachments for the protection of naval property at naval stations and bases, and shall perform such other duties as the President may direct. However, these additional duties may not detract from or interfere with the operations for which the Marine Corps is primarily organized.[2]

This statue gives the Marine Corps two distinct and complementary missions. The first is "the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases." The second is the conduct of "land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign." It gives additional missions, to include those directed by the President, but with the specific caveat that the execution of those additional duties not detract from the two primary missions of the Marine Corps. The recent fixation on operations ashore has led the Marine Corps to neglect this caveat and it is in danger of losing its ability to conduct its primary responsibilities.

As we look forward to what the Marine Corps can do in support of national security policy, the service must strike a balance between its competing missions as a ground contingency force and its role in support of a naval campaign**.** The service is constantly developing a host of new

concepts to find a better way to approach the accomplishment of these two missions. Today the Marine Corps can best serve the Joint Force and our nation's security leaders by adding capabilities that will enable the Marine Corps to conduct expeditionary advanced base operations in support of an integrated naval campaign. By analyzing the current and future threat environment as envisioned in our national security documents, reviewing the past solutions that Marines applied to similar problems, and recognizing that force projection should not be the only tool we provide, it becomes clear that the expeditionary advanced base (EAB) concept is both necessary and achievable. These bases would be austere and temporary outposts that are both lethal and mobile. They allow naval forces to complicate the adversary's targeting cycle with small unit outposts operating within the threat envelope of their long range strike weapons. These bases, when operating together in conjunction with other naval forces, can serve as a sea denial outpost and support the navy's mission of sea control.

The Marine Corps has chosen a force structure that rightfully maximizes its utility as a crisis response force as this mission has risen in prominence for our national leadership. In order to do so the service has accepted risk at the higher end of the range of military operations. The Marine Corps recognizes these limitations and is developing refined methods of employing the force to accomplish its primary mission of gaining and maintaining access to a theater of operations. *Expeditionary Force 21* articulates the way that disparate units will come together to mass at the right place and time to achieve decisive results. Is there a way, however, to use this disaggregated force in its existing small unit formations to prevent the need to conduct entry operations by contributing to a mission of sea control, and denying an adversary the ability to conduct *fait accompli* strategies? This is a gap in both Navy and Marine Corps concepts that the services are now attempting to reconcile.

EAB advances the idea that smaller Marine units controlling key terrain in a theater of operations can contribute directly to the maritime commander's mission of sea control. These forces can help offset some of the advantages that an adversary employing an anti-access/ area-denial strategy hopes to gain. For the Marine Corps to accomplish this operational approach existing capabilities will have to be refined and some additional capabilities added to be truly successful.

Defining the Future Global Security Environment

To understand how the Marine Corps took on the role of the crisis response force it is important to understand how the United States view of its role in the global security architecture has evolved. By examining how our policy makers view the security environment, and how they intend to use the military to shape it, it becomes clear that this is a mission that the Marine Corps must continue to pursue.

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 mandated the publication of the National Security Strategy (NSS). The purpose of this mandate was to "address U.S. interests, goals and objectives; the policies, worldwide commitments, and capabilities required to meet those objectives; and the use of elements of national power to achieve those goals; and it must provide an assessment of associated risk."[3] No specific requirement exists to address potential adversaries or conflict, however many reports do. Although the balancing of priorities and the allocation of resources occurs much later in the process, the NSS should provide the overarching guidance on what the United State considers a threat, and under what conditions the United States employs the elements of national power. A

quick review of the evolution of this document illustrates how the conditions have changed and the obligations grown for the DoD.

Through a close reading of these documents that guide strategic planning we see their echoes throughout our contemporary strategic planning documents. Although some contemporary thinkers believe that the risk of today and into the future is an unprecedented phenomenon, the reality is that the future security environment is one characterized first and foremost by uncertainty as much as the past has been.

The NSS published under President Reagan in January 1988 outlined a broad policy based on returning the United States to the pinnacle of power in global politics through both military strength and economic development. It states bluntly that "[t]he most significant threat to U.S. security interests remains the global challenge posed by the Soviet Union."[4] It goes on to identify Europe as the principal theater of operations for combating that threat. Beyond Europe the NSS identifies interests in the Middle East and views the primary threat as "the protracted war between Iran and Iraq, and by Iran's drive to become the dominant power in the region."[5]. Three years later the Berlin Wall had fallen, the Soviet Empire had collapsed, and the United States found itself at war with its erstwhile ally from the Iran-Iraq war over its invasion of Kuwait.

In attempt to make sense of this chaotic post-Cold War environment and following the overwhelming success of the Gulf War the 1991 NSS outlines the framework that President George H.W. Bush had deemed the "new world order". It is a vision of "a new world community brought together by a growing consensus that force cannot be used to settle disputes and that when that consensus is broken, the world will respond."[6] It details the disposition of global power and threats, noting the emerging threat posed by the release of Soviet control on

unresolved ethnic tensions specifically in Yugoslavia.[7] Precautionary warnings highlight the tenuous security environment while an overall tone of hope for the integration of the world under the example and security of the United States permeates the text. The document begins with recognition of the problem that will define the next decade; the United States "cannot be the world's policeman with responsibility for solving all the world's security problems. But we remain the country to whom others turn when in distress."[8] The next five years would see the United States not only heavily engaged in combating the conflict from the breakup of Yugoslavia, but responding to security crises in Haiti, Somalia, and notably not responding in Rwanda.

In an attempt to redefine and focus the United States role in global security away from this "global policeman" and combat the appearance of a reactive foreign policy, the 1996 NSS offered new criteria for the commitment of United States military force into a conflict. The opening lays out a lofty goal:

> …[to] send American troops abroad only when our interests and our values are sufficiently at stake. … When we do so, it will be with clear objectives to which we are firmly committed and which — when combat is likely — we have the means to achieve decisively.[9]

It goes on to outline and prioritize the three basic categories of national interests that merit the use of the armed forces. The first, vital interests, correspond with the "survival, security and vitality of our national entity--the defense of U.S. territory, citizens, allies and our economic well-being." The second, important interests, are those that "do not affect our national survival, but they do affect importantly our national well-being and the character of the world in which we

live." Finally, humanitarian interests, are those where our military resources are required when "a humanitarian catastrophe dwarfs the ability of civilian relief agencies to respond" or "the need for relief is urgent and only the military has the ability to jump-start the longer-term response to the disaster." An important caveat to this third case is that the "risk to American troops is minimal."[10] For the most part this guidance outlined the use of military force for the next five years. This period saw primarily the maintenance of the nascent peace in the Balkans and a response to crisis, both humanitarian and security, in Africa.

During this same period of evolution, the threat posed by trans-national terrorist or criminal organizations persisted. Current strategic guidance documents use the term Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) as a catch all, but this threat is not new. The 1988 NSS noted that "low intensity conflicts", "international terrorists", as well as "racial, sectarian, and other tensions…challenge U.S. interests and our hopes for human betterment".[11] In 1991 the NSS began to note that despite the overall positive results of the collapse of the Soviet Union that its collapse could "unleash local, destructive forces that were formerly kept in check."[12] Among these it noted that there some regimes "have made themselves champions of regional radicalism" and that the United States will maintain "regional balances" and resolve disputes "before they erupt in military conflict."[13]

The events of September 11th 2001 briefly narrowed the focus of military planners. The promises of transformation envisioned by advocates for a revolution in military affairs following the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan did not prove to translate as cleanly during the subsequent operations in Iraq. Over a decade later, the current National Security Strategy addresses the complex priorities the nation faces. It places a premium on protecting and strengthening the international order that currently preserves and protects American interests. At

the same time, it recognizes that the primary destabilizers of that order are groups such as ISIL and al'Qeda and revisionist powers such as Russia. While it highlights the challenge of a rising China, it does not categorize the country's increasing power as a threat but as an opportunity.[14]

In many ways it is useful to think of the future as a return to the problems that the DoD attempted to deal with prior to the events of 9/11. Between 1980 and 2015 the United States fought seven major combat operations[i] while "the overwhelming majority of military deployments have been humanitarian assistance or disaster relief operations". There is no expectation that the future will be significantly different. As the roles of the United States in maintain global order has increased in prominence, the Marine Corps has adopted this mission as its primary mandate. The central question for the Marine Corps is how will it organize to execute its traditional role within the DoD when the majority of its usage will be for events other than those core missions detailed in its Title X mandate? The Marine Corps' current capstone concept, *Expeditionary Force 21*, attempts to answer that question and introduces an important concept that must be further explored.

The Future of the Past

An important aspect of understanding EAB is to appreciate why the Marine Corps continues to push for smaller autonomous units. This work was begun soon after the end of the Cold War and in parallel to the rise in prominence of the crisis response mission. Much of this work was put on hold or adapted to fit the prioritization of the counter insurgency fight over the last 15 years, but it is easy to trace a clear path through history that points to the continued use of disaggregated forces by Marine commanders.

[i] Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom/Inherent Resolve, Enduring Freedom, Odyssey Dawn/Unified Protector, Allied Force, Urgent Fury, and Just Cause

Many of the ideas central to the current capstone concept can trace their roots to the work done under General Krulak throughout the 1990's. General Krulak recognized that the future security environment was fraught with risk and uncertainty and laid out a five-year plan under the newly created Marine Corps Warfighting Lab to develop new operational concepts through a series of experiments to address them.[15] These experiments, named 'Sea Dragon', resulted in operational concepts such as Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS) and Ship to Objective Maneuver (STOM). They "explored the effectiveness and viability of small squad-sized units acting as reconnaissance teams that searched out larger enemy formations and then directed supporting fires to attack and destroy those formations".[16]

It is clear that many of these operating concepts continue to influence the current approach to operational challenges. In fact, EF21 explicitly states that it builds on those "proven concepts".[17] These concepts were designed to fight those conflicts characterized by General Krulak as the "stepchild of Somalia and Chechnya" not "the son of Desert Storm".[18] They recognize that the value the Marine Corps provides a unique tool with its ability to remain forward deployed and rapidly project force into a potential area of operations with little advanced notice or planning. These disaggregated forces are essential to providing broad coverage when forward postured forces are at a premium. Furthermore, these forces provide great value to Geographic Combatant Commanders while conducting Theater Security operations during Phase zero operations.

At the tactical level *Expeditionary Force 21* reaffirms that "infantry battalions will remain the Marine Corps' standard unit of deployment" but outlines the benefits of company landing teams. Specifically, their ability to "enable dispersed operations to secure landing sites or maneuver deep to inland objectives" and "capability to disperse and mass throughout the littorals".[19] These types of disaggregated operations ashore are familiar to any Marine who has

deployed in recent years, but are a dramatic departure from the traditional planning considerations for amphibious operations. *Expeditionary Force 21* recognizes that any sized Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) may be called upon as the first responder at the scene and presents a roadmap for a natural evolution of that unit to the right sized force. Amassing a flotilla of naval vessels stateside and then deploying them to the theater of operations, as in the examples of Korea and Desert Storm, is unrealistic. Not just because the dynamic nature of the future security environment will not allow for a delay in applying forces, but the fact that the current ship inventories and availability do not support such an endeavor. The reality is that naval assets will flow into a theater of priority from other Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC), often with units that trained to conducting disparate missions. *Expeditionary Force 21* envisions a suitcase staff as part of a fly-in command element that can establish or take control of a developing crisis, whatever its nature may be, and employ forces allocated to that mission up to and including being designated as a Joint Task Force (JTF).[20] When a crisis occurs where national leaders believe it is an imperative to employ military power, but a United States presence may not be welcomed, *Expeditionary Force 21* recognizes that the existing basing and deployment strategy is insufficient. This is a stark departure from the current model of mature and developed instillations supporting Marines deployed during MEU rotations or to existing 'footholds' into certain areas.

While envisioned as a way to counter the emerging threats of non-state actors and low intensity conflicts, and expanded to allow for rapid crisis response, these smaller and distributed forces have become a solution to countering the Anti-Access/ Area-Denial (A2/AD) challenges posed by more conventional adversaries. The current Deputy Secretary of Defense, Robert Work, as an analyst for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) authored a

report in 2002 that envisioned a Marine Corps organized around a "Deep Maneuver Brigade" that would consist of both traditional combined arms battalions enabled with platforms that provide increased operational reach and specialized units "designed for dispersed, small unit operations" to act "as the forward eyes and ears of the fleet strike network".[21] Work goes on to point out that if we degrade an enemy's initial sensor networks he becomes more susceptible to the types of deception and rapid mobility that amphibious forces provide.[22] Not coincidentally we find many of these same concepts in the "Third Offset Strategy" implemented soon after Mr. Work assumed duties as the Deputy Secretary of Defense.

While *Expeditionary Force21* presents a way for the Marine Corps to use a distributed force to conduct entry operations, it only hints at ways that same force could be otherwise employed. The Marine Corps has closely aligned itself with ways to support the Joint Force Land Component Commander (JFLCC) but does not present itself as a primarily naval asset. When the Marine Corps talks of returning to our amphibious roots it is important to remember what those roots are.

The Marine Corps as a Naval Force

There is rigidity in current Navy concepts when it comes to the use of Marine forces. For all of the new operating concepts being developed they primarily envision the Marine Corps as a tool to gain and maintain access. This may consist of seizing or destroying objectives ashore to enable maritime or air maneuver or securing port and airfield facilities to allow the joint force to conduct decisive operations. While a critical mission for the Marine Corps, the service must broaden its operating concepts to allow for other missions, specifically the ones at the heart of its Title X responsibilities.

The mission of seizing advanced naval bases has often been an afterthought for naval strategists. In 1933 then Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Brig General Russell wrote in the Marine Corps Gazette of a fictional account between a Marine General and a Navy Admiral discussing the Marines role in advanced base operations. During the fictional conversation the Admiral notes that "Marines are the equivalent of warships, because advanced bases enable more ships to be maintained on the scene of operations than would be possible without bases".[23] In this case the reference is to the matter of sortie generation. If having advanced bases from which to refuel, rearm, and conduct operations allows naval vessels to remain forward, then a numerically inferior navy could control strategic important areas of maritime terrain far from their home country. In an analysis of the Navy during the interwar period Craig Felker points out that Brigadier General Russell was "not so much concerned that the fleet would ignore the tactical support required for amphibious warfare" but "the navy's failure to acknowledge the importance of advanced bases to sea control".[24]

During the course of the interwar period the United States Navy had a robust series of fleet experiments to test "the implications of modern technology on its doctrine" and serve as "an important medium through which naval officers used operational experiences to modify aspects of their conceptions of naval warfare".[25] During these exercises Marine visionaries like General Lejeune and LtCol Ellis envisioned and then implemented the doctrine successfully employed during World War II in the Pacific.

The challenge that General Lejeune faced in 1920 is not so different from that the Marine leaders face today. The primary difference is that in 1920 General Lejeune's mission was "the future existence of the Corps".[26] While this institutional paranoia still runs strong within the Marine Corps it is not in an existential crisis at the moment. However, many similarities

between the institutional pressures within the Marine Corps of the interwar period and the Corps of today exist.

During the 1920's "many Marines looked to duty in China and the Banana Republics as the Corps' destiny" while others "viewed the war in Europe [World War I] as the model for the future".[27] Today the Marine Corps experiences competing pressures to focus on missions that have current relevance while still remaining an amphibious force. Some promote the idea of the Marine Corps as a bridge between special operations forces and conventional forces. Others believe that the Marine Corps should adopt a force structure that enables it to conduct large scale land operations that would allow it to combat a near peer rival, and support counter insurgency and stability operations.

A 2014 paper prepared by the Center for New American Security following the release of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) provides an example of this debate. In an attempt to stimulate the debate about future Marine Corps structure the authors hypothesized three different future threat environments and a hypothetical force design emphasizing capacities and capabilities optimized for each. First, they imagined a power projection oriented Marine Corps aligned against the threat of a rising China.[28] Second, they imagined a Marine Corps with the ability to conduct protracted stabilization missions in littoral regions and potentially densely populated urban areas in a scenario characterized by widespread conflict caused by failed states and an increase in disorder resulting in multiple civil wars.[29] Finally they imagined a Marine Corps oriented toward countering threats posed by non-state actors, violent extremist organizations that gain influence and power by harnessing the types of weapons and destructive technologies previously only available to nation states.[30] The Marine Corps envisioned as optimized for these three scenarios ranged from 160,000 to 185,000 active duty Marines

organized around from 6 to 21 Infantry Battalions and Fixed-Wing Squadrons with as many as seven and as few as zero Assault Amphibious Companies.[31] Clearly by choosing to fixate on one scenario alone, significant risk would be imposed in the conduct of the other missions.

As a proposed solution the authors offer a recommended blend of the force "focused not only on the rise of [China] scenario but also on crisis response in support of all the regional combatant commands."[32] They deem this force the "Crisis Response" force and it very much mirrors the direction that the Marine Corps has chosen to take in response to increasing fiscal constraints. The authors believe that a force of 160,000 active duty Marines structured around 16 Infantry Battalions, 12 Fixed-Wing Squadrons and only 4 Assault Amphibious Companies achieves a balanced compromise between "the Corps' unique maritime presence and flexibility of maneuvering at sea with its responsive capacity to stabilize small crises".[33] In addressing the question of whether the Marine Corps should be generalists or specialists, they opt for the former and go on to state that "because of the dynamic character of the strategic environment and the diverse risks posed by numerous trends…judicious risk calculus from a joint, and even national perspective" must take place.[34]

Nowhere in this conversation is how the Marine Corps can conduct its statutory requirement to "seize and defend advanced naval bases". During the 1920's General Lejeune recognized that "land operations in the Caribbean and China were important responsibilities, but building roads in Haiti, or protecting embassy in Peking also kept the Corps" from fully integrating with the navy.[35] Additionally, he understood that "to lean too far in the direction of the army's land warfare mission would only serve to alienate naval officers".[36] Our current leadership recognizes this same truth. In 2009 then Commandant General Conway explained that the Marine Corps must "return to our naval roots and regain our capabilities".[37] He goes on to

recognize that "operational capability requires the constant maintenance of relationships and skills developed through years of side-by-side service with the fleet".[38] Our current Commandant, General Neller, reinforces this saying "we are first and foremost a naval combined arms expeditionary force".[39]

General Neller goes one step further in his new planning guidance and adds to the recent calls for the reintegration with the navy after years of operations ashore. Harkening back to the fleet exercises and General Russell's call to action, the current Commandant sees that the Marines have more to offer the Navy than they potentially realize. While there is little doubt that amphibious operations to gain access, seize objectives, and hold terrain contribute to the navy's mission of sea control, is there something more that Marine Corps units could provide the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC)? General Neller calls for further work with the Navy to "shape our concept of naval campaigning and naval expeditionary operations" to "include a greater Marine Corps contribution to Sea Control operations".[40]

A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower (CS21) released in March of 2015 is the current capstone concept for the United States Navy. The document is a multiservice naval concept signed by not only the Chief of Naval Operations, but the Commandants of the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard as well. The document recognizes the value of forward stationed and employed forces for their ability to respond to crises, protect the maritime commons, conduct partner and training exercises, and project power when required.[41]

CS21 recognizes five essential functions to accomplish these missions, "all domain access, deterrence, sea control, power projection, and maritime security".[42] The Marine Corps plays a role in all of these missions, but its role in influencing sea control is neglected. The first and most obvious role the Marine Corps plays is in support of all domain access. There is a mature

body of work in joint doctrine in both the Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC) and the Joint Forcible Entry Operations (JFEO) concept that defines guides planners thought on how the Marine Corps can support this mission.[43] Equally as robust is the role that forward stationed and deployed Marine forces play in power projection. The CSG and MEU/ARG are the primary tools that the Navy uses to accomplish this task. The deterrence mission as defined in CS21 is that of nuclear deterrence. While the Marine Corps has little play in this arena, they do provide the security for those nuclear deterrence assets while in port at home or abroad. Maritime security is another mission that the Marine Corps can only partially fulfill. However Marine units do train to standard to conduct visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) operations as part of the certification process prior to being designated mission capable as a MEU. The glaring gap is sea control.

Sea control is the establishment of local maritime superiority while denying an adversary that same ability. It is more than just the destruction of enemy naval forces, it includes the protection of sea lanes to allow friendly forces freedom of maritime maneuver and to conduct sea commerce while denying the enemy the same. Within CS21 the Navy lists the essential elements of sea control as "surface warfare, undersea warfare, strike warfare, mine warfare, air and missile defense, maritime domain awareness, and intelligence".[44] While it does recognize the importance of having secure "ports of embarkation and debarkation"[45] it lacks an expansion of what land-based forces can do not only to provide safe harbor to conduct this mission, but contribute more directly to the mission of sea control.

Expeditionary Advance Base Operations

One way to achieve this objective is through the Expeditionary Advanced Base (EAB) Operations concept. EAB is an emerging concept that best aligns the goals of addressing the Marine Corps role in contributing to sea control with the realities of the capabilities and organization it will possess in the near future. It recognizes that the Marine Corps must be in a position assist the Navy in a maritime theater, and that the adversary is unlikely to face us in a way that allows us the ability to utilize our strengths, and exploits our reliance on expensive platforms by imposing a cost mismatch. It further recognizes the limitations that the current joint force has in dealing with an adversary when we either cannot or for strategic necessity will not introduce large scale ground or air forces into their sovereign territory. The Marine Corps can play a key role in this strategy by combing its traditional mission of seizing advanced bases with its current concept of distributed operations to frustrate the enemy's objectives.

EAB Operations is a concept still in development. The initial working group convened under the Air Sea Battle Office categorized three different types of forward bases that used to combat an adversary using an A2/AD strategy. The first are Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC) Defense Bases. These exist beyond the range of enemy ballistic missiles and long range fires and defend SLOC against enemy submarine and mine laying capabilities.[46] The second are Distributed Bases. These bases are designed to operate within the range of enemy ballistic missiles and long range fires but distribute critical infrastructure to complicate enemy targeting and provide resilience to friendly forces.[47] By virtue of their size and fixed nature these bases require active defense against enemy attack. This requirement limits the number of these that a force can realistically expect to maintain. Finally, EAB operate within the range of enemy ballistic missiles and long range fires but operate with minimal infrastructure and passive defenses. The temporary, austere, and mobile nature of these bases makes them able to defend

against long range missile strike because they are not of sufficient value to expend the long range strike asset and difficult to locate and target based on their austere and mobile nature.[48]

It is clear that the austere nature of these bases is an operational advantage over the traditional basing structure that the joint force has relied upon when facing an enemy utilizing an A2/AD strategy. However, rather than viewing these bases as simply replacements for more traditional fixed bases, or augmenting afloat staging areas such as amphibious warships or sea basing platforms, Marines should recognize EAB as having unique advantages over these approaches. The EAB concept leverages the current Marine Corps model of distributed operations to support "economy of force, force in being and sustainment operations" that enhance the JFMCC's fight for sea control.[49]

One of the advantages that an adversary utilizing an A2/AD strategy has over US forces is a capacity mismatch. For the cost of one carrier the enemy can procure exponentially more missiles to defeat that one platform. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the United States will produce additional surface combatants in any sufficient quantity in the coming years. The latest report that the Navy submitted to Congress paints a bleak future when analyzing the cost of funding the Ohio Class Replacement, the Navy's number one priority. It notes that in order to do so requires a lack of sufficient investment in other shipbuilding programs, the result of which would be "a battle force inadequately sized to meet our naval requirements in support of the DSG" and "significant risk to the industrial base… since low production rates lines may not provide adequate work to keep shipyards operating at minimum sustaining levels and could result in shipyard closures".[50] This would not only mean that the current inventory would be left to languish, but the hope of rapidly changing course to meet a crises would be unlikely.

EAB provides a suitable hedge against this risk by contributing to economy of force operations. The limited number of combatant ships "will be high demand assets in relatively short supply".[51] To service this gap EAB offers the JFMCC an alternative to accomplish missions traditionally assigned surface combatants to "alternative forces, such as land based missile forces to close straits and conduct sea denial missions" freeing surface combatants to conduct more critical mission sets.[52] More importantly EAB can allow these mobile naval assets to remain a credible threat along the entirety of the enemy's periphery reducing the enemy's ability to mass, and offsetting the cost mismatch by forcing the enemy to defend along his entire front or leaving areas undefended and vulnerable to exploitation.

Some analytical work has already been done to demonstrate how land based missile forces utilizing anti-ship missiles (ASM) could effectively defend strategic chokepoints. In 2013 RAND released a report for the Army to assist in considering what future capabilities they would need.[53] The stated purpose was to assist in the development of concepts "that employ the same inexpensive anti-access technologies to significantly raise the cost of a conflict for China and, should deterrence fail, to limit China's ability to inflict damage off the Asian mainland".[54] The results of the study indicated that "a land based ASM capability would be relatively easy to create in the U.S. armed forces" and that "this capability does not require the permanent stationing of assets in the Western Pacific".[55] They further concluded that beyond "complicating the PLA's C2, intelligence, and targeting requirements" developing this capability "would raise the risks and cost of a conflict for China" or any nation that relies on the maritime domain for freedom of action.[56] In addition possessing these capabilities the researchers note would "further efforts to provide security cooperation to partner nations, could help deter conflict, and could contribute to victory in a future conflict".[57]

EAB also provide the JFMCC a force in being. This echoes the idea espoused by Sir Julian Corbett. A unit conducting EAB operations would serve as a deterrent to adversaries conducting a *fait accompli* strategy of gradual incrementalism. By "maintaining a credible force forward to contest such aggression" the JFMCC can "hold enemy forces at risk until legacy forces can mass to achieve decision" if it is required.[58] This is different from existing forward basing paradigm as these EAB forces would "persist and survive forward within" the enemies threat rings, but remain viable by relying on "passive defense measures and minimal basing infrastructure to thwart effective enemy targeting".[59] Similar to Corbett's "fleet in being" they demonstrate "that where the enemy regards the general command of a sea area as necessary to his offensive purposes, you may be able to prevent his gaining such command by using your [force] defensively, refusing … regular battle, and seizing every opportunity for a counterstroke".[60] Marine planners and force developers will require this type of thinking, using land based maritime forces to execute a historical naval mission, to achieve success.

Finally, EAB provides the JFMCC with increased naval sustainment and support. These bases, much like those envisioned by planners during the Culebra exercises, can provide "a secure location for ships to conduct maintenance, repair and rearm forward enabling them to return to station much sooner than if they are compelled to retire to a deep water port to reload".[61] The Navy and Marine Corps fully embrace this traditional capability. It takes on significant importance however when considering the current mismatch in space and time between an attacking and defending force in the Western Pacific.

While the Peoples Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) develops a wide array of anti- ship missiles, the United States Navy explores the concept of distributed lethality to offer targeting problems and capabilities mismatch to PLAN strike assets, both at sea and ashore. The

traditional surface combatants use missiles fired from Vertical Launching System (VLS). While these combatants carry payloads of "90 to 122 cells" these cells are used for both offensive and defensive missions.[62] Navy planners have already begun to worry about the lack of depth in missile capacity over time:

> A day or two of combat operations may require several anti-aircraft weapons to be used against anti-ship cruise missiles and Tomahawks to be fired at targets ashore. After such operations, U.S. ships would have to travel hundreds, or possibly even thousands, of miles to a facility with weapons, equipment and people to re-arm. This takes our large surface combatants out of the fight for days, thus forcing the CSG and SAG to pull back, out of range of land-based opposing forces. That spells tactical victory for anti-access strategy.[63]

The fact that "reloading VLS cells in today's status quo demands an industrially robust port facility with heavy equipment, trained rigging crews, and a large munitions storage facility" further complicates the issue.[64] While the Navy is working on material and training solutions to combat this problem, EAB gives them a location to utilize these capabilities when mature. This is not the only technical obstacle that the EAB presents, and the Marine Corps will require creative thinkers to develop material and training solutions of its own.

The Lesson of the Higgins Boats: Adaptation as a Strategy

The Marine Corps does not currently possess the equipment nor train to the task of assisting the Navy in conducting its mission of sea control. Embarked forces are not used in support of the naval commander (with the exception of air assets) except when they are sent ashore. More often than not they secure objectives to allow the introduction of additional forces. To execute

the vision of EAB Operations those forces ashore can then, if properly trained and equipped, secure or defend maritime territory to free up surface or subsurface combatants in the region.

The challenge in designing an operational concept and then resourcing that concept in a budget constrained environment is difficult. To do so the Marine Corps should develop a force aimed at integration rather than innovation. There is a wealth of literature in the business world about different approaches to organizational design. Of note is the work of Miles and Snow. The Miles and Snow model subjectively classifies organizations, based on their patterns of strategic decisions, into four categories: Prospector, Analyzer, Defender, and Reactor.[65] Through their work they suggest that the culture of the organization will determine how it responds to a challenge in its respective field. While they have based their work on the traditional business model of profit maximizing and economic incentives, it has value in providing a lens to analyze various approaches to strategic decision making and highlighting the risks present in each system.

The optimal approach for the Marine Corps to pursue is that of the Analyzer. While the Defender and the Prospector "reside at opposite ends of a continuum", the Analyzer is "an organization that attempts to minimize risk while maximizing the opportunity for profit".[66] It blends the approaches of the two extremes by taking parts of their solutions to the problems posed in dynamic market and combining them together. The Analyzer "moves toward new products or markets… only after their viability has been demonstrated" while maintaining a majority of its revenue from a "fairly stable set of products and customer or client groups".[67] For the Marine Corps this means continuing to provide balanced force packages organized around the MAGTF for crisis response missions to combatant commanders, while seeking to exploit

new innovations in the marketplace in how we employ those forces against the enemy in support of an integrated naval campaign.

This approach both reflects the tradition of the Marine Corps and remains the most economically viable. During the interwar period the Navy and Marine Corps relied heavily on modifying commercial platforms for military purposes when specific amphibious requirements arose. The Navy purchased the first modern landing craft from "Andrew Higgins, a Louisiana boat builder" in 1936.[68] After successful testing the boat further improved with the addition of a bow ramp modeled on Japanese design.[69] Additionally the Marine Corps procured a "tracked vehicle designed by Donald Robeling" built for "swamp rescues" over a specialized amphibious tank from a "brilliant but stubborn inventor of armored vehicles".[70] Years later the Marine Corps would again incorporate a revolutionary technology in its operating concepts by harnessing the power of the helicopter and vertical envelopment.

This culture is alive and well in the Marine Corps after lying dormant for some years. The decision to transition from the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) to the Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) as a replacement to the aging Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) most clearly demonstrates this. The recognition that the transformational capabilities promised by the EFV came with too high a cost, both in dollars and tradeoffs, led the Marine Corps to pursue a solution that relied on mature demonstrated technology and enter the acquisition process at milestone B, saving time and money.

The Marine Corps would require a similar solution to provide an ASM capability to execute the EAB concept. As discussed previously there exists a wealth of munitions and weapon systems that already provide this capability to many of our adversaries as well as our allies. One potential solution that the RAND study highlights is the Norwegian-built Naval Strike Missile.

Both ships and wheeled ground vehicles can fire the weapon system produced by Kongsberg.[71] The performance characteristics of this munition advertise the delivery of a payload equivalent of 100kg of TNT to a range greater than 200km in a projectile roughly the same size as the Marine Corps HIMARS rocket.[72] While not as simple as a plug and play solution, it demonstrates that a superior capability exists in a platform similar to those that the Marine Corps has the logistical means of supporting in a deployed and austere environment.

An important component of any new acquisition program is funding. There is Congressional Support for such a capability, which can be further enhanced by demonstrating the potential cost savings when compared with the cost of additional surface combatants. In 2014, as a result of the RAND study being published, Congressman Randy Forbes wrote to the Chief of Staff of the Army advocating that the Army pursue "ground-based anti-ship missiles…specifically for deployment in the Western Pacific [to] offset current advantages by the Peoples Republic of China".[73] This should be especially troubling to Marine leaders as Congressman Forbes is the powerful Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces which oversees the Navy and Marine Corps budgets. The fact that a strong naval advocate is looking to the Army to solve this problem indicates to what degree the Marine Corps has abdicated its role as a key component to a naval campaign.

While the ASM capability is the critical enabler of the ASB concept, many of the existing capabilities exist in the Marine Corps. The concept is not without its challenges. First and foremost is the increased reliance on integrating sensors and C2 systems between navy and Marine Corps units. This concept places a great reliance on an integrated sensor and C2 network to link these EAB outposts under the JFMCC. In addition to sharing information and target tracks with each other, they would need the ability to communicate with elements of a naval task

force for true integration. This is not something that Marine units currently have the capacity to do easily, much less in a likely communications degraded environment.

Conclusion

The United States Marine Corps has the dual mandate to be the strategic shock absorber for the Joint Force and retain its preeminence in conducting amphibious operations. Often these missions are complementary. The Marine Corps has proven its relevance time and again by sending forward deployed amphibious task forces to respond to a variety of challenges to which our leaders demand we respond. Over the last thirty years the list of these potential missions has grown while forces have diminished and spread themselves even thinner. As a response the Marine Corps continues to push the envelope for the smallest unit that it can independently employ.

Throughout all of this the Marine Corps had never sought relief from its traditional mission to seize and defend advanced naval bases. However, the current threat environment and the challenges posed by the proliferation of A2/AD technologies have changed the way the joint force considers operations in an expeditionary environment. The Marine Corps must adapt to fill the gaps that exist in current operational thought.

The path we should follow was blazed in the 1920s and remains consistent today. By not just returning to the Marines Corps' amphibious roots, but returning to its naval heritage, the Marine Corps can best contribute to the emerging security challenges of the 21st Century. Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations, when combined with the larger tenets of *Expeditionary Force 21* provide a naval commander a powerful tool that supports the sea control and sea denial mission.

It is important that the Marine Corps adopt this concept to remain relevant to not only the Navy but the joint force through all phases of a campaign and in all domains.

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