

Leader Development Imperative For The U.S. Army's Force XXI And The U.S. Marine Corps' Operational Maneuver From The Sea

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Title: Leader Development Imperatives for the U.S. Army's Force XXI and the U.S. Marine Corps' Operational Maneuver from the Sea.

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Thesis: To realize the potential of Army and Marine Corps emerging warfighting doctrines in the next century, intermediate and senior leadership of the respective services need to take steps now to ensure that future officer leadership is prepared to meet the challenges of the future battlespace.

Discussion: The emerging Marine Corps doctrine of Operational Maneuver from the Sea and the Army's Force XXI each pose unique challenges to the way the services view officer leader development. These intermediate and senior leadership requirements include developing a vision for officer recruitment and training which supports providing both services with lieutenants capable of functioning as combat leaders in fast moving, highly ambiguous, and devastatingly lethal situations suggested by the emerging doctrine. The Army and the Marine Corps have undertaken several initiatives to ensure that professional development keeps up with the introduction of new technology and the rapidly changing threat environment which forces will face in the near future. There are, however, several impediments to progress in the area of leader development in regards to Force XXI and OMFTS, each of which runs contrary to the successful implementation of the new warfighting doctrines.

Conclusion: Army and Marine Corps senior leadership need to develop a positive, nurturing leadership climate within their units to develop subordinate leaders capable of employing and coordinating the numerous assets that will be available on the future battlefield.

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Leader Development Imperatives for the U.S. Army's Force XXI and the U.S. Marine Corps' Operational Maneuver from the Sea.

The emerging Marine Corps doctrine of Operational Maneuver from the Sea and the Army's Force XXI each pose unique challenges to the way the respective services view officer leader procurement and development. To realize the potential of both doctrines as the next century unfolds, intermediate and senior leadership in the Marine Corps and the Army need to take steps now to ensure that the future officer leadership is prepared to meet the challenges of the future battlespace.

These intermediate and senior leadership requirements include developing a vision for officer recruitment and training which supports providing both services with lieutenants capable of functioning as combat leaders in situations suggested by the emerging doctrine. Senior leaders must determine if warfare will so fundamentally change as to require a shift in the focus of officer selection and training. Also, senior leaders must develop a vision for the future which allows a wide range of leader development strategies.

Another key aspect of success in Operational Maneuver from the Sea, (OMFTS), and Force XXI is the entire concept of leader development, or how the services bring young officers through the levels of responsibility and authority and prepare them for positions of command at higher levels in the services. In this regard, OMFTS and Force XXI are demanding of our forward thinking. Heritage and traditions are sacred to the Marine Corps and the Army. Yet, there may be little connection between history and the battlespace conditions found in the 21st Century and the requirements of future combat leaders compared to their counterparts of yesteryear.

A final key element in the degree of success OMFTS and Force XXI will achieve is how well the Marine Corps and the Army overcome the obstacles to achieving the vision of the emerging doctrines. I believe a great number of impediments to progress are internal to the service, such as deeply held views regarding services roles and missions.

Conversely, there are external obstacles to realizing the services's vision, such as budget constraints, public support, and the changing nature of the threat.

This paper will examine the leadership requirements of OMFTS and Force XXI and highlight the characteristics that leaders must have to be tactically and technically proficient in the future as seen by both emerging doctrines. I will briefly describe and analyze Marine Corps and Army efforts to match training to leadership requirements in the future. Finally, I will address some of the major impediments to progress in preparing for the future, most of which are related to the following paradox: On one hand, imagination and creativity yielded the forward-thinking concepts of OMFTS and Force XXI. On the other hand, the inability of the services to rationalize the shifting plates of heritage, traditions, and experience over the future concepts of maneuver, technology, and the nature of the threat may threaten the successful integration of OMFTS and Force XXI as service warfighting doctrine.

The Army's Force XXI and the Marine Corps' OMFTS are similar in that they attempt to address future service requirements and developing doctrine and technology. While this kind of process is not new in military history, these visions of conditions on the future battlefield are dramatic because of the expected shift from conventional to unconventional conflict and the overwhelming capabilities of technologically-advanced weapons systems. Added to this is the position of the United States as the sole world superpower, a factor which will ensure future U.S. intervention world-wide as peace keeper, honest broker, and champion of American interests.

In summary, OMPTS and Force XXI focus on the increase in the depth, breadth, and height of the battlespace as a function of the increased lethality of weapons and capabilities to "see" our adversaries at much greater ranges through myriad means. Both doctrines seek to bypass enemy strength and exploit weaknesses by finding or creating enemy gaps, weaknesses, and opportunities.

Force XXI further introduces the concept of the "empty battlefield" to describe a

battlespace which is so lethal that traditional maneuver space is avoided as a kill zone and sensor-to-shooter links are streamlined to deliver immediate, decisive indirect fires.

Future battles will be faster paced, more lethal, more information-dependent, and more confusing. This results in the first of many paradoxes of modern warfare: How can warfare of the future be more confusing if we have such advanced technology?

The answer to this first paradox may be found in the character of the threat which will be faced by Force XXI and OMFTS warriors. It is relatively difficult to predict the actions of the hundreds of nation-states and non-state actors within the next few years. It is only wild speculation to estimate the world situation and warfare in the next century. Author Michael J. Mazarr explains this theory of chaos and believes that attempts to model threat behavior are useless. Mazarr says that chaotic systems are neither predictable nor deterministic, but that they are characterized by random interactions, complex feedback loops, and disproportional reactions to minute variations in initial conditions.¹

With Mazarr's overarching framework of chaos as fundamental to the future world and warfare in general, we turn to the leadership skills necessary to operate successfully in the OMFTS and Force XXI arenas. As a key foundation to mastering OMFTS, the Commandant of the Marine Corps has named three necessary skills and attitudes for leaders at all levels: recognition decision making, rapid adaptation to new circumstances, and sophistication in the use of information resources. Further, General Krulak provides the focus of leader education as producing "thinking, decisive commanders who are continually prepared for the next level of challenge and tempo rather than

¹Michael J. Mazarr, , *The Revolution in Military Affairs: A Framework for Defense Planning*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, June 10, 1994.

the last."²

The Commandant has also integrated the moral and ethical foundations of leadership as vital elements on the future battlefield. The chaos and lethality of modern and future war demand the highest adherence to moral leadership because Marines at all levels have "vast destructive power in their hands," with the ability to "act independently and compassionately." Key attributes for combat commanders are strong character, the highest caliber of moral leadership, and integrity.³

The Army Leader XXI Campaign Plan reflects the same basic values as the Marine Corps leadership requirements, but integrates characteristics of leaders with the uncertainty of the future. The Army has undertaken initiatives to:

...develop leaders who can operate in an environment of complexity, ambiguity, and rapid change; can build effective teams amid continuous organization and technological change; and can adapt and solve problems.⁴

Unique to the Army's leader development philosophy regarding preparation for the challenges of Force XXI is the focus on the process to allow for early decisions based upon projected requirements and emerging concepts. For example, working groups are currently in session to identify changes necessary in Reserve Officer Training Corps through Senior Staff College programs to come in line with the Force XXI vision as stated in the Force XXI Campaign Plan. The Army is attempting to adjust supporting agencies now in the direction required by Force XXI tenets in an effort to be ready in the year 2010 and beyond.⁵

²General Charles C. Krulak, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea Concept Paper*, (Washington, Headquarters Marine Corps, Undated), p. 4.

³General Charles C. Krulak, *Marine Corps Gazette*, (December 1995), p. 13.

⁴Army Leader XXI Campaign Plan, 25 January 1996. Internet Document.

⁵LTG John E. Miller and MAJ Kurt C. Reitingger, "Force XXI Battle Command," *Military Review*, (July-August 1995), p. 7.

A non-service perspective on the leadership requirements of future conflict is Mazarr's contention that although conventional war, that is, like forces converging in a Clausewitzian scenario, may not be the warfare of the future, traditional warrior values will remain at a premium. Disengaged combat, OMFTS, or the "empty battlefield" of Force XXI is not entirely possible in unconventional or guerilla warfare, and thus, leaders need to possess the warrior values of physical toughness, courage, and the willingness to give one's life for a cause.⁶

While most of the OMFTS and Force XXI leader development efforts appear most applicable at troop command levels of brigade and below, there are unique leader development requirements for the more senior leaders of the Army and Marine Corps. Central to this is the realization by senior leadership that for both service doctrines to function, the traditional purview of the senior to make decisions becomes less important than his involvement in the entire process of warfare. With technology's rapid advances, it has become easier for commanders at higher levels to "see" the battlefield and thus, the temptation to directly influence the battle at the lowest levels continues to be a reality.

Senior commanders have three major tasks in preparing subordinates for OMFTS and Force XXI.

First, they must possess the vision to articulate clear endstates for their staffs, and use their creativity and imagination to bridge the gaps of information that characterize the ambiguous warfare of the future. In the chaos and uncertainty of future war, we need to know when we have achieved our mission.

Second, senior commanders must demonstrate tactical competence and a strong ethical foundation. Our senior leadership will have the almost impossible task of

⁶Mazarr, p. 27.

implementing new technology and doctrine without ever having seen it or worked with it before. Also, tactical competence is a great challenge because experience in past conflict may not relate at all to future warfare. Values-based leadership is crucial to organizations as the levels of uncertainty rise and as situations become more complex.

Third, senior commanders need to fully appreciate the permissive environment of future maneuver warfare and the paradox of the delicate balance between almost omniscient command and control systems and independent engagements which take advantage of superior speed and lethality. Sensor-to-shooter links are real or near-real time, and operators have seconds to make life and death decisions. It is for this reason that junior leader development is so important. Trust must go up and down the chain of command to promote quick decisions, bold initiative, and innovative problem solving in ambiguous or stressful situations.

Meeting the requirements for leader development at all levels is a tough mission that gets tougher with each advance of technology and shift in the world's geopolitical truth. For example, the following is a description of efforts to better equip the combat soldier and Marine to enhance his effectiveness:

"Those include an objective individual combat weapon, an integrated sight module, combat identification, forward observer/forward air controller, the multipurpose individual munition/short-range assault weapon, a high-resolution display system, a personal status monitor and an advanced image intensifier."⁷

A soldier or Marine equipped with individual equipment such as the above would be a challenge for any young platoon leader, if only in maintenance of equipment. Taking this concept to its logical conclusion, leaders at various levels in the soldier's or Marine's

⁷Scott R. Gourley, "Soldier of the Future," *Army*, (February 1996), p. 56.

chain of command would have some type of display to monitor each subordinate, and higher levels would have apparatus to connect with higher headquarters in a more sophisticated command and control system. The most dramatic thing about the described soldier system, called the Generation II Soldier System, is that nearly 5,000 systems will be fielded by fiscal year 2003.⁸

Indications are that current leader development programs are not keeping up with the pace of technology and often lag far behind the introduction and fielding of weapons systems. In technically advancing specialties like Field Artillery, for example, past experience and school attendance may no longer suffice to meet developing requirements in the field.

A young officer could have recently attended the Field Artillery Officer's Basic Course yet have no exposure to some advanced piece of equipment that has been rapidly fielded to take advantage of some emerging technological advantage. While there is nothing wrong with speeding technology to provide the most leverage, units in the field assume more responsibility for initial leader development. As systems are upgraded, the leader development process in the field is taxed to train leadership on arriving systems. New equipment training occurs and the young leader becomes more and more familiar with the platform. Then, the young officer is reassigned to professional development schooling or a different weapons system, and the process starts over again.

The above example shows a major shortcoming in our current leader development programs. While neither the Force XXI Campaign Plan nor the Commandant's OMFTS concept paper mentions technical aspects of leader development, tactics and technology have been the focus of the majority of our leader development efforts. A key aspect of Marine Corps and Army vision for Force XXI is that although no one can be sure of the

⁸Gourley, p. 56.

specific technology that will prevail in the future, it's a given that it will be very advanced. Using advanced technology in the uncertain world of tomorrow will require leaders to possess certain important attributes.

If the focus of leader development should be at developing the character and values necessary to function on the ambiguous future battlefield, then the Army and Marine Corps need to take a discriminating look at the way we recruit and train officer leadership to ensure that programs are closely linked to future requirements and that they emphasize values over skills, and techniques versus tactics. Now more than ever, the services need to recruit future officers early and focus initial officer training programs on character and values development as precursors to any successful integration of technology on the Force XXI or OMFTS battlefields.

For over 20 years, the Army has used the dismounted infantry squad as a vehicle to teach leadership. Third-year Army Reserve Officer Training Corps' classes are almost totally devoted to squad and platoon level tactics in preparation for the following summer's Advanced Camp, which serves as the major evaluation in determining a cadet's standing in competition for an active-duty commission. While reinforcing the heritage and traditions of the Army as land-based and heavily reliant on leadership and interpersonal skills, the "infantry as teaching vehicle" has several problems which run contrary to the attributes named as vital to success of Force XXI leadership.

First, for four years, Army ROTC cadets are indoctrinated with the infantry as the defining combat arm of the Army. Most often, ROTC cadre are from the combat arms, and all non-commissioned officers are from the infantry branch. Only a very few select cadets, however, will be branched infantry or any other combat arm upon commissioning. The majority of cadets will receive commissions in either the combat support or combat service support branches. This majority of cadets starts an Army career with negative attitudes about their assigned branch, as they have heard nothing different during their

four years of Army ROTC.

A second problem with "infantry as teaching vehicle" is the preference afforded those with military experience or similar backgrounds at the expense of those with no military background or limited military knowledge. The Army ROTC program then becomes a paramilitary organization with little tolerance for the uninitiated, and skills become more important than values.

Officer recruitment and selection is just one area of preparing future leaders for OMFTS and Force XXI heritage and traditions conflict with innovations in technology and the nature of the threat. I believe that there are several key obstacles relating directly to Marine Corps and Army leader development which threaten to impede the successful implementation of the doctrinal concepts of OMFTS and Force XXI.

A major obstacle which could be an impediment to the successful implementation of OMFTS and Force XXI doctrine is the creation of a new set of warrior values which expands the scope of acceptable soldier and Marine conduct to include the intuitive requirements of modern warfare to bridge gaps of the unknown. Speed, lethality, and rapidly changing political situations contribute to the complexity of future battlefields, and in addition to the requirement to be ready "at a moments notice" and all that entails, leaders at all levels will have to develop a high tolerance for ambiguity to fully exploit capabilities of modern technology and operational advantages. With the potential for a totally integrated digital battlefield on the horizon, the freedom of movement once afforded the "man on the ground" may be taken away by echelons of command with a greater understanding of the bigger picture and a helmet-camera view of a developing situation of operational or strategic significance. Warriors of the future need to supplement their traditional ethic with the role as a sensor feeding information into the command and control system at the highest levels of national command authority.

Another impediment to the integration of OMFTS and Force XXI with leader

development implications is the lack of trust, real or imagined, between senior and junior levels of leadership. A key assumption of the Army Leader XXI Campaign Plan is that the environment in which leaders develop has so fundamentally changed that junior leaders are dissatisfied with the Army's leader development process and don't know what the Army's leader development plan is, currently or in the future.⁹

Recent downsizing and current high overseas deployment rates probably combine to fuel the flames of mistrust and poor junior officer retention, but looking toward the future, Army doctrine writers see even more potential discontent on the Force XXI battlefield as U.S. forces are called upon to quell disturbances world-wide. Trust and confidence must be present in maneuver warfare for techniques such as mission-type orders to work.

Other evidence of mistrust in the services today is found in the resurgence of concerns about the "zero-defect" mentality, complaints about "micro-management," and placing the blame on a superior as an excuse for inaction or delay. What is key about each of these concepts is that the current spin on the time-worn "zero defects" and "micro-management" is that those phrases are increasingly used as excuses by some leaders to explain their failure to assume responsibility for a tough decision.

Perhaps the greatest impediment to progress in implementing OMFTS and Force XXI doctrine is the increasing trend toward isolation from society at all levels of the services. Isolationism is an inadvertent outgrowth of our initial entry training programs and it continues throughout the highest levels of the military. Our heritage and traditions contribute to our isolation and weaken our ability to effect sweeping changes such as those suggested in our emerging service doctrines.

⁹Army Leader XXI Campaign Plan, p. 3.

A recent newspaper article about Marine Corps Boot Camp provided an excellent example of isolationism as promoted in Army and Marine Corps initial entry training. Both services stress to the inductees that now that they are in the service, they are not like the people "back at home" as a technique of building up a young man with a new identity as "soldier" or "Marine." Young Marines interviewed for the article told how they didn't like anyone left in their hometown because they were all lazy and addicted to drugs. The further extension of this technique of isolation is the idea that the Marines, (or Airborne, Rangers, Special Forces), stand alone against a nation of deviants of one kind or another.

At the highest levels of the military, isolation is suggested by the comments of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is quoted on the cover of the November-December 1995 *Military Review*: "We don't win unless CNN says we win." The obvious implication is that the military stands alone under scrutiny by CNN and public opinion, regardless of our own assessments. This comment represents the healthy cynicism the Chairman has gained from the reality of his position, and alone it is a thought provoking idea.¹⁰

The problem of isolation is amplified when other senior leadership incorporate related themes into their various talks to soldiers and Marines. For example, we have heard concerns from numerous sources about "bloodless" battles, the "CNN" factor, and America's intolerance for casualties. We have heard about the dwindling defense budget and close scrutiny of the armed forces politically and economically. The notion that major American institutions are "against" us further supports this notion of isolation. There are no answers given, nor suggested courses of action to take to alleviate the problems the services face, only that the problems exist and they won't go away.

¹⁰Cover of *Military Review*, (November-December 1995).

These numerous challenges combine to create a climate in the services that we are somehow "under fire." I believe that isolated organizations are subject to poor morale and insecure leadership more concerned with things they cannot change than mission accomplishment. Inability to effect change results in feelings of frustration and insecurity, helplessness and hopelessness, stress and concern, all of which are counter to the winning positive attitude demanded of OMFTS and Force XXI leadership.

In conclusion, Operational Maneuver from the Sea and Force XXI represent the Marine Corps' and Army's vision for the way that future war will be conducted. Both are attempts to look into the future to anticipate the threat, envision available technology for use in warfare, and begin to develop doctrine to guide future warfighters.

The leadership requirements for the Army and Marine Corps officer will change dramatically, mixing all that comes from our heritage and traditions with the anticipated challenges future leaders will face in a technologically advanced, politically unstable and chaotic world. While absolute integrity, ethical character, boldness, and initiative will remain paramount, compassion, technical expertise, and integration will supplement a leader's critical values. Leader development programs must stress the timeless character of these important values as technology surpasses our most optimistic predictions.

Leaders at all levels of the Army and Marine Corps face several impediments to the total integration of the concepts of Force XXI and OMFTS, all of which deal with developing a winning attitude among leaders at all levels. Only through a positive leadership climate can the conditions exist where tomorrow's leaders can take advantage of the overwhelming advantages the Marine Corps and Army will bring to the battlefield in Force XXI and Operational Maneuver from the Sea.

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