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BUILDING GLOBAL WARRIORS

**Distributed Operations:
The Way Forward**

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER
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ABSTRACT

Title: Distributed Operations: The Way Forward

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Proposed Topic: Distributed Operations (D.O.) implementation in the Marine Corps

Thesis: The effectiveness of distributed operations in the contemporary operating environment (COE) will demand a change from current trends in development within the Marine Corps. ***In order to fight effectively in the COE, the Marine Corps will have to implement an enhanced distributed operations capability amongst our fighting forces.***

Discussion: While the origins of D.O. are as old as military history itself, I believe that the employment of small, dispersed, and independent forces is necessary for our present and future success during what Colonel Hammes calls the “fourth generation of warfare” (4GW). Despite the fact that we currently execute some form, or level, of D.O., I do not believe that our recent endeavors will get us to where we need to be – successful against a global threat of extremists whom are networked and execute in “flat” organizations based largely on a commander’s intent. General Hagee’s Mandate in April 2005 laid the foundation for experimentation and implementation of D.O. within the Marine Corps, and since then, various organizations – Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Systems Command, Training and Education Command, Marine Corp Warfighting Lab – have taken action to follow through on the Commandant’s guidance. The Marine Corps’ current endeavors relative to D.O. implementation equate to no more than training in basic ITSs, an enhanced gear suite, and an improved school track for small unit leaders. That is, basic skills and standards that should already be resident amongst our forces.

Recommendation: Our ability to execute an enhanced form of D.O. is based on an improved warfighter and small unit proficiency. The foundation of improved warfighters and small units is their ability to shoot, move, and communicate, with a solid foundation in existing Infantry Training Standards (ITS). The Marine Corps is wasting valuable time and resources trying to capture in rigid detail what is simply a complementary action to our maneuver warfare doctrine. A better method would be to define the D.O. concept within our existing principles of warfare. The “D.O. principle” dictates that a commander distribute his units to the requisite unit level in order to drive tempo and achieve decisive results in his area of operations. By defining D.O. as a principle of warfare, we could focus our efforts on improving the individual warfighter and small unit proficiency with a goal towards a more capable and professional infantry community.

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- INTRODUCTION -

Despite evolving doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs), and enhanced technology, the theory of warfare is enduring. The nature of war is immutable in that no matter what form it may take, warfare remains a violent clash of wills that is most dependent on the human aspect. The Marine Corps will always require properly trained and equipped warriors who are prepared to meet current and future challenges on the battlefield. In his recently published Commandant's Planning Guidance (CPG), General Conway gave a description of his "Focus Areas", which include "to win the long war" and "to be prepared for future warfare."¹ To meet the challenges of the 21st Century, it is paramount that the Marine Corps enhance its capabilities as a "general purpose, expeditionary force" that is ready for employment in all manners of warfare and contingencies.² ***In order to fight effectively in the contemporary operating environment (COE), the Marine Corps will have to implement an enhanced distributed operations capability amongst its fighting forces.***

Despite recent discussion and experimentation involving distributed operations (D.O.), I do not believe that there is an organizational understanding of the D.O. concept within the Marine Corps. In April 2005, General Hagee gave detailed guidance regarding D.O. in his Mandate - A Concept for Distributed Operations. The Mandate defines the D.O. concept as a complement to maneuver warfare doctrine in that it is "an operating approach that will create an advantage over an adversary through the deliberate use of separation and coordinated, interdependent, tactical actions enabled by increased access to functional support, as well as by enhanced combat capabilities at the small-unit level. The essence of this concept lies in the capacity for coordinated action by dispersed units, throughout the breadth and depth of the battle space, ordered and connected within an operational design focused on a

¹ Conway, James T., Commandant's Planning Guidance 2006.

² Conway, James T., Commandant's Planning Guidance 2006.

common aim”.³ In some form, the Marine Corps already executes distributed operations with its dispersion of forces and assets in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Because the use of distributed operations is as old as military history itself, the concept can be adequately captured within our existing “principles of warfare” – MOOSEMUSS.⁴ The “D.O. principle” should dictate that a commander distribute his forces to the requisite unit level in order to drive tempo and achieve decisive results in his area of operations. By broadly defining the D.O. concept as a part of our principles of warfare, the Marine Corps could get away from finite parameters of qualification and employment, and focus their efforts on the foundations of D.O. – improved individual warfighting skills and small unit proficiency. The operating environments of the foreseeable future necessitate the development of an improved D.O. capability within the Marine Corps.

- CONTEMPORARY OPERATING ENVIRONMENT -

The current global situation has been ably described by the likes of Robert Kaplan, Thomas Friedman, and Thomas Barnett. Robert Kaplan has made a living as a traveling journalist detailing foreign affairs, various regions, peoples, and conflicts the world over. Mr. Kaplan’s latest book, Imperial Grunts, discusses the global employment of United States military forces to protect our interests through what he terms “ground level imperialism.” The book’s premise is that America’s execution of imperialism, or presence the world over, and the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) are implemented on the ground, mission by mission, in the most exotic landscapes by various military contingents that perform the full spectrum of tasks in order to maintain a close watch on the United States’ interests and security.⁵ Mr. Kaplan details the employment of U.S. forces the world over in what Thomas Friedman calls a “globalized society.”

³ Hagee, Michael W., A Concept for Distributed Operations. Department of the Navy, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 25 April 2005.

⁴ MOOSEMUSS – maneuver, objective, offense, speed, surprise, mass, unity of effort, simplicity, security

⁵ Kaplan, Robert D. Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground. Vintage Books, Random House, Inc., New York, NY, 2005. Page 5.

Thomas Friedman's The Lexus and the Olive Tree is a timeless publication that details the development of "globalization" and the resultant interconnectedness of the world's cultures and societies. Mr. Friedman's premise is that the end of the Cold War resulted in the international integration of capital, technology, and information. His book describes the tension between the "haves" and "have-nots"; it is a pull between the global system of commerce, technology, and information versus the forces of culture, geography, tradition, and community.⁶ In his latest book, The World is Flat, Thomas Friedman gives a brief history of the 21st Century with a focus on the "flattening", or more connectedness of the world, and what this more connected world means to countries, companies, and individuals. Mr. Friedman asks, "Has the world gotten too small, too fast"?⁷ Thomas Barnett further describes pitfalls associated with a more connected global society.

Thomas Barnett's books - Pentagon's New Map and Blueprint for Action – give an interpretation of the chaos associated with globalization and how to better address problem areas. Mr. Barnett uses security, economics, politics, and culture to divide the world into what he calls the "functioning core" and the "non-integrating gap" to predict potential conflicts. Mr. Barnett's premise is that America and other "functioning core" nations are key to the success of making globalization truly global through the exportation of security. Mr. Barnett states, "eradicating disconnectedness, becomes the defining security task of our age.... and by expanding the connectivity of globalization, we increase peace and prosperity planet-wide."⁸ While each of these writers portrays a grim picture of the COE, the next question we must ask ourselves is, "What type enemy has developed within these environments"?

⁶ Friedman, Thomas L., The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization. Anchor Books, Random House, Inc., New York, NY, 2000.

⁷ Friedman, Thomas L., The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, NY, 2005.

⁸ Barnett, Thomas, P.M., The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century. Berkley Books, New York, NY, 2004.

In his book, The Sling and the Stone, Colonel Hammes defines the COE and associated enemy as the “Fourth Generation of Warfare” (4GW). Col. Hammes’ premise is that changes in each of the generations of warfare are evolutionary, and the result of dynamic interaction between politics, social issues, economics, and technologic factors that combined to bring about each generation of warfare. According to Col. Hammes the 3GW culminated with Desert Storm, and components of the 4GW began as early as Mao Tse-Tung’s communist revolution in China. Colonel Hammes details the evolution of the 4GW through the description of political, economical, social, and technological developments. Although all these sectors of society are not evolving at the same rate, they are evolving in the same direction – towards a multi-layered and chaotic environment.

Politically, the nation-state has seen the creation of international organizations – the United Nations, NATO, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Concurrently, there has been a great increase in the number and diversity of nations, from 51 to 189 enrolled in the United Nations. A third significant factor is the stateless actors – transnational and international. Economically, there has been the rise of the international economic markets controlled by Mr. Friedman’s “electronic herd” and “supermarkets”. And socially, our world has undergone a dramatic increase in information and knowledge flow. **International connections have multiplied exponentially and developed a sense of the “haves” and “have-nots”**. The changes in technology have been exponentially expedient and had great impact on the development of military weapon systems. The integrated evolution of these four factors has intensified differences amongst our societies and resulted in a conflict of ideas, beliefs, religions, and cultures.

Within this disparate, yet networked, global structure exists a new kind of enemy whose aims span the three levels of warfare. Strategically, the 4GW enemy tries to convince his adversary that their war aims are either unachievable or too costly. Second, there exists the patience in the execution of a long war. Third, is the use of the media to convey an effective information operations campaign by creating political stagnation in international organizations and the target nation. Operationally, tactical

events are selected to target an audience with the message the insurgent is trying to send. The 4GW takes place across the spectrum of political, economic, social, and military fields with tactical actions that involve a mixture of international, transnational, national, and sub national actors. The result of “broken” countries and inadequate governments has been the development of disenchanting populations and factions who seek relief and a voice for change. There has been a reversion to earlier social arrangements – tribal, clan, or gang – to fill the void left by ineffective governments and bureaucracies. We now see a *soldier versus warrior* scenario and vast differences in capabilities and execution.⁹ A soldier practices a job, or profession, and representative of their society. A warrior thrives on, and exists, for war with very little external control beyond a commander’s intent. A soldier, or Marine, practices a profession and is under the control of a political entity. The enemy we are up against executes in small and dispersed units with a guiding commander’s intent the world over.¹⁰

Recently the International Institute for Counterinsurgency under Mr. Boaz Ganor sited over 435,000 individuals on the terrorist watch list. This inordinate amount of potential enemy “executors” is compounded when one considers that they are dispersed across the globe; can potentially cause catastrophic damage with individual, or small team, actions; and, that there does not exist a conventional operational design and hierarchy that can be easily targeted. The world’s 1.3 billion Muslims enable our enemies’ ability to “swim” amongst the masses. Of additional note, our enemy is not relegated to a specific battlefield – he chooses when and where to execute globally. These parameters are very difficult to defend against strategically and are further complicated at the operational and tactical levels of war where the enemies’ strengths remain their ability to execute amongst the “cover” of the population, to dictate the timing of their actions, and due to their proximity

⁹ Hammes, Thomas X., The Way to Win a Guerrilla War. 26 November 2006.

¹⁰ Black, Andrew, Al-Suri’s Adaptation of Fourth Generation Warfare Doctrine. Terrorism Monitor. Volume 4, Issue 18, 21 September 2006.

with the people, maintain a monopoly on intelligence. These factors paint a bleak picture of how and where U.S. military forces must operate.

The United States and Western Culture are faced with a strategic problem, or *condition*, to which there is not a finite solution – we can only *contain* the threat from this condition through the global employment and continuous forward *presence* of our forces. The strategic condition is complicated by our inability to employ a preemptive strategy against what R.S. Moore calls the spreading ideology of extremist Muslims, networking Jihadists, and the resultant Muslim insurgency. Even in our chosen areas of involvement in the GWOT, our problem at the operational level is a lack of forces to effectively execute what General Chiarelli calls “full spectrum” operations.¹¹ The strategic/operational problems are permeated at the tactical level, on the ground, where our forces must execute very diverse missions in expansive AOs without the requisite troop strength and assets. Our high operation tempo, all inclusive mission essential task list, and involvement in diverse and dynamic AOs, demands that we enhance individual and small unit fighting capabilities within the Marine Corps.

- CURRENT TRENDS IN DISTRIBUTED OPERATIONS -

Even with General Krulak’s Hunter Warrior experiments in the 1990s and numerous past examples of D.O., our “triggering event” towards the development of more distributed execution has been the result of military action during the GWOT. The Commandant’s Mandate discusses the changes required to affect D.O. within the Marine Corps, which include increased responsibility at junior levels, gear/equipment enhancements, training and education to support development and implementation, the altering of common manpower practices, and the evaluation of the warfighting functions in order to better support D.O.¹² Because the Commandant directed the Commanding General of the Marine Corp Combat Development Command (MCCDC) to make a plan for the Marine

¹¹ Chiarelli, Peter W. & Michaelis, Patrick R., Winning the Peace The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations. Military Review, www.army.mil/professionalwriting, July-August 2005.

¹² Hagee, Michael W., A Concept for Distributed Operations. Department of the Navy, HQ USMC, 25 April 2005.

Corps wide implementation of a D.O. capability beginning in the fall 2006, and to not wait for completion of all experimentation, there currently exist three simultaneous efforts – *implementation*, *experimentation*, and *refinement*.

The leader in implementation, and the most visible of the three endeavors, is MCCDC's Transition Task Force (TTF). Comprised of members representing the warfighting functions, the TTF is charged with synchronizing D.O. efforts throughout the Fleet Marine Force (FMF). The TTF's primary means of implementation is the Infantry Battalion Enhancement Preparation Program (IBEPP). IBEPP is a focused training, equipping, and staffing program for infantry battalions getting ready to deploy and is organized to give them the baseline capabilities to better employ D.O. (Enclosure 1). The IBEPP represents lessons learned to date and is intended as a direct feed to the FMF for immediate impact in the COE. The most recent lessons learned to date is that our Marines need more work in basic Infantry Training Standards (ITS).¹³ Hence, IBEPP is an effort to ensure that our infantry Marines are trained in the skills and tasks that they should already be proficient!

The first phase of IBEPP involves the small unit leadership fill of officers, staff non-commissioned officers (SNCO), and non-commissioned officers (NCO). Prior to deployment, each of these leaders attends their requisite schools as part of the IBEPP cycle. Concurrent to the "school phase", the TTF conducts its "train the trainer" (T3) and the Tactical Small Unit Leaders Course (TSULC). The aim of the "T3" is to train the company cadre of how to plan, organize, resource, and support standards-based training.¹⁴ The TSULC instruction sets the conditions for junior Marines to make a successful transition from "follower to leader" by instilling in them the ability to train their squad and fire teams in basic ITS.¹⁵ These basics include improved proficiency on weapons and optic devices; fire and movement/maneuver; combined arms at the fire team and squad levels; basic

¹³ Boyce, Russ, How Good Are Our Marines?. Training & Education Command, G-3 Shop. Unpublished Article.

¹⁴ Marine Corp Combat Development Command, Brief – Distributed Operations: Overview for the Commandant of the Marine Corps. LtGen James Amos, Deputy Commandant, CD & I, 20 October 2006.

¹⁵ MCCDC, Small Unit Excellence Conference Results. USMC, Quantico, VA VA, July, 2005.

instruction in communications; and pre-combat preparation and inspections.¹⁶ The foundation of the training at the small unit level is a focus on patrolling and on the attack of a fortified position. D.O. is not a definitive TTP, and developing a more D.O. capable unit, should not entail any additional ITS. What is needed is more rigorous training in the basics – “brilliance in the basics”. The IBEPP does not equate to a D.O. capability amongst our Operating Forces, but is implementing improved training in basic infantry skills and techniques, the use of equipment, key leadership schooling, and small unit competency.¹⁷ IBEPP can be seen as an effort towards General Conway’s “general purpose, force in readiness”.¹⁸

The Training and Education Command (TECOM) is the higher headquarters for all the Marine Corps’ schools training establishment and professional military education (PME) programs. Because the D.O. concept is based on the abilities of individual Marines and small unit infantry skills, TECOM’s work towards D.O. implementation is focused on producing a better educated, trained, and equipped infantryman. Towards this end, TECOM is currently analyzing existing Marine Corps’ ITS to compile a list of fundamentals that can be honed at the small unit level – fire team, squad, platoon – in order to develop a “patrolling culture” within the Marine Corps.¹⁹ Most important to TECOM, the IBEPP helps to develop improved small unit training and streamlined training standards that should be a goal regardless of the Marine Corps’ future plans. In addition to training and education efforts towards the D.O. concept, the Marine Corps has developed an associated gear suite (Enclosure 2).

¹⁶ Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), Brief – Distributed Operations: Overview for the Commandant of the Marine Corps. LtGen James Amos, Deputy Commandant, CD & I, 20 October 2006.

¹⁷ Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), Brief – Distributed Operations: Overview for the Commandant of the Marine Corps. LtGen James Amos, Deputy Commandant, CD & I, 20 October 2006.

¹⁸ Conway, James T., Commandant’s Planning Guidance 2006.

¹⁹ MCCDC, Small Unit Excellence Conference Results. United States Marine Corps, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA, July 2005. Page 5.

Through the use of a supplemental increase in budgeting during 2005, Systems Command (SYSCOM) used the Marine Expeditionary Rifle Squad (MERS) concept as a baseline to produce an early version of the gear needed for an entire battalion to conduct distributed operations. Due to the temporary nature of supplemental funding, SYSCOM's gear list was not thoroughly tested by way of field experimentation before purchase. However, some of the articles on the gear list are the result of the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab's (MCWL) experimentation efforts. While certainly a case of "putting the cart before the horse", SYSCOM's D.O. affiliated gear list does seem to be workable for future conventional-type operations and D.O. endeavors.

The basis of D.O. is the individual warfighter. Despite the Commandant's guidance to develop changing trends in manpower assignments, as of yet there have not been any steps taken towards implementing a D.O. friendly manpower system. Thus far, manpower endeavors with respect to the D.O. concept have produced only the personnel required to maintain the D.O. gear suite (Enclosure 3). And this list of technical personnel has only been manned at each of the Coast's Advanced Infantry Training Courses. In September 2006, the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) published "Distributed Operations: Manpower Policies for Developing Small Unit Leaders" which detailed many reasons as to why the D.O. concept does not fit with current manpower assignment practices.²⁰ **This may be the most notable point of failure in the Marine Corps' endeavor to develop an enhanced D.O. capability, as the ability to fight in a more distributed manner will necessitate more time training and staying in the Operating Forces.**

The Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL) is the lead for experimentation efforts towards the D.O. concept. MCWL takes the results of the experiments and makes recommendations to the larger MCCDC body – TECOM and TTF – that pursue the ongoing implementation process. MCWL began experimentation efforts towards a D.O. capability in 2004 and defines the concept as "the

²⁰ Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), Distributed Operations: Manpower Policies For Developing Small Unit Leaders. Alexandria, Virginia, September 2006.

employment of units across the depth and breadth of a non-linear battlespace, in order to achieve favorable intelligence driven engagements". MCWL envisions "units deployed as fire teams, squads, and platoons whose actions are guided by commander's intent, and are able to disperse or aggregate as the mission and evolving situation requires".²¹ To date, MCWL has executed several limited objective experiments (LOE) and advanced warfighting experiments (AWE) focused on the viability of small unit level D.O. employment, in addition to several exercises and experiments that are planned through fiscal year 2008. MCWL's experimentation endeavors are in keeping with the CMC's guidance to examine the viability of an enhanced D.O. capability relative to each of the warfighting functions.²²

Refinement of the D.O. concept is an ongoing process tied directly to experimentation by MCWL and implementation by TECOM and TTF to the Operating Forces. The Concepts Division at the MCWL is currently reviewing and revising the concept based on lessons learned thus far in Iraq and Afghanistan, and recently published "Marine Corps Operations in Complex and Distributed Environments". This document's findings dictate that we empower our junior Marines; enhance training at a "dispersed" level; continue to develop top of the line gear; develop the use of supporting arms at small unit levels; enhance means of mobility; and make combat service support more supportable to dispersed units.²³ This document states that the D.O. concept should not replace what we are doing now, and simply allows us to execute in smaller, more independent units of employment.

Current endeavors to build an enhanced D.O. capability in the Marine Corps have equated to a semi-tested gear suite, an improved schooling track for small unit leaders, more regimented training standards, and a pre-deployment, preparation cycle. While the Marine Corps' endeavors have been a positive step towards a better trained, equipped, and prepared deploying unit, these measures are not

²¹ Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL), Information Paper – Questions and Answers About D.O.

²² Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL), Information Paper – Experimentation Campaign, 14 April 2006.

²³ Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC), Marine Corps Operations In Complex and Distributed Environments, 11 January 2007.

enough. The “D.O. tool” has many levels of employment and is more, or less, viable with the capabilities inherent in small units and the individual Marine. There are further steps that can be implemented during entry level training and in the Operating Forces to produce optimally trained, educated, and employed warfighters and small units that equate to an enhanced D.O. capability amongst the Marine Corps’ infantry community.

- RECOMMENDED CHANGES -

The Marine Corps’ first priority should be the recruitment and selection of the “right” Marine. While the Marine Corps advertises adventure and elitism, they need to make a harder sell on the warrior aspect of the infantry Marine. Colonel B.P. McCoy’s recent article, “Predators and Prey: Breeding Aggression”, is right on target in that America is not a warrior society.²⁴ While not universally a “warrior culture”, America still produces young men of this class. The Marine Corps is attracting a fair amount of these young men, and could attract more with a targeted recruiting campaign. Maybe it is time to advertise a bold new title and slogan called **“The Marines – America’s Global Warriors”**. A warrior thrives on and exists for war with very little external control beyond a commander’s intent, which should be the essence of GWOT and future execution – more independently executing small units that are deployed throughout their respective AOs the world over.²⁵

Of additional importance is that the Marine Corps get the right man into the right job – the infantry military occupational specialty (MOS). In the realm of recruiting, the Corps should get away from simply filling quotas and work towards the fulfillment of job requirements based on enlistees’ skills and personality traits. Traits to look at for the 03XX field may include aggressiveness, decision-making skills, the ability to handle multi-tasking, and an expressed interest, or knowledge, in a wide

²⁴ McCoy, Brian P. Predators and Prey: Breeding Aggression. Marine Corps Gazette, Quantico, Virginia, October, 2005, Volume 89, Issue 10.

²⁵ Reference Page 5 for description of “warrior” by Colonel Hammes, The Sling and the Stone.

range of topics. Currently there is not a standard profile for an infantry recruit. The Marine Corps must develop a measure of specific personality traits and abilities of its infantry recruits that can be honed and developed into the skill sets necessary to execute in small units on the 4GW battlefield. In addition to recruit screening, emphasis needs to be put on a recruit's background and upbringing.

We need to identify recruits who grew up in threatening urban environments which required some form of survival skills and an ability to "read" and understand the situation. That is, where or where not to go, and how to "network" amongst the local population in order to execute basic functions required during daily existence in a threatening urban environment. Another important skill set may reside with those young men who grew up with a propensity for the outdoors and/or hunting. There is much to be learned and ingrained from the process of scouting, tracking, and hunting game; or simply, hiking and spending extended periods living outdoors. The ability to function in an urban environment and the use of outdoor skills are developed over a lifetime, and we cannot train our recruits to these abilities and expect them to employ themselves effectively in a threatening, foreign environment. Additional emphasis should be put on those recruits who participated in physical-type sports – boxing, football, rugby, and wrestling – and have a desire for aggressive competition and team work. Once the right man has been selected for the right job, the Marine Corps will need to adjust its current enlistment timeline in order to properly prepare their infantry recruits prior to reporting to the Operating Forces.

The Marine Corps is on a tight timeline to develop a recruit into a Marine, to attend MOS school, and get his worth in the Fleet Marine Force (FMF). This current timeline does not allow us to maximize training benefits in the infantry community without taking away from his time in the FMF (Enclosure 4). The Marine Corps must adjust their current periods of entry level schooling. A viable solution towards this end would be to implement extended infantry enlistments that allow adequate time to develop and train our Marines to the requisite level. Why not train up and prepare a recruit for one year prior to reporting to the Operating Forces? By making what is a 4-year enlistment into a 5 or

6-year enlistment, we could better prepare our most important asset, maintain current deployment cycles, and more readily employ D.O. at the small unit level.

One of the strengths of the Marine Corps is their preponderance of youth, however, I believe that in order to enhance their capabilities, the Marine Corps will need to implement extended tours within the Operating Forces. A very evident point of failure in our manpower assignment practices are the relatively short fleet tours that are interrupted by non-operational b-billet assignments. This “stop and go” career path is a hindrance to a Marine’s warfighting prowess. Longer tours would develop more seasoned leadership, proficiency, and cohesiveness. A positive step towards this end would be the advent of the 7-year infantry, sergeant. This way, squad leaders could become true professionals at their craft. Of additional importance would be the elimination, or shortening of b-billet tours. Beyond first year enlistments, the Marine Corps must look towards the development of a truly professional warrior who has 16+ years of training and operational experience during a 20-year, infantry career. **The most drastic changes required for a more capable force will require a complete overhaul of the Marine Corps’ current manpower management process. A changed process that allows the infantry MOS to become more than simply a job, or profession, but a lifestyle.**

Nothing speaks louder than money in a capitalist society, and it is time to spread the monetary bonuses towards the infantry Marine. More money for the infantry MOS and reenlistments would be seen as a reward for executing the most demanding and important job within the Marine Corps, in addition to being used as a retention of services and experience. Although there are certain benefits to maintaining a youthful organization, it is paramount that the Marine Corps mature their forces by holding on to their experience and talents. With the requisite retention bonuses, operational time, and employment abroad, there would be the improved image and allure of the infantry MOS. The Marine Corps will need experience, maturity, and enhanced decision-making skills to better employ their forces on the distributed battlefield during the 4GW. The Global Warrior community should be seen as a lifetime service without the current flows into, and out, of the Operating Forces.

A pivotal point in a Marine's enlistment is his indoctrination to the Marine Corps. At the entry level, the recruit is "untainted" and has very high expectations. In the recent past, the Marine Corps has instituted such programs as the "Crucible", basic urban skills training (BUST), the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP), stability and support operations (SASO) training, Mojave Viper, and the IBEPP. While each of these endeavors is a measure taken towards a warrior ethos, there is more that can be done to develop individual and small units into more D.O. capable forces. In order to enhance the individual's and small units' ability to "shoot, move, and communicate", there should be added rigorous standards that focus on improved physical stamina, marksmanship, social and psychological studies, enhanced decision-making, and training in basic tactical and technical skills.

Integral to the challenges of combat is physical stamina. The first step towards improved physical performance needs to be the altering of the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) into an evaluation that is more challenging, enduring, and persistent. Monthly evaluations that incorporate a 5-mile run, max pull-ups, max push-ups, and max sit-ups would better keep our infantry community fit and ready. A fitness routine that encompasses periods of body building and cardio-calisthenics, a high repetition, weight lifting regimen, and cardiovascular work that is focused on endurance and speed, would go a long way towards an improved warrior. Emphasis should be put on the ability to hike for long distances and periods of time with a lighter load than is customarily carried; more beneficial would be 30-40 mile treks with 25 pound packs, water, chow, and personal weapons, which are covered in an 8-10 hour timeframe and repeated for consecutive days. Enhanced physical standards would help to develop a more physically and mentally tough organization. The individual Marine and small unit needs to be able to move and sustain across long distances while effectively employing his weapon.

Central to the ability to move amongst diverse and threatening AOs is the employment of one's personal weapon. Our infantry community needs intense and continuous training in the employment of small arms. Through the advent of an enhanced marksmanship program the Marine's weapon will become "an extension of his body". The handling and employment of a Marine's weapon needs to

become a natural action that is imbued through the firing of thousands of rounds on ranges that test his ability to engage the correct target at close quarters and maximum ranges, and are fired at day and night while moving or maneuvering. The individual Marine and small unit's lifeline are their ability to shoot, move, and communicate. Paramount to a small unit's existence while in harm's way is their ability to interact, understand, and influence foreign population sets.

We need to implement in our infantry Marines familiarization with those factors necessary to win the "psycho-cultural" wars, with an emphasis on cultural awareness studies.²⁶ More important than language training, is the study and appreciation of world history, cultures, and the social dynamics of a given country or region. The fight is global in nature and will cover many corners of the world, and the time and desire to learn a foreign language does not exist amongst most Marines. More in-depth analysis should be given to how and why such situations arose in a particular area of operations. Marines need to understand various regional dynamics and the United States' defense and military strategy towards dealing with these situations. The 4GW will necessitate leaders capable of fighting in a "three block war" environment, and this will take time, patience, and trust.

More entry level training time and the United States' involvement in a long war will help the Marine Corps achieve this end – a more seasoned leader and decision-maker. Action in Afghanistan and Iraq has taught the U.S. military that planning and execution practices from the past are largely ineffective against an elusive and adaptive enemy. Quick reaction and preemption, or "gut feeling" intuition must replace rigid, linear approaches to problem solving and decision making. Most often key pieces of information will be developed at the lower levels without previous knowledge to the company and operational level commanders. Paramount to our success in what is primarily a tactical-level war will be the equipping and allowance of on-the-scene leaders to execute the entirety of the intelligence cycle – "gather, assess, analyze/process, decide, and disseminate." A push towards more

²⁶ Scales, Robert H., Clausewitz and World War IV.

tactical level decision-making fits with the CMC's Mandate which describes D.O. as, "the use of speed and decision-making to focus on enemy critical vulnerabilities; more readily exploit opportunity; and achieve tactical successes that equate to decisive outcomes at the operational level of war".²⁷ The foundation to the aforementioned characteristics and skills will be increased work in existing skills of the infantry MOS.

The Marine Corps should take a less is more attitude in the development of their forces. That is, training individual Marines and small units to a higher standard in fewer tasks in order to develop a more in-depth proficiency. At any given time, there are approximately 24,000 infantry Marines in the Operating Forces, and this number is greatly reduced when one removes the staff and support apparatus from the numbers. Our small numbers, high operational tempo, and large AOs require us to refine our training standards to develop a more proficient and prepared infantry community. During entry level training, new Marines should focus on proficiency and employment of squad weapon systems (M16A4, M203, M249, hand grenades, AT-4) and night vision devices. Additional emphasis should be put on the development of combat lifesaving skills. Intense training should be invested on movement and maneuver on various types' terrain for extended periods of employment. With a Marine's initiation to the Marine Corps, there should be the implementation of "buddy teams" further emphasizing security with combat checks and inspections to develop a sense of preparedness. Thorough practice in marksmanship and shooting skills, in addition to an enhanced ability to employ one's weapons in fireteam and squad-sized units during movement/maneuver, live-fire exercises, should begin during entry level training. A much longer and higher entry level standard would carry over to a training regimen in the Operating Forces that focuses further on the basics of the infantry MOS.

²⁷ Hagee, Michael W., A Concept for Distributed Operations. Department of the Navy, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 25 April 2005.

Once in the Operating Forces, the individual and small units – fire team, squad, and platoon – would continue their work towards “brilliance in the basics.” Particular attention should be paid to the use of night vision devices and optics. Continued proficiency must be maintained in challenging movement exercises, as well as tactical closure and fire and movement/maneuver at the fire team through company-level. Proficiency should be developed in the use of battalion communication assets and the ability to logistically sustain a small-sized element and support it with requisite fire support assets – direct fire, mortars, artillery, and close air support (CAS). Tasks should focus on the following ITS: Attack of a fortified position, execution in an urban environment, reconnaissance, ambush patrols, mounted and mechanized operations, orders development and issuance, and all matters of land navigation. During their tenure in the Operating Forces, Marines would be imbued with a thorough knowledge of basic infantry skills. Today’s infantry Marine is motivated, willing, and courageous, however, needs to be selected, trained, and trusted to a much higher degree. With the implementation of the aforementioned selection, retention, and training parameters the Marine Corps could develop a more professional infantry community that is ready for employment in smaller elements.

- CONCLUSION -

Military action in two, separate countries has made evident just how immense our challenge (enemy) is, and how/why we must combat them and their associated ideology. Our actions in Afghanistan and Iraq are not what are in question; instead it is whether or not we will produce a properly trained and equipped force that can better take the fight to a new kind of enemy. The United States’ is the most powerful conventional force the world over. Because the 4GW enemy cannot compete with the U.S. in a conventional, military mode, he has begun to employ various tactical/operational measures that avoid our strengths of mass and technology. Whether the United States government decides preemption, prevention, or reaction, the Marine Corps will be employed in any number of contentious operating environments that will require the employment of a highly trained

fighting force that is up to the challenge.²⁸ The use of D.O. is merely a form of maneuver warfare that allows the commander to employ his forces in a more dispersed manner in order to drive tempo and achieve decisive results in his AO. Paramount to the Marine Corps' success in the 4GW is the more distributed employment of smaller units. The foundation of D.O. is individual warfighting skills and small unit proficiency that should be implemented at entry level training and improved upon over a career in the Operating Forces. The development of "Global Warriors" would result in an improved D.O. capability within the Marine Corps.

²⁸ Gordon, Michael R. & Trainor, Bernard E., Cobra II: The Inside Story Of The Invasion And Occupation Of Iraq. Pantheon Books, New York, NY, 2006.

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