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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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CMC
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From: Commandant of the Marine Corps

Subj: UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS MASTER PLAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

1. The Marine Corps Master Plan for the 21st Century (MCMP) is approved and supersedes the MCMP 1994-2004.
2. The MCMP is a Total Force plan that serves as the keystone document of the Combat Development System (CDS). It provides strategic direction and focus for developing the Marine Corps input to the Department of the Navy Program Objective Memorandum for 2000-2005 (POM-00). Within the CDS, this plan provides definitive guidance for sustaining our core competencies as well as developing our future warfighting capabilities.
3. This plan provides guidance and goals to planners and decisionmakers in the near term; it is our roadmap into the 21st Century. While the MCMP cannot provide solutions to all future challenges, it will ensure that we begin our journey into the next millennium with a unified vision. It provides a message of who we are and where we are going. As our overarching planning document, the MCMP is a "user's guide" to the future. I encourage all Marines to read it and use it on a regular basis. We must continue to be self critical. The MCMP must not gather dust on some obscure shelf; rather it must become well-worn from constant revisits as we think about our future.
4. Inquiries concerning this plan should be directed to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (C 39), Quantico, Virginia 22134-5021.


C. C. KRULAK

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS MASTER PLAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

[History] has fully demonstrated the vital need for the existence of a strong force in readiness. Such a force, versatile, fast-moving, and hard-hitting, will constantly have a very powerful impact . . .

82nd Congress House Armed Services Committee Report, 1947

The Marine Corps will be the Nation's force of choice—a certain force for an uncertain world. No matter what the crisis or the threat, the nation will have one thought: Send in the Marines.

Commandant's Planning Guidance, 1 July 1995

[A] naval expeditionary force that, while deployed unobtrusively in international waters, is instantly ready to help any friend, defeat any foe, and convince potential enemies of the wisdom of keeping the peace.

Operational Maneuver from the Sea, 1996

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PURPOSE

The Marine Corps Master Plan provides the vision and guidance necessary to build the integrated combat capabilities the Marine Corps will need for the 21st Century. It directs the Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, to coordinate the preparation and execution of 14 supporting implementation plans that will continue to “make Marines and win our Nation’s first battles” of the future.

ORIENTATION

National Strategies

The President identifies the United States security objectives in the National Security Strategy, establishing the Nation's broad political, economic, and military interests in peace and war. The National Security Strategy is one of *engagement*, with the primary objectives of enhancing our security, promoting prosperity at home, and fostering democracy abroad.

The National Military Strategy supports the National Security Strategy by translating strategic political and economic objectives into national military objectives and tasks. The National Military Strategy sets the national military objectives of *defeating adversaries, deterring aggression and coercion, preventing or reducing conflict, and promoting regional stability*. These objectives drive our strategic tasks: *shape the international environment* while supporting diplomatic, economic, and political elements of power; *respond to the full spectrum of crises*; and *prepare now* for an uncertain future. The National Military Strategy calls for employing all forces, jointly, to meet the Nation's national security objectives within the context of clearly defined military objectives.

U.S. military forces deter, and if necessary, fight and win conflicts through *overseas presence and power projection*. The Nation's forward-deployed naval forces, together with forward and CONUS-based forces from all the Services, combine to meet the requirements of conflicts and are capable of operating across the full range of military operations.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Joint Vision 2010 provide strategic direction for joint operations in the 21st Century. The operational themes of *maneuver, engagement, force protection, and logistics* provide a framework for the future and are enabled by information superiority.

Naval Forces Supporting National Strategy

The degree to which our national security strategy's objectives are met depends to a large extent on the ability of our Nation to deter aggression and promote stability. Credible deterrence is not for the fainthearted; it is achieved through hard work 365 days a year. Our forward-deployed naval forces are major contributors.

Naval forces have long been the instrument of choice to provide our Nation's response to global contingencies. They provide the strategic flexibility and operational versatility to respond to a wide range of crises across the entire range of military operations. Naval forces provide the United States the unique capability to conduct and sustain operations from the sea—including continuous forward presence and self-sustainment—in support of our national interests without reliance on prepositioning ashore, foreign basing, or overflight rights.

Marine Air-Ground Task Forces are an integral part of naval forces. They form a thoroughly integrated air-ground-logistics force that is unique among the world's military forces. These highly trained forces can be readily deployed, employed, and "re-cocked" for follow-on missions in response to global contingencies. Marine forces are expeditionary and can deploy rapidly—

- { By sea on amphibious ships as forward presence forces and as an enabler for follow-on forces.
- { By air as air contingency forces in response to crisis.
- { By air or sea to unite with maritime prepositioning ships strategically located around the globe to establish sustainable forward presence and power projection.

No matter the mission, Marine forces give the unified commander a potent and flexible tactical weapon with strategic and operational mobility.

Concepts for the Future

As we approach the 21st Century, U.S. naval forces are transitioning from a blue water operational focus to the littorals. The Navy and the Marine Corps have developed strategic guidance for taking the naval services into the 21st Century. The Navy and Marine Corps Papers, . . . *From the Sea and Forward . . . From the Sea*, provide direction to shift the focus of naval forces to the littorals.

The Marine Corps capstone operational concept for operations in the littorals is *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*. It provides a versatile, integrated framework for the projection of naval expeditionary power ashore.

The naval services continuously reevaluate operational concepts and revalidate the associated doctrine. Periodic updates of the Marine Corps Master Plan will be based on changes in national strategies, the evolving strategic environment of the 21st Century, the impact of emerging technologies, and lessons learned from operating forces.

ASSESSMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

As identified in the 1997 Joint Strategy Review, the 21st Century security environment will be increasingly characterized by *chaos, crisis, and conflict*.

Trends

The global challenges of the 21st Century will be increasingly complex and less amenable to solution by overwhelming force and will require innovative approaches that are timely and effective across the full range of military operations. The strategic environment in the early 21st Century will be characterized by the following factors:

Demographic

- { Growth of the earth's population will be exponential; global population will exceed 7 billion by 2010.
- { Eighty percent of the world's megacities (cities with populations over 10 million) will be found within 200 miles of a major ocean or sea by the year 2020.
- { Demographic imbalances will increase between industrialized and developing nations, particularly in population segments under the age of 25.
- { Populations of the current industrialized nations will decrease as a percentage of the world population.

Economic

- { By 2020, 7 out of 12 of the world's largest economies will be located along the Pacific and Indian Ocean littorals.
- { Reliance on diminishing supplies of fossil fuels and other strategic raw materials, particularly Middle East oil, will increase.
- { The vast majority of all global trade, and most energy resources, will continue to flow by sea; in Asia, seaborne trade will quadruple in the next 25 years.

Political

- { Many Third World nations will turn toward democracy and free market economies to enhance their well-being and position in the global community; most will experience great difficulty.
- { Increasing nationalist sentiment will limit U.S. access and flexibility to stage and prosecute independent U.S. operations from foreign bases and facilities.
- { Increases in failed or failing states will threaten U.S. lives and property and add to regional instability.
- { Use of terrorism as an instrument of change will increase. There will also be an increasing potential for use of weapons of mass destruction.
- { There will be more challenges to the legitimacy of nation-states by increased numbers of transnational actors and nonstate entities.

{ Third World nations will increasingly employ multinational coalitions and regional organizations to respond to the range of crises confronting them.

Social

{ Transnational ethnic and religious strife will increase.

{ Increasing starvation, disease, and crime in countries struggling to deal effectively with overpopulation will lead to increased incidents of transnational migrations of refugees.

{ Increased unemployment among the burgeoning under-25 populations in Third World nations will lead to increased conflict.

Military and Technological

{ The majority of potential conflicts will be at the lower end of the range of military operations.

{ The number of crises requiring forces capable of operations other than war will increase.

{ Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems will continue.

{ Most advanced countries will reduce their military force structures; nations with burgeoning economies, especially in Asia, will increase the size and sophistication of their armed forces.

{ There will be qualitative improvements in command and control and information systems, and in the capability to disrupt those systems.

{ The range and precision of munitions and their delivery systems will increase.

{ The quantity and quality of effective but relatively low technology weapons, using available countermeasures to frustrate more sophisticated weapons, will increase.

{ Global access to information media, including worldwide public information systems, will encourage increased use of information by nations to influence events.

Assumptions

Certain assumptions can be made, based on the Nation's strategy and the security environment of the 21st Century, which will aid in determining U.S. military force requirements and how the Marine Corps organizes, trains, and equips for the future.

- { In the early 21st Century, the United States will remain engaged globally as the world's only true superpower.
- { U.S. military forces will remain preeminent and will be capable of global power projection.
- { Resources for current and future force modernization initiatives will continue to be constrained.
- { Naval forces will be increasingly employed as part of joint or multinational forces, whether afloat or ashore.
- { Naval forces will maintain the structure, capabilities, and equipment required to provide the Nation with flexible, responsive, forward-deployed forces.
- { Information technology will continue to shrink the world with both positive and negative effects.

Conclusions

The 21st Century will be characterized by increasing crises and conflicts along the world's littorals. The consequences of unconstrained population growth, declining resources, ethnic animosities, resurgent nationalism, the decline of the nation-state, terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are all potential threats to national interests. Sea lines of communication and maritime choke points will increase in strategic importance. These destabilizing factors will impact the world's littorals, where 70 percent of the world's population now lives. Crises and conflict will expand around the globe.

The Nation requires a flexible and responsive forward presence to promote stability, deter conflict, and provide crisis response or conflict resolution. The numbers of U.S. bases overseas will continue to diminish, and foreign basing and overflight rights will be increasingly unreliable. General purpose forces will need to operate across the range of military operations with appropriate strength, mobility, and lethality.

The Navy and Marine Corps provide the Nation with forces capable of selective engagement, a precisely programmable "rheostat" of tailored, cost-effective crisis response capabilities. Marines capable of operating in every clime and place, whether on land, on the sea, or in the air, will play an essential role in our Nation's future.

MISSION. *Provide a highly trained, well equipped, versatile, expeditionary “Force in Readiness” to the Nation.*

EXECUTION

To accomplish the Marine Corps mission, we must focus our limited resources to ensure that we provide the most effective military capabilities. The Marine Corps Combat Development System provides specific procedures for defining and satisfying our required warfighting capabilities. Future combat developments are grounded in our commonly shared vision for the 21st Century.

Vision

In an uncertain world, the U.S. Marine Corps will be a highly versatile fighting force, well prepared to handle a variety of missions and trained and equipped to defeat any enemy. The Marine Corps will be recognized globally as the premier crisis response force, ever ready to project the power and influence of the United States from the sea to any foreign shore. Whether the crisis is a military attack against our Nation or its interests, acts of political violence against Americans abroad, civil unrest, or natural disaster, the Marine Corps will be first on the scene, first to fight, first to quell disturbances, and first to help. The Marine Corps will be our Nation’s force of choice, a certain force for an uncertain world. No matter what the crisis or the threat, the Nation will have one thought: “Send the Marines.”

Forward-operating in fully capable combined-arms teams, the Marine Corps will be on the scene, ever ready to protect the Nation’s interest. We will remain fundamentally a naval expeditionary force, as comfortable on the seas as on the land and in the air. With the Navy, we will be able to go anywhere rapidly and project force across any shore against any foe, sustaining ourselves from sea or land bases without preexisting infrastructure. We will be a learning organization, able to anticipate and adapt quickly to any challenge. We will be self-critical, quick to identify opportunities, and relentless in our efforts to improve. We will continue to be a force rich in history and traditions and imbued with the highest values of courage, honor, and commitment. We will be a total force, Active and Reserve, able to effectively integrate a full range of capabilities, ours as well as those of other services, agencies, and nations, into a unified and focused instrument of national power. We will continuously exploit the latest technologies, concepts, and methods to enhance the operational effectiveness of our forces. And as we have always been, we will be an economical force, able to get more out of less.

The bedrock upon which we will build this superb armed force is the world’s finest military professional, the United States Marine—a disciplined, motivated, dedicated warrior—a smarter, stronger Marine. A Marine imbued with the values that have served us well throughout our history and infused with the agility of mind and body will be required in future conflict. All Marines, enlisted and commissioned, junior and senior, will be educated to act intelligently and independently, trained to seek responsibility, and expected to act with boldness and individual initiative. Regardless of military occupational specialty, all Marines will be trained first as

riflemen, able to defend themselves and their units. Through the unbreakable bond of our unique esprit, we will forge these highly capable individuals into flexible, yet unbeatable, units and into a single Marine Corps.

Making Marines and winning our Nation’s first battles are the two most important things the Marine Corps does for our Nation. Our successes have earned the respect and confidence of the American people—that will continue.

Master Plan Approach

Guidance from the National Security Strategy, coupled with the 1997 Joint Strategy Review and the National Military Strategy, provides the framework for our vision and concepts. The Master Plan builds upon that framework starting with our core competencies as the foundation. Core competencies define who we are; they are grounded in history, proven in combat, and enduring into the future. We build upon our core competencies by achieving goals and objectives and their associated required operational and support capabilities. Within the Combat Development System, Marines design specific implementing actions to ensure success. These specific implementing actions are found in each of the implementation plans. This approach is illustrated in Figure 1-1.

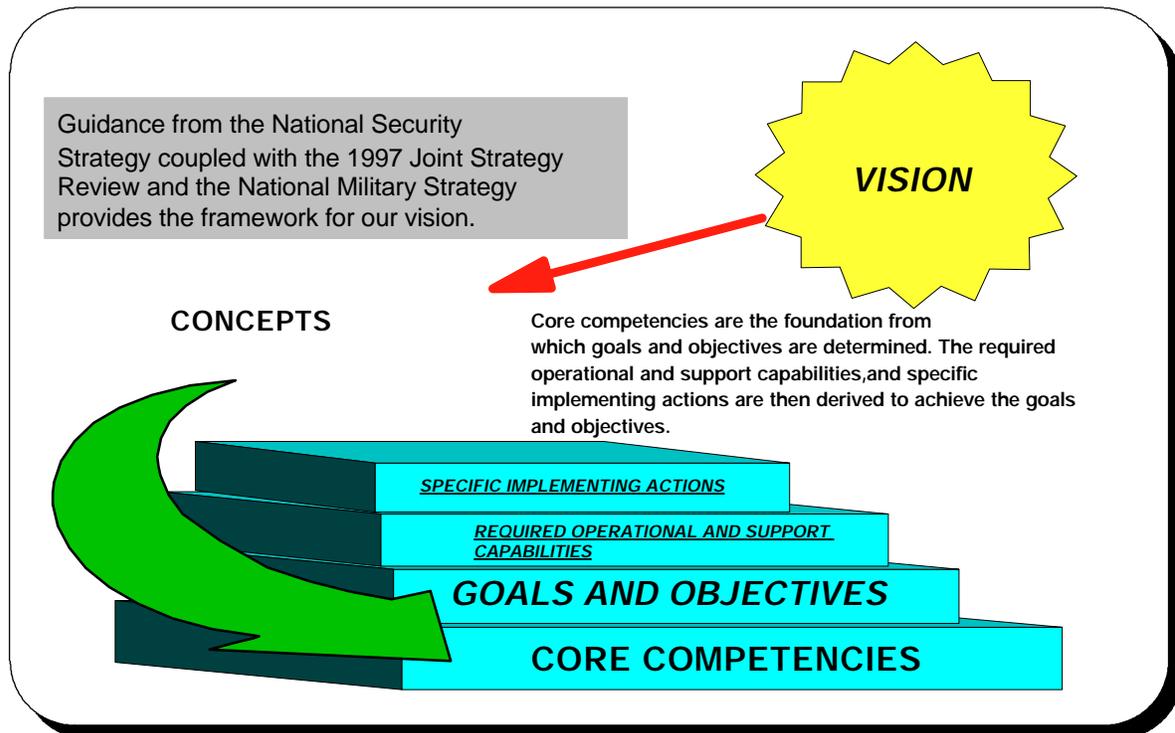


Figure 1-1. Master Plan Approach

CORE COMPETENCIES

The direct result of over 221 years of expeditionary experience, the last 45 of which were spent as the Nation's by-law force-in-readiness, are these six core competencies that define what Marines do and how they operate.

The first core competency, **expeditionary readiness**, defines an institutional mindset that is ready to respond instantaneously to worldwide crises, 365 days a year. However, expeditionary readiness requires three additional, critical attributes. First, it means being ever-ready to *win our Nation's first battles*. This requires a ready force that can transition from peacetime to combat operations at a moment's notice, without critical reserve augmentation, and with certain success. Second, it means preparing to defeat the "opponent after next"—requiring a relentless commitment to innovation and change. And third, it demands a force that can *flourish under conditions of uncertainty*.

The next core competency is **combined arms operations**. As specifically demanded by Congress, the Nation's naval crisis response force must be capable of acting immediately on short notice and without immediate support from Army and Air Force warfighting forces. In other words, such a force in readiness requires an organic, combined arms capability. For over half a century, Marine Air Ground Task Forces have trained so that their ground combat, air combat, and combat service support capabilities are directed by a single commander. *Other services practice combined arms operations—Marine Air Ground Task Force operations embody them.*

Expeditionary operations are much more than military expeditions on foreign soil. Like expeditionary readiness, expeditionary operations require a special mindset—one that is constantly prepared for immediate deployment overseas into austere, bare-bones operating environments. As a result, expeditionary operations consider host nation support a luxury and are designed to bring everything necessary to accomplish the mission—from individual equipment up to and including airfields and hospitals.

The Marine Corps' naval character is an indispensable attribute for a force in readiness, and forms the basis for the fourth core competency, **sea-based operations**. Sea-based operations provide for extraordinary strategic reach and give the Nation an enduring means to influence and shape the evolving international environment. In addition, sea-based operations provide units with a large measure of inherent force protection. A highly ready, combined arms Marine Air Ground Task Force, operating from a mobile, protected sea base, provides the National Command Authorities with unimpeded and politically unencumbered access to potential trouble spots around the world.

The fifth core competency, **forcible entry from the sea**, provides the National Command Authorities a unilateral capability to act. Ultimately, a global superpower must possess an ability to project power ashore in the face of armed opposition. In the past, forcible entry from the sea was defined by amphibious assaults that focused on establishing lodgments on the beach and then building up combat power for subsequent operations. It is now defined as an uninterrupted movement of forces from ships located far over-the-horizon directly to decisive objectives.

Although a force in readiness cannot afford a pause to call up its reserves during an emerging crisis, Marine operations still demand a sixth core competency, **reserve integration**. Marine Reserves routinely practice carefully crafted reserve integration plans to augment or reinforce crisis response missions and to add combat power for operations, especially at the high end of the conflict spectrum.

Scope and Limitations

The Marine Corps is 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 provides detachments and organizations for service on armed vessels of the Navy, provides security detachments for the protection of naval property at naval stations and bases, and performs other duties as the President may direct. However, these additional duties may not detract from or interfere with primary Marine Corps operations.

Hard experience has shown that the best way to quell a small crisis before it explodes is to respond rapidly with a sufficient force and yet maintain the capability to reinforce quickly if the situation deteriorates. Often the immediate presence of a powerful combat force ready to react to any increase in risk tends to have a calming effect in hostile or confused situations. Effective insertion of U.S. forces should not require the cooperation from countries within the region where the crisis occurs. This is especially true where U.S. forces would be considered either provocative or targets. Although the Navy-Marine Corps team can effectively act as an enabling force for follow-on large scale joint operations with other Services, the primary responsibility for the prosecution of large scale land operations belongs to the Army and Air Force.

In summary, Navy and Marine forces provide self-contained and self-sustained air, land, and sea strike forces operating from a protected sea base. Navy and Marine forces are structured to meet a range of contingencies including presence, humanitarian operation, evacuation of non-combatants, peacekeeping, and warfighting. They are compact enough to respond rapidly and yet heavy enough to get the job done. Most important in this increasingly uncertain world, the combined Navy-Marine team provides the National Command Authorities with great flexibility in their pursuit of national interests.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and enabling objectives form the foundation for our institutional plans and implementing actions required to support our core competencies.

Goal A. Provide the Nation a flexible, responsive, naval combined arms Total Force.

Objectives

- { Maintain and improve the ability to provide timely and effective task organized forces to unified commanders and other service and government departments for other missions as the President may direct.
- { Maintain an organic, expeditionary fire support capability.
- { Maintain an organic self-sustainment capability.
- { Exploit advances in information and logistics technologies that reduce our logistical footprint and reliance on facilities ashore.
- { Maintain the capability to support joint, interagency and multinational operations.
- { Maintain a robust, organic aviation capability.
- { Maintain the capability to conduct and sustain operations from the sea with amphibious forces.
- { Develop and transition to an enhanced Maritime Prepositioning Force capability.
- { Maintain and evolve a command and control capability that enables effective operations inside the opponent's decision-making cycle.

Goal B. Recruit, develop, distribute, and sustain a quality Total Force.

Objectives

- { Instill, develop, and sustain the warrior ethos of our Corps.
- { Develop and sustain in all Marines the core values of honor, courage, and commitment.
- { Recruit the best of the Nation's youth.
- { Recruit and sustain a force that reflects the diversity of American society.
- { Transform recruits into Marines.
- { Continue to refine our entry level training to teach, foster, and reinforce our core values.
- { Sustain and reinforce our core values in our schools and units.
- { Foster an environment that rewards performance, accepts mistakes, enhances retention, and recognizes the potential of all Marines and our civilian work force.

- { Ensure that leadership education programs emphasize both mission accomplishment and taking care of Marines.
- { Enhance quality of life programs.

Goal C. Develop and provide relevant and easily integrated Marine forces to the unified commanders.

Objectives

- { Continue to foster our expeditionary mindset.
- { Provide combat-ready Marine forces that are interoperable, rapidly deployable, sustainable, and employable immediately upon arrival.
- { Maintain the capability to rapidly reconstitute and redeploy.
- { Develop, foster, and maintain adaptable command relationships.
- { Provide general purpose forces capable of operating across the full range of military operations.
- { Structure and source Marine Component Headquarters capable of responding to a Unified Commander's requirements and directing and supporting assigned operational forces.
- { Continue to refine Total Force warfighting capabilities.
- { Continue developing command and control systems that are fully interoperable with joint systems.
- { Maintain and enhance our credibility as the Nation's premier force in readiness.
- { Continue to provide disciplined and reliable individuals and units to operate in an environment of uncertainty.
- { Create a command climate that encourages initiative and accepts honest mistakes as part of the professional growth process.
- { Continue to make every Marine a rifleman.

Goal D. Support and sustain Marine forces worldwide.

Objectives

- { Maintain and improve the capability to support force deployment.
- { Continue to enhance materiel support capabilities for deployed forces.
- { Maintain a force regeneration capability.

- { Develop strategies that sustain required infrastructure and services.
- { Provide a comprehensive program of construction, repair, and long-term maintenance for bases and stations.
- { Adopt modern telecommunications and information systems and networks.
- { Improve training areas, ranges, and fixed facilities to enhance maneuver, training, and education opportunities.
- { Implement outsourcing and privatization initiatives without compromising readiness, expeditionary capability, and sustainability of the force.
- { Establish proactive, sustainable environmental compliance and protection measures that are compatible with training requirements.
- { Identify core infrastructure for retention or realignment to support our warfighting missions.

Goal E. Continue to develop innovative concepts.

Objectives

- { Pursue the development of joint and naval concepts.
- { Expand Service concepts.
- { Develop combat capabilities within the Combat Development System.
- { Integrate science and technology, modeling and simulation, and experimentation in concept development.
- { Pursue innovation and advanced warfighting experimentation under the auspices of the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab

Goal F. Enhance personnel and materiel readiness of the Total Force.

Objectives

- { Develop and sustain a Total Force structure that meets the requirements of the 21st Century.
- { Develop and maintain the Nation's most combat capable and fully integrated reserve force.
- { Man the operating forces at authorized strengths.

- { Equip the operating forces at authorized strengths.
- { Develop the capability to measure, monitor, and forecast personnel, equipment, and unit readiness more effectively.
- { Enhance the quality of life of Marines and their families.
- { Maintain deployment readiness.
- { Enhance the professional development of the civilian work force as part of our fully integrated Total Force.
- { Develop a skilled, experienced, and stable acquisition work force to manage our acquisition programs.

Goal G. Prepare Marines for the challenges of the 21st Century.

Objectives

- { Train, equip, and educate Marines as the cornerstone of our warfighting capability.
- { Integrate Marine Corps training into Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Unified Commander joint training plans.
- { Improve and refine training standards commensurate with evolving capabilities.
- { Improve proficiency in battle skills, military occupational specialties, and mission essential tasks.
- { Create opportunities for Marines to learn from shared experiences.
- { Modernize training and education through advanced technologies.
- { Foster military thinking and decision making.
- { Improve awareness of regional political, economic, cultural, and social issues and their impact on security and military operations.

Goal H. Continue to provide the Nation the most cost-effective warfighting capability in an era of constrained resources.

Objectives

- { Identify and streamline processes, functions, and capabilities.
- { Provide an institutional climate that rewards efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
- { Strive to increase capabilities by means other than materiel solutions.

- { Refine the Concept Based Requirements Process to meet 21st Century requirements.
- { Institutionalize continuous business process improvement.
- { Continue to develop common use systems.
- { Continue with rotary and fixed wing aviation neckdown strategies.
- { Develop and use distributed simulation technologies to enhance training and operations.
- { Streamline acquisition and materiel fielding processes to rapidly exploit emerging technologies.
- { Develop and implement a national awareness and education plan to highlight Marine Corps capabilities.

COORDINATING INSTRUCTIONS

Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, is directed to coordinate the development, integration and execution of the 14 supporting implementation plans that “make Marines and win our Nation’s first battles” of the future. These plans will—

- { Be integrated into the Combat Development Tracking System.
- { Include an executive summary, program, function, or process definition, linkages to other implementation plans, and detailed plans of action and milestones.
- { Include a divestiture strategy to eliminate outdated policies, procedures and capabilities.
- { Be submitted to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, within 90 days, following publication of this Marine Corps Master Plan.

Appropriate commanders, deputy chiefs of staff, assistant chiefs of staff, designated assistants, and directors will assist and provide expertise during the development and integration of all implementation plans.

The Marine Corps Master Plan will be updated as required and revised in conjunction with the biennial Program Objectives Memorandum cycle.