

*The Marine Corps has a long tradition of looking ahead, anticipating defense needs, and preparing to meet them in a practical and innovative way. In this decade, a statement presented to Congress in March, the Commandant set the stage for the debate about force requirements. In a postscript to Waters, in doing so, he provides insights in line with the Marine tradition.*

## Defense Policy for the 1990s

by Gen A.M. Gray  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Any discussion of our national requirement for contingency forces for the approaching decades must include an examination of the international and domestic environment, our national interests, existing and anticipated threats, technology, our national strategy, and future force structure requirements. The world has entered again into an era of dynamic and exciting change. Quite understandably, our citizens and warriors are optimistic about more enduring and peaceful relationships throughout the world. There also is much uncertainty with regard to the future security environment of the coming decades. Our Nation must reevaluate its military force requirements in light of the changing threat, our national goals and interests, evolving strategy, and diminishing defense resources. As we pass through this period of transition, we must not lose

sight of the fact that in the present environment of uncertainty, the United States remains the keystone of international stability. Our position as a world leader is the direct result of our unrelenting commitment to democratic ideals, our economic power, and our willingness to maintain credible military force levels to protect our interests and those of our friends. Put another way, the people of our great Nation continue to demand that we maintain our status as a superpower. If we are to maintain this status well into the next century, we must have a balance among all the elements of national power.

### International Environment

A nation's intentions, capabilities, and interests may change, but geography and enduring national values do not. The United States has been and

will continue to be a maritime nation with global economic and political interests. Our basic national security interests and objectives will remain constant. The preservation of a stable world environment through the maintenance of credible military forces and strong alliances will remain crucial to our survival as a Nation and our political and economic well-being.

The changing nature of the Soviet threat and the emergence of new regional powers and threats will be the greatest source of change and uncertainty in the world. In a very short time, we have witnessed dramatic developments in the international security environment. Emerging changes in the Soviet/Warsaw Pact threat are causing us to redefine the way we and our allies view the world. The scope of these developments is not yet fully understood. Accordingly, there is a

need to proceed with both caution and vision. In light of the changing threat, we have begun, and will continue, to reduce those forces focused on the Soviet threat. It is premature to undertake a widespread restructuring of our general purpose and special operations capable forces, the core of our crisis response capability, without a clearer assessment of the long-term effect of the ongoing changes within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe on international stability and a better understanding of the new world order emerging in the previously lesser developed regions of the world. In spite of the uncertainty surrounding the changes occurring, one thing is certain: No longer will we have the luxury of focusing the majority of our defense efforts on a single threat or a single region of the world.

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The international security environment is in the midst of changing from a bipolar balance to a multipolar one with polycentric dimensions. The restructuring of the international environment has the potential to create regional power vacuums that could result in instability and conflict. We cannot permit these voids to develop either through disinterest, benign neglect, or lack of capability. If we are to maintain our position as a world leader and protect our interests, we must be capable of and willing to protect our global interests. This requires that we maintain our capability to respond to likely regions of conflict.

Growing economic power will, in some regions, lead to greater political and military independence among our current alliance partners. The emergence of these new centers of economic,

political, and military power will result, at times, in a divergence of interests. This will increase our requirement for forces capable of responding unilaterally. Rising nationalism throughout the world will complicate further our ability to respond to threats to our worldwide interests. In the coming decade, our access to overseas bases and overflight rights will continue to diminish, which will place greater emphasis on the maintenance of sufficient strategic mobility assets and an increased premium on forces capable of operating and being sustained independent of overseas access.

The underdeveloped world's growing dissatisfaction over the gap between rich and poor nations will create a fertile breeding ground for insurgencies. These insurgencies have the potential to jeopardize regional stability and our access to vital economic and military resources. This situation will become more critical as our Nation and allies, as well as potential adversaries, become more and more dependent on these strategic resources. If we are to have stability in these regions, maintain access to their resources, protect our citizens abroad, defend our vital installations, and deter conflict, we must maintain within our active force structure a credible military power projection capability with the flexibility to respond to conflict across the spectrum of violence throughout the globe.

Drug use and trafficking will continue to undermine both international and domestic stability. The widespread use of drugs has the potential to cause major damage to our economy and domestic social order. Our Nation's demand for drugs contributes to the spread of narcoterrorism, and it is a contributing factor to insurgencies developing throughout the drug producing regions.

#### **Domestic Environment**

For the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that the defense budget environment will improve. Many of our citizens expect the changes in the Soviet threat to result in significant defense cost savings in both the short and long term. Growing concern with budget deficits will make it increasingly difficult to maintain the force structure needed to achieve our worldwide objectives. There will be little support for any military force structure that does

not have aggregate utility across the spectrum of conflict. The issue is clear. How do we provide for the adequate defense of our national interests with less available funding? Solid business principles tell us to capitalize on complementary robustness, avoid unnecessary duplication and specialization, and increase the quality of our forces while reducing their quantity.

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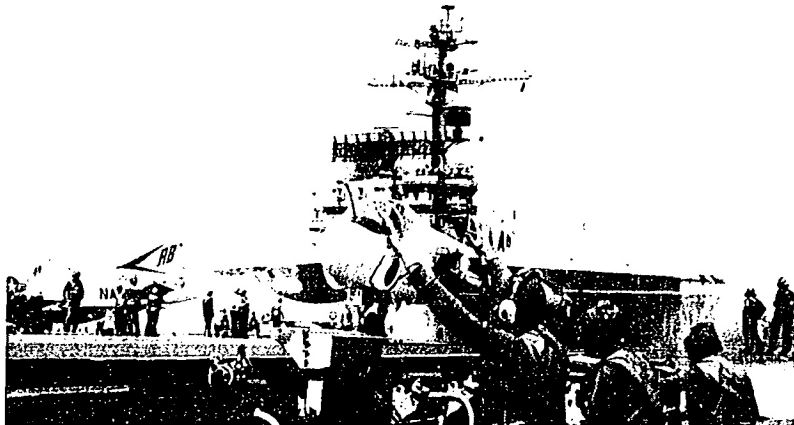
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Although forward defense and coalition warfare will remain key components of our national security strategy, domestic support for overseas basing will continue to diminish unless our people are convinced of its utility and benefit. More importantly, if we are to maintain support for these bases, we must be able to show that our economically capable allies are shouldering their fair share of the cost burden of these bases. It will be difficult to sustain support for overseas basing when bases in the United States are being evaluated for closure.

In recent times, our citizens have shown a greater willingness to support action, including military action, when our interests have been threatened. This trend will probably continue, provided a link can be demonstrated between U.S. intervention and U.S. national interests. The challenge will be in articulating this link. We must take the time to identify our interests and assess the threat. Once this is done, we can formulate a strategy and develop an affordable force structure that supports the achievement of our objectives at an acceptable level of risk.

#### **National Interests**

Our geography, extent of territory, coastline, global economic and political interests, and dependency on the sea lines of communications for our



The Navy-Marine Corps team offers the Nation a real-time reaction capability to overseas crises.

economic and security needs make us a maritime nation. Our superpower political and military status is dependent upon our ability to maintain the economic base derived from our ability to compete in established and developing economic markets throughout the world. If we are to maintain this status, we must have unimpeded access to these markets and to the resources needed to support our manufacturing requirements. In addition, our ability to operate successfully and confidently within these markets and to protect our citizens abroad is dependent on the stability of the regions in which they are located.

Changing demographics are revising the way we view our political, economic, and security environment. We are shifting from a somewhat myopic view of the world to a wider angle view. Our national interests no longer are focused primarily on east to west but have evolved to include north and south. The Pacific region already has surpassed Europe as our largest trading partner, and other industrialized nations rely on the region and its sea lines of communications for much of their supply of strategic resources. In the Middle East, it will remain in our interest to maintain stability for both economic and political reasons since many of our allies depend on the region for the majority of their oil supply. In our own hemisphere, stability is threatened by insurgency and drug trafficking. Our growing dependency on Africa's strategic mineral resources will make stability in this region increasingly important.

#### Threat

The projected threat is complex and is complicated further by the proliferation of sophisticated weapons. Its ambiguous nature makes planning for

military requirements difficult. Economic and political instability threatens nations in all regions of the world. Conflict of some type in each of these regions is ongoing and likely to continue. It is very likely that conflicts will continue to occur simultaneously and in more than one region. The majority of these will be at the low- to mid-intensity level of conflict. We must remember as we discuss levels of intensity that all conflict by its nature is violent—*there is no such thing as low-intensity violence.*

Although there is much uncertainty with regard to the present and developing threat, several factors are clear. As alliances forged over the past 40 years either crumble or take on new characteristics, nations will increasingly act, militarily, in their own self-interest. Nationalism and terrorism are on the rise. In many regions, poverty has become institutionalized with little hope of relief. Within the next 20 years, the earth's population will be approximately 150 percent of today's level. Eighty percent of this population will reside in the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Migration patterns will continue to shift populations away from the heartlands to the coasts. These population patterns place added stress on already overburdened economic and social systems. Competition for limited resources, such as food, water, and housing, will continue to make these regions breeding grounds of discontent. Already, insurgencies are ongoing in the Pacific, Latin America, and Africa. Their numbers will increase, perhaps dramatically, in the short term.

In the Middle East, social disaffection with Western secular ideas continues to provide a breeding ground for terrorism and instability. The political and economic alignment of the region is threatened by the possible se-

cession of the Islamic states from the Soviet Union. In Africa, poverty, famine, disease, lack of national identity, and governmental corruption have created a fertile breeding ground for insurgencies. Drug trafficking, exploding populations, debt, and unfulfilled expectations have created an explosive situation in Latin America. Two distinct classes of nations are emerging in the Pacific—the rich and the poor. In the case of poor nations, poverty is likely to be a very long-term condition that will be exacerbated by rising populations. Conflict is possible as emerging regional powers take steps to consolidate their power. Drug trafficking and insurgencies will continue to plague the region. In Eastern Europe, the transition from totalitarian rule to democracy will be difficult and conducive to instability. Several Eastern European nations are on the verge of economic collapse. Although it is much too early to provide a final assessment, the economic condition of these countries, coupled with unfulfilled nationalistic aspirations and lingering authoritative structures, have the potential to cause significant unrest.

Throughout the world, the proliferation of arms is increasing at a dangerous pace. The variety of weapons systems available and their lethality has dramatically increased. The range of weapons technology encompasses nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, ballistic missile technology, sophisticated aircraft, submarines, armor, armored vehicles, and precision guided munitions for use against land, sea, and air targets. In the past few years, the number of arms suppliers has significantly multiplied. Many nations are developing an indigenous capability to produce advanced weapons both for their own requirements and for export. In addition, countries of the Eastern Bloc can be expected to use the sale of arms as a means to gain sorely needed capital for economic development. The weapons available to developing nations and organizations will be limited only by their ability to pay for them.

The availability of arms will impact another source of instability that will continue to affect all nations—terrorism. This will continue to be the preferred means for radical nations and groups to achieve their ends since it is an inexpensive means of warfare that makes all nations equally vulnerable.

Unfortunately, the increasing sophistication and quantity of available weapons, as well as the recent linkage of drug trafficking to terrorism, will compound this threat. Finally, in regions where support for revolutionary movements has been curtailed, we can expect such movements to shift tactics from guerilla operations to terrorism.

### Strategy

Forward defense, deterrence, escalation control, and coalition warfare will remain key aspects of our national security strategy. Our historical reliance on the seas for our economic and security requirements, coupled with the fact that the majority of potential conflicts will be located along the littorals, drives us toward the development of a strategy that is maritime in character. The expected decrease in overseas bases and overflight rights, coupled with an expected increase in the need for independent action, further underscores the need for a strategy that is consistent with our national character and requirements. To have utility, it will have to be an integrated strategy, which means that it must be applicable across the spectrum of conflict.

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As we determine the needs of the Nation with regard to military strategy and force requirements for the future, we must realize that the strategy and forces needed to deter conflict between the superpowers are not always sufficient to deter conflict at the lower spectrum of violence. Sustained presence, to include nation-building and security assistance operations in the regions of potential conflict, signals U.S. interest and resolve. Our contingency forces must have the flexibility to maintain presence either through forward basing or forward deployments on a continuing basis in areas of interest. For the past 40 years, we have had the flexibility of having both

assets. If either of these is lost or reduced, the importance of the other will increase dramatically. Since the deterrence of violence is to a large degree dependent upon a potential adversary's perception with regard to our national will and capability, we cannot afford in a time of potential or actual crisis, either through lack of access or capability to gain access, to give the impression or confirm that we lack a credible capability to respond.

Recognizing that defense resources are decreasing, a key aspect of our revised strategy must be the concept of sequencing. Within our active force structure we must continue to maintain sufficient force levels to tailor our response to the most likely conflicts. We must have sufficient combat power immediately available to deter conflict, meet recurring operational commitments such as forward deployments and security assistance, and respond to multiple crises. Immediately available forces must have sufficient combat power either to resolve the crisis on terms favorable to the United States or to seize and hold the beachheads, ports, or airfields needed for the introduction of follow-on forces. This requires that we capitalize on existing capabilities, optimize our Active and Reserve force structure mix, and avoid structuring our forces for specific threats. Our Active force structure must be credible to be an effective deterrent.

### Technology

Many of the technologies that will be applied to the battlefield of the next century have already been identified. Directed energy and laser weaponry, improved sensors, robotics, stealth, and superior space systems are already being developed. Genetic engineering and other biotechnologies will lead to capabilities in chemical and biological weaponry never before envisioned. Although the total impact of advancing technology on the battlefield is dynamic, several trends can be identified.

The battlefield of the next century will be increasingly fluid and lethal, and it will be dispersed over a wide area with no rear areas. It will require command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, and interoperability systems that will be fully integrated and capable of rapidly processing, fusing, analyzing, and disseminating

tremendous amounts of information.

Survival on the battlefield of the future will require highly mobile and self-supporting forces that are capable of rapidly massing forces and firepower from dispersed locations, at the same tempo day or night, under all weather conditions. These forces must be capable of independent small unit action. Their success will depend not only on equipment but also on individual and unit initiative, leadership, and discipline.

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If our Nation is to maintain military credibility in the next century, we must continue to exploit affordable new technology. Fiscal constraints and responsibility will require that the development and exploitation of technology have both civilian and military applicability. The combination of civilian and military requirements is not limited to a single area or use. Military requirements for technological advancement in the design of aircraft, ships, avionics, communications, data processing, and robotics, to name but a few, are already compatible in many ways with the needs of the civilian community. Without capitalizing on this type of incentive, we will not have the resources to do what is needed.

### Force Structure

The force structure implications of the changing security environment and advances in technology are significant. We clearly have a need for mobile and versatile forces—forces that can deter aggression by their ability to respond rapidly to a wide range of crises. These forces must have the following characteristics: high levels of readiness, balance and flexibility, air-ground-logistics integration, rapid responsiveness



*Amphibious assault vehicles approach Onslow Beach during an exercise at Camp Lejeune.*

without reliance on Reserve integration, and a credible forcible entry capability. These forces must truly be expeditionary, with organic close air support, assault support, air defense, antiarmor, light armor, engineer, reconnaissance, and intelligence capabilities, and, most importantly, they must be sustainable.

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The complexity of the future security environment requires a diversity of capabilities that will enable us to rapidly tailor forces for a variety of missions. In particular, our forward deployed forces must be capable of executing on short notice the following missions and tasks: raids, security operations, limited objective operations, mobile training team employment, noncombatant evacuation operations, show-of-force operations, reinforcement operations, civic action programs, psychological warfare, deception operations, counterintelligence operations, electronic warfare operations, military operations in urban terrain, clandestine recovery operations, specialized demolition operations, tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel, and in-extremis hostage rescue operations.

The unique requirements anticipated in the developing world will require that we take a broader approach

to conflict in these areas. We must possess the capability to conduct counternarcotic, antiterrorist, and nation-building operations in a wide range of regions around the globe. While direct military action may continue to produce short-term solutions to some crises, deep-seated remaining disaffection will require the capability to deploy active military forces that possess specialized capabilities if we are to provide long-term solutions to internal instability and unrest. These forces must possess capabilities that go beyond warfighting. To be successful, they must be educated on the unique requirements of nation-building operations, pacification, and low-intensity conflict and have both a regional and host country focus. Language capability will be critical. They must be trained to operate in consonance with representatives of the State Department and other U.S. departments and agencies. They must be able to conduct medical, engineer, security assistance, and civil affairs operations. Our objective in conducting these types of operations should be the creation of a bond of special trust and confidence between the people of the host nation and the United States.

In determining the forces required for our future security needs we must evaluate the capability that exists within our present force structure. This is necessary because fiscal realities, professional integrity, and common sense mandate that we identify and maintain those forces already in existence that possess the capability to meet current and projected security needs. In light of the dynamic nature of the world, it would not be prudent to undertake unnecessary and major force structure changes, to include roles and missions changes, until and unless a more stabilized era emerges. Changes in force structure, functions, and roles

and missions are expensive. Our fiscal resources are insufficient to permit us the error of eliminating existing needed capabilities and being required to buy them back later at greater cost in another package. We must review our current capabilities with an eye toward determining what assets within our existing arsenal of forces can be improved rather than discarded.

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Today we have in place the majority of forces needed to respond to our security needs. This did not happen by accident. It is the direct result of over 40 years of congressional guidance and support, and operational planning by those entrusted with the defense of this Nation. As a result, we have within our active force structure a wide range of capabilities. We possess the capability to respond with small independent action forces, mobile training teams, or multidivision forces. Our existing force structure has the flexibility to adapt to the uncertainty of the security environment. We have the capability to project sustained combat power both with and without host nation support or overseas access. The future security environment will demand greater flexibility and capability in this area.

Our force structure must be light enough to get to the fight and heavy enough to win. Our ability to get to the fight is dependent on the availability of strategic lift and the size and weight of our expeditionary forces (footprint). In some areas, our response options are already limited by insufficient lift and too big a footprint. The future security environment requires greater flexibility and capability in this area. Within our active force structure the requirement for heavy weapons and equipment must be reviewed. Equip-

ment that is ill suited for expeditionary operations must be removed from our contingency forces. This equipment can be eliminated or placed elsewhere within our Active and Reserve forces.

Personnel requirements within the active ranks must be reviewed to eliminate unnecessary excess. Our people must be educated, disciplined, and technically proficient. They must be capable of innovative thought and initiative. Unnecessary specialization of skill requirements must also be avoided. Our forces must be manned with individuals who have a wide variety of combat skills to include special operations capability. Using this approach, our force structure will have an inherent cost effective capability to flexibly respond to a wide variety of contingencies.

The sophisticated nature of the emerging threat requires that our research and development efforts continue. We must focus our efforts on developing equipment that is transportable, survivable, mobile, easily maintained, and lethal. Future requirements include the continued development of lighter armor, armored vehicles and artillery, assault support aircraft, ground mobility, and night fighting equipment. Our efforts in research and development must continue to be driven by operational requirements, such as our ongoing efforts to improve our capability to conduct operations from over the horizon.

## Conclusion

Without question, past and current developments in Central and Eastern Europe require a reevaluation of our Nation's security interests and requirements. At the same time, we also must recognize that there always will be social, economic, and political distinctions between nations. As long as these differences exist, nations will continue to take actions to advance their own self-interests that will bring them into conflict with another nation's legitimate security concerns. Threats to our interests have existed and continue to exist separate from the Soviet Union. In fact, the majority of the crises we have responded to since the end of World War II have not directly involved the Soviet Union. This trend will continue.

The diverse nature of the threat and our national interests require a flexi-

ble contingency force structure. The location of the threat, our interests, as well as our national character, dictate that a significant portion of this capability be maritime in character. Our existing floating operating bases, warehouses, and airbases will have great utility as our overseas bases decrease and the requirement for independent action increases. There will be a requirement for a variety of forces to include amphibious forces, land- and sea-based pre-positioned forces, and airborne and airborne forces. The challenge will be to determine the correct mix based on need and affordability.

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In the present era of uncertainty it is crucial that the United States remains a stable element. A contributing factor to stable world order is our capability to act decisively, if need be, in those instances where our interests are threatened. Unacceptable acts against the United States are not to be undertaken lightly and without risk by those who do not wish our Nation well. If we are to continue to deter conflict at the lower spectrums of violence, we must maintain credible contingency and crisis response forces.

As an example of our existing capabilities in this area, one need only examine our response to recent events in Panama and the Philippines, both of which occurred virtually simultaneously. In Panama, the predominant amount of military power was delivered by air. This was consistent with the planning conducted and the military requirements of the situation. The existence of secure airheads, the ad-

vanced pre-positioning of forces and supplies, available planning time, the very presence of our Southern Command's Headquarters, and above all the readiness of the forces deployed resulted in the successful execution of Operation JUST CAUSE.

Though overshadowed by the Panamanian crisis, the attempted coup in the Philippines was an excellent example of maritime forces successfully contributing to the achievement of our national objective without the use of violence. Within hours, adequate forces were quickly deployed to protect our vital interests. Marines were physically inserted to protect our Embassy in Manila and our naval base at Subic Bay. Quietly, professionally, with little fanfare, all of the elements required to respond across the spectrum of conflict were quickly positioned. This provided our National Command Authority with the flexibility to introduce forces as needed and, more importantly, it provided the flexibility and credibility needed to allow the diplomatic process to function. The readiness of these forces to respond with sufficient combat power coupled with their unique capability to remain over the horizon, close enough to respond but far enough away not to incite, was a major factor in the deterrence of violence against U.S. interests in the region simply by the credible demonstration of resolve and capability. This underscores the flexibility provided by these types of forces to our Nation's leaders in times of crisis.

These two crises demonstrate the value of our existing contingency forces. Our Nation will continue to require sufficient numbers of forces organized, trained, and equipped for rapid response to crisis in the decades to come. Strategic lift, both air and sea, has been and will remain the linchpin in the execution of our crisis response and contingency operations. If there is to be a debate with regard to our need for contingency forces, it will center on the proper balance between airlift and sealift and the size of the force dedicated to contingency and crisis response missions. If the majority of our future force requirements exist today, as I suspect they do, our best course is to refine, reshape, modernize, and pare down that which already exists. In taking these steps, we must not lose sight of what is good for the Nation, both now and in the future. **USMC**