

**March 2021****A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY COMMANDANT
FOR INSTALLATIONS AND LOGISTICS**

Although the fundamental nature of war is timeless, the character of war in the 21st century is evolving rapidly, and so the Marine Corps must continue to adapt. In accordance with the Commandant's guidance, the Marine Corps is currently executing one of the most important transformations in its 245-year history. This transformation, centered on *Force Design 2030*, will produce a force postured to compete against a peer adversary and the spectrum of modern threats in an environment characterized by imposing distances, contested domains, and vulnerable infrastructure. These characteristics highlight the criticality of logistics as the pacing function for success and drive the imperative for the logistics enterprise to evolve. Marines have always adapted to shifting threats, most recently proving resilient in the face of a global pandemic, and we must now be ready for large-scale change to Marine Corps logistics.

In 2019, as the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration (CD&I), Gen Berger signed the *Sustaining the Force in the 21st Century Functional Concept*, which outlines four lines of effort to shape the future of logistics in the Marine Corps. These lines of effort (global logistics awareness, diversify distribution, improve sustainment, and optimize installations), coupled with the *Commandant's Planning Guidance* and *Force Design 2030*, steer our modernization efforts.

Although there is much work to do in designing and transforming the logistics enterprise, ongoing CD&I led planning and wargaming has already identified several focus areas. One focus area is redesigning our prepositioning capabilities. For decades, maritime and air superiority allowed us the latitude to deliberately leverage the Maritime Prepositioning Force to deploy Marine Corps forces and supplies in support of the Joint Force. Increasing adversary capabilities in surveillance, power projection, and precision fires place domain dominance in jeopardy. We must create a robust prepositioned network of equipment and supplies that will enable rapid deployment and sustainment of forces in an environment where adversaries challenge our freedom of action.

We must also set the conditions in our operating theaters that enable a rapid shift from the competition that is the current "peace" to countering more aggressive actions from our adversaries. This level of operational logistics requires the joint efforts of those already postured in theater; they must support the equipment and the command and control organization to quickly put Marine forces in a fighting stance. We cannot wait for traditional warnings and indicators to posture ourselves for employment. These same threats complicate how we conduct and distribute logistics support at the tactical level. We must learn how to better control our electromagnetic signature and harden our positions. We must also accelerate the development of autonomous systems as well as other risk-worthy and resilient equipment. Evolving tactical requirements and capabilities, like supporting littoral maneuver, have also highlighted the need for rethinking our organizational constructs. We will continue to examine the functional capabilities within each Marine Logistics Group and more broadly, logistics capacity and requirements across the Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

Underpinning these tactical initiatives is the need to develop and retain high-quality Marines who think critically about the enemy and our own capabilities. We need Marines who have a wide variety of skills and are capable of understanding and adapting to a complex environment. Adversary challenges to our previously assumed freedom of action also extends to our infrastructure. The same capabilities that threaten our battlefield maneuver challenge the security of our force generation and deployment platforms. Our bases and stations should no longer be considered safe havens free from the effects of global conflict. Our bases must be resilient

in the face of a spectrum of risks—whether from kinetic fires, cyberattacks, or the effects of climate change. We have traditionally mortgaged installation improvements against other enterprise requirements, but the threats to our installations require us to redefine how we think about our investment in our bases. Our home stations are warfighting platforms; we must prioritize and resource them as such.

A key to Marine Corps logistics success is our ability to integrate and synchronize with the Navy, providing a fully naval logistics capability. To ensure responsiveness of sustainment and distribution, the naval force must have a redundant and flexible system attuned to performance-based networks, vice a brittle architecture built singularly on efficiency. While this synchronization occurs at the headquarters level between Installations and Logistics and the N4, it needs to extend to every level. Recent wargames have shown the benefits of having Sailors and Marines find gaps and identify solutions together. The Navy and Marine Corps team must be synchronized to effectively fight the fleet.

These logistics challenges will require sustained resources and focus to solve and can only be accomplished through holistic changes. As the Commandant stated in his comments to the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee Readiness hearing, “Making legacy platforms better will not force our near peer adversaries to change course.” This is why we are focused on making strategic investments, resourced through divestment of legacy capabilities. These changes, which include divesting of capabilities without having fielded new ones, incur risk that we must carefully control through change management and communication up and down the chain of command. Our goal is to posture the logistics enterprise to sustain the force so that we can “persist and prevail against peer/near peer threats.”

The articles in this issue of the *Marine Corps Gazette* examine how we can address some of the challenges within the logistics enterprise. Our Marine Corps needs not only logisticians, but Marines of all occupational fields, to think critically and creatively about how we can overcome the challenges of sustaining our force in competition and conflict. I am committed to creating maneuver space for all Marines, whether in the halls of the Pentagon or on the battlefield, to help us accomplish these goals.



Charles G. Chiarotti
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps
Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics



Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction
prohibited without permission.