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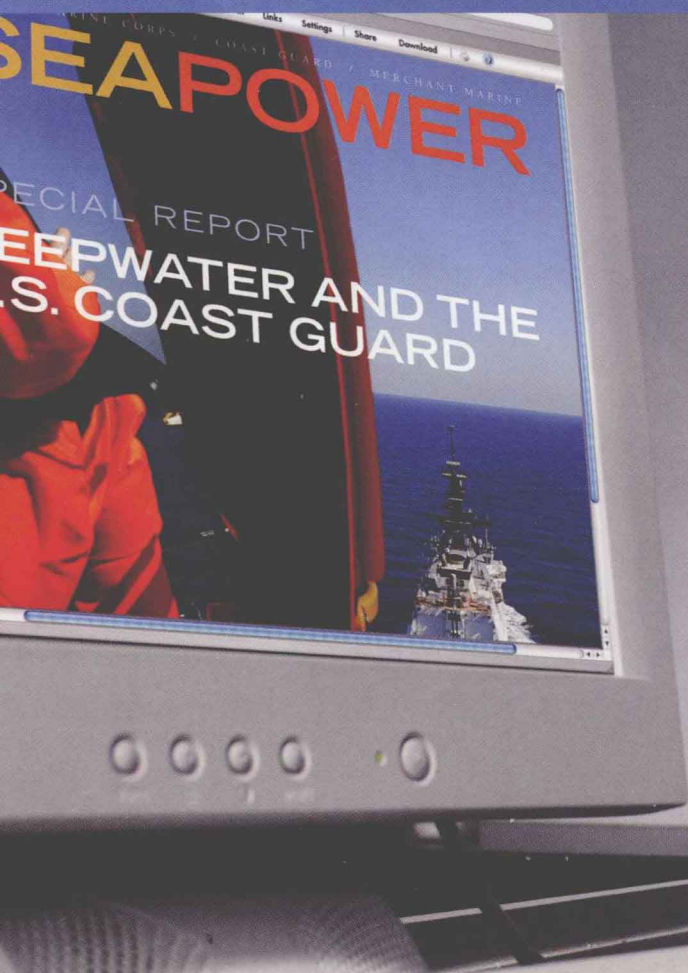


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An aerial photograph of a modern naval ship, likely a Freedom class LCS, moving through the water. The ship is white with a dark hull, and its wake is visible. The background is a deep blue sea under a dark sky.

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SEAPOW

Volume 53, Number 6, June 2010

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COVER PHOTO OF ADM. ROBERT J. PAPP JR., COMMANDANT OF THE U.S. COAST GUARD, ABOARD THE MEDIUM-ENDURANCE CUTTER BEAR BY COAST GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS
SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS ANDREW KENDRICK.



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An Essential Maritime Policy

By DANIEL B. BRANCH JR., Navy League National President

The Navy League unveiled its 2010-2011 Maritime Policy, "Responding Globally — Engaged at Sea and Ashore," during the May 3-5 Sea-Air-Space Exposition outside Washington.

In crafting this essential document, our Maritime Policy Committee weighed the requirements and desires of the Sea Service leaders against the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of Defense Department strategies and priorities and the 2011 defense budget request, both of which have Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates' stamp of approval.

The budget request provides some boost in shipbuilding to a level of about \$15 billion a year across the five-year Future Years Defense Program, puts the Joint Strike Fighter on track, funds the Joint High-Speed Vessel and gives the Navy a new mission of expanded ballistic-missile defense.

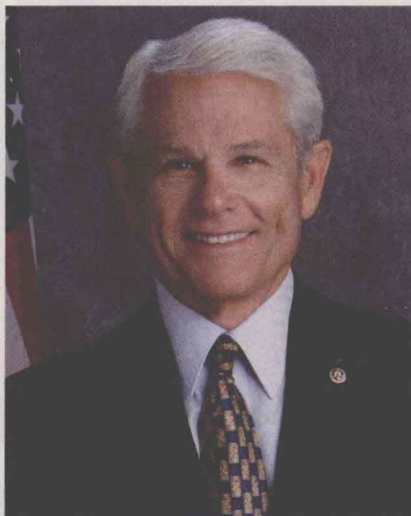
The QDR, among other things, reaffirms engagement of the Navy and Marine Corps, and directs the Navy and Air Force to address the long-term China threat by developing a new Air-Sea Battle concept between them.

Yet on the heels of what some analysts say is a relatively Navy-favorable QDR and budget, Secretary Gates effectively put the Navy, the Marine Corps and industry on notice during a Sea-Air-Space luncheon speech May 3, saying the services "must be willing to re-examine and question basic assumptions in light of evolving technologies, new threats and budget realities. ... I do not foresee any significant top-line increases in the shipbuilding budget beyond current assumptions."

The Maritime Policy notes that the No. 1 problem facing the U.S. Navy is the lack of a fully funded, achievable shipbuilding program that produces the right mix of ships, with the right capabilities, for the right costs, in economic quantities over the next 25 years.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead stated yet again at Sea-Air-Space that he still considers a 313-ship fleet the floor, the starting point. That will not be realized with just \$15 billion a year over the long term.

On the Marine Corps side, Commandant Gen. James T. Conway has stated publicly many times — most recently



at Sea-Air-Space — that the troubled Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) is now on track and remains essential to the service's future effectiveness. But Secretary Gates questioned its necessity in 21st century warfare, saying, "We have to take a hard look at where it would be necessary or sensible to launch another major amphibious landing again — especially as advances in anti-ship systems keep pushing the potential launch point further from shore."

The Navy League, however, continues to support the Marine Corps' plans for the EFV to enhance the service's forcible entry capability, as

detailed in the Maritime Policy.

Secretary Gates strongly believes that building on time and on budget should be the baseline for any program, and not the goal. Indeed, the Navy and industry together must adopt best business practices to improve efficiency, bring costs down, rein in requirements creep and take advantages of economies of scale.

The secretary also noted that the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps outpace all other military forces, several times over, in terms of size, strength and capabilities. A necessity, we believe, given the fact that this nation is at war and yet, beyond combat operations, must also ensure the free flow of commerce on the seas, provide humanitarian aid and assistance around the world when called upon, and train and equip the world's foremost fighting force.

As detailed in the Maritime Policy, the Sea Services Team faces no shortage of challenges on several fronts — fiscal, physical, political — and we must strive to make sure our men and women in uniform and their families have the tools they need to train, fight, win and live fulfilling lives in service to this great nation. I urge you to read and share with others the 2010-2011 Maritime Policy, which is available digitally at www.navyleague.org.

Dan Branch

Investing in Special Ops

By AMY L. WITTMAN, Editor in Chief

Facing a complex and uncertain security environment, the Department of Defense has increased its investment in special operation forces and unique warfare capabilities.

To prevail against al-Qaida and its allies, the 2010 Quadrennial

Defense Review notes U.S. forces must have "a highly capable network of special operations and intelligence capabilities" and build "the security capacity of key partners around the world" to reduce the availability of al-Qaida safe havens.

This month, *Seapower* explores some special warfare capabilities developed in the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard that are being brought to bear against this enemy.

Special Correspondent Otto Kreisher, in "MARSOC Evolves" (page 10), says that the relatively new Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) has seen deployment rates rise and substantial changes in its organization and focus. As the operational environment has changed, so too has MARSOC. A MARSOC Marine must be able to adapt to conditions ranging from non-kinetic operations, such as training local forces, to kinetic, or combat, operations. Today's environment "doesn't give you the luxury of deciding either/or," says Col. Steve Davis, deputy MARSOC commander.

Also in demand are the unique capabilities of U.S. Navy Riverine teams. In "Heading Downstream" (page 14), Special Correspondent Dan Taylor notes that after three



years of patrolling rivers in western Iraq and training Iraqis to take over security operations in al-Anbar province, Riverines have shifted their focus to training Iraqi units in the southern province of Basra.

Demand for their skills elsewhere remains high, with combatant commanders looking to Riverines for help in training local forces in partner nations such as Thailand and the Philippines.

Key U.S. ally Canada has taken slow, deliberate steps to develop its maritime special operations capability. In "Force of Last Resort" (page 18), Special Correspondent David Pugliese reports that the focus now for Canadian Special Operations Forces Command is finding the right mix of vessels and improving its efficiency and effectiveness in maritime counterterrorism operations.

Correspondent Patricia Kime, in "MSSTs on the Block" (page 26), looks at the proposal in the Coast Guard's fiscal 2011 budget request to cut five Maritime Safety and Security Teams, which may signal an end to the service's fielding of specialized units trained for anti-terrorism operations.

Kime also provides an update on Coast Guardsmen who, in late 2008, began their journey to become Navy SEALs, in "Coasties To Join Navy SEAL Teams" (page 30).

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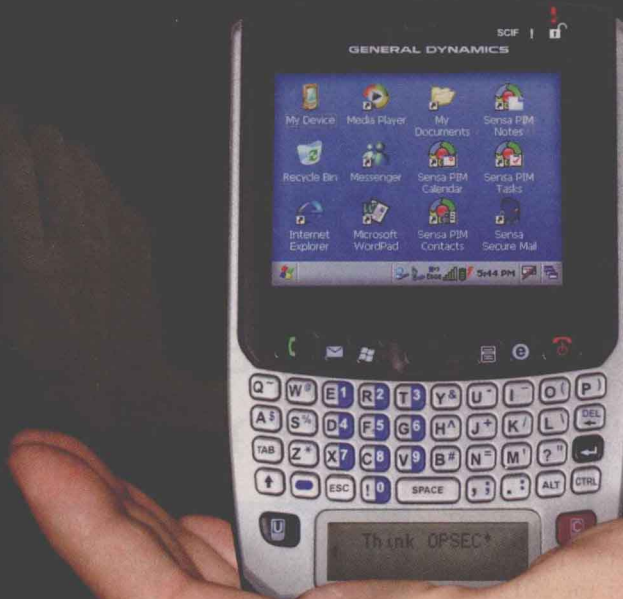
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WASHINGTON REPORT

Gates Wants 'Root-and-Branch Changes' for Long-Term Savings

With Congress just now getting to work on the fiscal 2011 budget proposal, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates already has laid down the marker for the 2012 request: Cut the fat from the Pentagon's overhead accounts to pay the bills for modernization and force structure.

On the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, Gates traveled to the Eisenhower Library and Museum in Abilene, Kan., May 8 to outline his plans to rein in Pentagon spending and restructure the department's top-heavy bureaucracy to be more efficient and cost-effective.

The site was fitting for Gates, a Kansas native who counts President Dwight D. Eisenhower as one of his heroes and pointed during his speech repeatedly to the five-star general's legacy as a watchdog of defense spending with a distaste for waste.

"It is not a great mystery what needs to change," Gates said. "What it takes is the political will and willingness, as Eisenhower possessed, to make hard choices — choices that will displease powerful people both inside the Pentagon and out."

For the fiscal 2012 budget, Gates is directing the services, the joint staff, commands and Pentagon civilians to take a "hard, unsparing look at how they operate — in substance and style."

"Given America's difficult economic circumstances and perilous fiscal condition, military spending on things large and small can and should expect closer, harsher scrutiny," he warned. "The gusher has been turned off, and will stay off for a good period of time."

Gates told reporters he needs to slash overhead costs by about \$10 billion to generate roughly 3 percent real growth in non-overhead accounts, including modernization. Overhead makes up about 40 percent of the defense budget.

The goal, he said during the speech, is to "convert sufficient

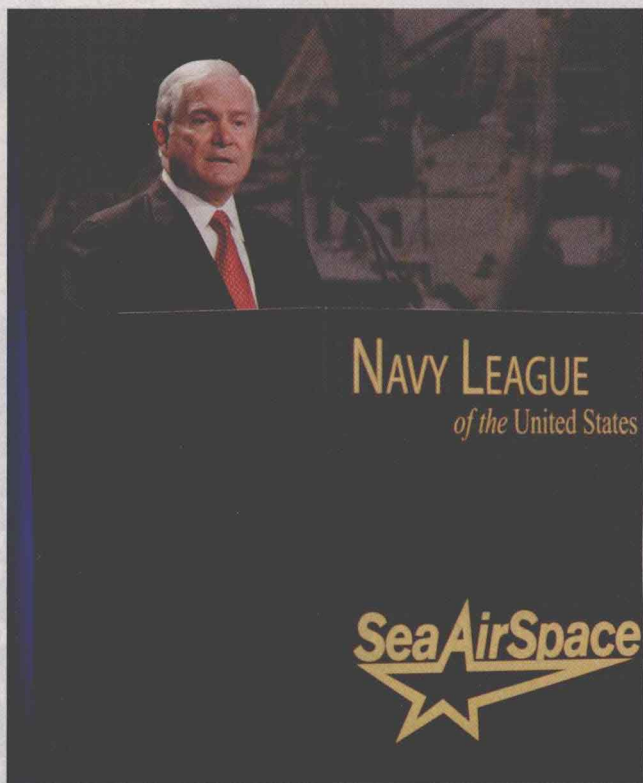
'tail' to 'tooth' to provide the equivalent of roughly 2 to 3 percent real growth — resources needed to sustain America's combat power at a time of war and make investments to prepare for an uncertain future."

Gates said simply lopping a few percent off the top of every account for fiscal 2012 will not do. What is

needed, he said, is a long-term shift in spending and mindset.

"These savings must stem from root-and-branch changes that can be sustained and added to over time," he said.

Going forward, Gates said, the Defense Department must review several specific questions:



Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates speaks at the Navy League's Sea-Air-Space Exposition May 3. During his remarks there, and in a speech at the Eisenhower Library and Museum May 8, Gates urged service leaders to "think more creatively" in an era of increasingly limited spending and changing threats.

■ “How many headquarters and secretariats are primarily in the business of reporting to or supervising other headquarters or secretariats, as opposed to overseeing activity related to real-world missions and needs?”

■ How many executive or flag-officer billets could be converted to a lower grade, with a cascading effect downward — where two-star deputies become one-star deputies, assistant secretaries become deputy assistant secretaries — to create a flatter, more effective and less costly organization?

■ How many commands or organizations are conducting repetitive or overlapping functions — whether in logistics, intelligence, policy or anything else — and could be combined or eliminated altogether?”

To give the services incentive to scrub their budgets for overhead cost cuts, Gates said they could keep within their budgets whatever money they save.

While Gates’ focus appears to be on overhead costs, he still expressed impatience for wasteful spending on weapons systems. Last year, he cut or eliminated more than 30 weapons systems, generating an estimated \$330 billion worth of savings over what would have been the life of the programs.

During his speech in Abilene, Gates said the department’s approach to requirements must change, with so-called “gaps” in capabilities based on a wider, real-world context than they are today.

“For example, should we really be up in arms over a temporary projected shortfall of about 100 Navy and Marine strike fighters relative to the number of carrier wings, when America’s military possesses more than 3,200 tactical combat aircraft of all kinds?” he said. “Does the number of warships we have and are building really put America at risk when the U.S. battle fleet is larger than the next 13 navies combined, 11 of which belong to allies

INTERCEPTS

“The aircraft flew exactly as we expected — no surprises. The fuel works so well, all I needed to do was just fly the plane.”

Lt. Cmdr. Tom Weaver

F/A-18 project officer for Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 23

After piloting an F/A-18 Super Hornet powered by a 50/50 mixture of traditional aviation fuel and biofuel made from camelina oil at Naval Air Station Patuxent, Md.

Navy News Service, April 22

“The Pentagon has enacted energy goals and is inventing, testing and deploying new technologies and alternative fuels to meet those goals. The military is, in many respects, leading the way and helping to re-energize America’s future.”

Phyllis Cuttino

Director of the Pew Charitable Trusts’ climate and energy programs

Time, April 27

and partners? Is it a dire threat that by 2020 the United States will have only 20 times more advanced stealth fighters than China?”

Gates’ comments followed a May 3 speech at the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space Exposition in which he questioned whether the Navy can afford to spend billions on individual ships. [See related story, page 45]

“At the end of the day, we have to ask whether the nation can really afford a Navy that relies on \$3 [billion] to \$6 billion destroyers, \$7 billion submarines and \$11 billion carriers,” Gates said.

Though he applauded recent investments in “more special warfare capabilities,” including small patrol coastal vessels, a riverine squadron and joint high-speed vessels, Gates questioned the need to maintain 11 nuclear-powered aircraft carriers — despite findings in the new Quadrennial Defense Review that concluded 10 to 11 carriers should remain in operation between fiscal 2011 and 2015.

“Consider the massive overmatch the U.S. already enjoys.

Consider, too, the growing anti-ship capabilities of adversaries,” he told the Sea-Air-Space audience. “Do we really need 11 carrier strike groups for another 30 years when no other country has more than one? Any future plans must address these realities.”

But during the Kansas trip, Gates told reporters that he has no plans to cut an aircraft carrier. Rather, he said he wants to “try to stimulate people’s thinking to get out of a rut of old thinking.”

The military, he added, needs to “think more creatively” in an era of more limited spending and changing threats.

“I may want to change things but I’m not crazy. I’m not going to cut a carrier,” Gates said. “But people ought to start thinking about how they’re going to use carriers at a time when you have highly accurate cruise and ballistic missiles that can take out a carrier that costs between \$10 [billion] and \$15 billion and has 6,000 lives on them. How do you do that differently than what you did 30 years ago, 20 years ago?”

INTERCEPTS

"Today, women earn about half of all science and engineering bachelor's degrees. There are capable women who have the interest, talent and desire to succeed in the submarine force. Maintaining the best submarine force in the world requires us to recruit from the largest possible talent pool."

Vice Adm. John J. Donnelly

Commander, Naval Submarine Forces

On the process to select the first group of women who will serve aboard U.S.

Navy submarines, set to begin in July.

Navy Times, April 29

"We tend to lean forward and look at what is in the realm of the possible, and ways in which we can contribute to the overall stability and security of the region. We are no longer in a position to say that other people's problems are not our problem."

Adm. Patrick Walsh

Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet

On what the U.S. military's emphasis on soft power means regarding alliances, partnerships and outreach efforts to reinforce security and stability in the fleet's area of responsibility.

Strait Times, Singapore, May 5

Navy Needs More Time To Decide on F/A-18 Buy

The Navy asked Congress April 30 for more time to consider a multi-year procurement contract offer from Boeing Co. for F/A-18 aircraft.

In a letter to the chairmen of the congressional defense committees, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said his service is "completing its fact finding and discussions to ascertain the ability to achieve substantial savings by way of multiyear procurement for the [fiscal] 2010 through 2013 aircraft."

Congress gave the Defense Department the authority to pursue a multiyear agreement for F/A-18E/F Super Hornet fighters and E/A-18G Growler electronic attack aircraft. But lawmakers set a March 1 deadline to tell Congress whether it will proceed with such a deal and gave officials until May 1 to sign the contract.

Deputy Defense Secretary William Lynn asked Congress for

— and received — an extension on the March 1 deadline.

LCS Freedom Set for RIMPAC Exercise

The Navy's first Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), USS *Freedom*, is scheduled to participate in the 2010 Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise in July near the Hawaiian islands, Capt. Mike Good, program manager for the LCS mission packages, told reporters May 3 at the Navy League's 2010 Sea-Air-Space Exposition.

RIMPAC is a large, multinational naval exercise conducted bi-annually with allied and partner navies of nations bordering the Pacific Ocean.

Freedom, built by a team led by Lockheed Martin, arrived in April at its homeport of San Diego after its maiden deployment, during which it participated in drug-interdiction operations in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific.

A surface warfare mission package was installed, including the Mk50 gun system, and a prototype maritime security module consisting of two 11-meter rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIBs) and visit, board, search and seizure teams.

In related developments:

The LCS's mine warfare mission package will be put through an end-to-end test onboard the experimental catamaran *Sea Fighter*, staged from Panama City, Fla.

Demonstration of the anti-submarine warfare mission package's low-frequency bi-static acoustic array module is scheduled for this winter in the Western Pacific.

The Mission Package Support Facility in Port Hueneme, Calif., activated in October, provided support to *Freedom* during its deployment with a repair team staged to Colon, Panama. The team repaired and returned to service the two RHIBs within 96 hours.

Good said one of the RHIBs had been damaged when it was "shouldered" by a drug-running boat.

The Army's decision to cease development of the Non-Line of Sight (NLOS) missile launcher — scheduled for inclusion in the LCS surface warfare mission package — has put the future of the weapon system in doubt.

Cancellation of NLOS was approved May 13 by Ashton B. Carter, undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics. Good said the Navy has started a trade study "to look at mature and maturing hardware that is available today."

Navy Looking to Extend Lives of Super Hornets

The Navy is looking at the possibility of extending the service life of its F/A-18E/F Super Hornet strike fighters to 9,000 flight hours from the designed 6,000 hours if the operational tempo ages the aircraft earlier than planned.



JONATHAN ERNST

Capt. Mark Darrah, program manager for the F/A-18 and EA-18G program office, speaks at the Navy League booth during the Sea-Air-Space Exposition May 3.

Capt. Mark Darrah, the Navy's program manager for the F/A-18 and EA-18G program office, told reporters May 3 at the Sea-Air-Space Exposition that the Navy "will implement pre-emptive-type things as we discover [needs]."

The Navy expects to begin retiring the Super Hornet in 2025, with the type withdrawn from service by 2030.

Darrah said the Super Hornet is a robust design and the aircraft fleet was doing "real well" with regard to wing-root fatigue life expenditure (FLE). Under current operations, wing-root FLE is most intense during the training work-up cycle, while less so during the combat operations over Afghanistan, with the low airframe stress of long transits to the target areas and a benign air-defense environment.

More difficult to manage, he said, was the accumulation of flight hours with the long transits.

AAPA: Seaport Capacity Limited by Supply Chain

President Barack Obama's goal of doubling U.S. exports over the next five years may be hampered

by limitations in the nation's freight transportation infrastructure, according to members of the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA).

Testifying before the Senate Finance international trade, customs and global competitiveness subcommittee in April, port executives gave their assessments of the nation's transportation infrastructure, AAPA spokesman Aaron Ellis said in a release.

"Even with an economic rebound, U.S. ports in general, and West Coast container ports in particular, have ample capacity for both imports and exports," said Phil Lutes, deputy managing director for the Port of Seattle's Seaport Division. "The real issues are enhancing efficient infrastructure throughout our trade corridors, dealing with the current [container] shortage, general promotion of our products abroad, and antiquated tax policies that discriminate against certain ports and cargoes."

Bill Wyatt, executive director of the Port of Portland in Oregon, said improving the condition of the nations' highways, bridges, rail-

roads, vessel navigation and marine terminal infrastructure were the main challenges in handling increased exports.

AAPA President Kurt Nagle said "there must be significant federal investments in freight transportation infrastructure, including seaports and the land- and water-side connections to America's ports. Exports ranging from cars to coal to foodstuffs to fashion depend on our nations' seaports to reach their markets." ■

Reporting by Seapower Correspondent Megan Scully. Managing Editor Richard R. Burgess and Assistant Editor John C. Marcario contributed to this report.

CORRECTIONS

■ The May report "No 'Coddling' the Osprey" referred to the use of "hot plates" to compensate for the effect of the MV-22 Osprey's jet exhaust on the flight decks of amphibious ships when the aircraft has the engines running in the helicopter mode. The Marines have alleviated that problem and eliminated the requirement for the hot plates by having the Osprey pilots move the rotors every few minutes to avoid concentrating the heat on any spot.

■ The May Historical Perspective incorrectly stated the career progression of convicted spy John Anthony Walker. After more than a dozen years of service with the Navy, Walker already was rising through the ranks as a chief warrant officer when he offered to spy for the Soviet Union in December 1967.

MARSOC Evolves

New missions, rising deployment pace mean more opportunities

By OTTO KREISHER, Special Correspondent

One Size Fits All

After two decades of resistance, U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) was created in 2006. In just four years, the command has undergone substantial changes in its organization and focus.

- The MARSOC Marine now has to be a “one-size-fits-all” warfighter able to adapt to a range of conditions, from “totally non-kinetic to one that is totally kinetic.”
- The major focus for MARSOC Marines in Afghanistan is on building Afghan security forces, protecting the population and coaxing less committed fighters away from the Taliban.
- The MARSOC unit deployment pace has risen from four in fiscal 2006 to 45 in 2009.

The prolonged and intensive worldwide fight against violent extremists has brought an accelerating rate of deployments to U.S. Marine Corps Special Operations Command. And the increasing emphasis on “non-kinetic” operations — noncombat missions concentrating on building or rebuilding infrastructure, training local forces, etc. — has required some substantial changes in organization and focus in the relatively young command.

Although its units have been deployed to dozens of locations around the globe, the command, known as MARSOC, has been used most extensively in Afghanistan, where the major focus is on building Afghan security forces, protecting the population and coaxing less committed fighters away from the Taliban.

“Afghanistan is not about killing people. It’s about creating the effects for success to occur out there,” said Col. Steve Davis, the deputy MARSOC commander. “It is about separating the reconcilables from non-reconcilables.”

That requires Marines with a wide range of capabilities and sound judgment, he said.

“We’ll always retain the ability to be very effective when it comes to dealing in lethality. But that is not the first tool you want to use,” Davis said.

Despite the stress on the non-kinetic aspects of MARSOC’s mission, its casualties and combat awards indicate the brutal nature of the task and the fighting qualities of the newest member of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM).

In its four years of service, the command has had seven Marines and one Navy corpsman killed and at least 90 men wounded. And its Marines and Sailors have been awarded one Navy Cross, three Silver Stars and more than 60

Bronze Stars or Navy Commendation medals with the combat “V,” according to MARSOC statistics.

And after a somewhat shaky start, MARSOC has gained the respect of its parent command.

“They’re doing great,” was the succinct response from Adm. Eric T. Olson, the SOCOM commander, when asked about MARSOC’s performance.

Returning the compliment, Davis said: “Adm. Olson and the folks at SOCOM have been huge supporters of what we’re doing.”

Davis also praised the support the command receives from the Marine Corps commandant, Gen. James T. Conway, and Marine headquarters.

“We couldn’t ask for any better resourcing, any better leadership, any better guidance,” he said.

Marine membership in the organization of elite forces, however, still gets a mixed review within the Corps, where the idea was resisted for nearly 20 years after Congress created SOCOM in 1987 to provide more resources and coordination to the Army, Navy and Air Force special operations commands.



A Marine from U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command, holds security around a humanitarian aid site in the Farah Province, Afghanistan, Feb. 28.

Past leaders and Marines of all ranks insisted that all Marines are “elite,” and worried about a drain on the Corps’ always limited force structure.

The Marines have had similar units in the past, including the Marine Raiders in World War II and, more recently, Maritime Special Purpose Force units, which worked closely with Navy SEAL teams in Marine Expeditionary Units, Special Operations Capable.

With the growing emphasis on special operations in the post-9/11 anti-terrorist campaigns, and pressure from then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, then-commandant Gen. James L. Jones agreed in 2004 to a demonstration using a selected group of Force Reconnaissance Marines teamed with a SEAL unit.

That trial deployment was considered a success, and MARSOC was established Feb. 24, 2006, at Camp Lejeune, N.C., with a small command element and Marines from the Foreign Military Training Unit, which had sent teams to instruct security forces in friendly developing nations.

The unit was renamed the Marine Special Operations Advisory Group (MSOAG) but continued the foreign training mission. It soon was joined by the 1st and 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalions, using personnel from the 1st and 2nd Force Recon companies, for more combat-oriented missions.

The command then stood up the Marine Special Operations School to train future operators and the Marine Special Operations Support Group (MSOSG) to provide communications, logistical, intelligence and military working dog support to the battalions.

The 1st Battalion and some elements of MSOSG are stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif. The rest of MARSOC is at Lejeune.

The first MARSOC unit that deployed to Afghanistan in August 2006 was accused of firing indiscriminately and killing innocent Afghans after its convoy was ambushed. Despite the protest of the first MARSOC commanding general, Maj. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, the company was ordered out of the country by the regional special operations commander.

MARSOC units soon were back in Afghanistan, however, and have been there almost continuously since. But there have been “significant changes” in MARSOC since its formation, Davis said.

“Most substantially, as the operational environment in the Middle East and around the globe has continued to morph, MARSOC has also changed to meet the operational requirements coming out of those areas,” he said.

The Marine Special Operations Regiment was created, using the MSOAG staff and led by a colonel. The regiment now has three battalions, commanded by lieutenant colonels, each consisting of four companies led by majors.

The command also established the Individual Training Course (ITC) to be run by the school.

MARSOC’s current commanding general is Maj. Gen. Paul Lefebvre, who relieved the second commander, Maj. Gen. Mastin Robeson, Nov. 20.

Most recently, the command activated a MARSOC Intelligence Battalion (MIB), which was stood up during a ceremony at MARSOC headquarters May 18. The mission of the MIB will be to train, sustain, maintain combat readiness and provide intelligence support at all operational levels in order to support Marine Special Operations Forces training and operations worldwide with mission-specific intelligence capability, according to a MARSOC release.

Perhaps the most significant change was redesignating the MSOAG as the 3rd Marine Special Operations Battalion and eliminating its distinction of doing mainly foreign military training while the other two battalions did “kinetic” or combat missions.

The original setup assumed that “certain guys do advisory work and other guys do more kinetically oriented operations,” Davis said. “The operational environment we deal with doesn’t give you the luxury of deciding either/or.”

The MARSOC Marine has to be able to adapt to conditions that range from “totally non-kinetic to one that is totally kinetic,” he said. “He has to have the experience, the judgment and the intellect to know what tool is best applied, for what duration, what point of time to get the effect that the strategic commander is looking for.

“Ultimately, when our force is made up of graduates from the Individual Training Course, you’ll get that one-size-fits-all Marine or Sailor who comes through there, capable of all missions across the spectrum,” Davis said.

The school is responsible for the assessment, selection and training of prospective MARSOC Marines. A candidate must be a U.S. citizen, at least a corporal, with a military entrance test score of 105 or higher and no nonjudicial punishments in their record. They must pass physical fitness, water survival and intelligence tests and a psychological evaluation.

Marines who pass the initial screening attend a three-week MARSOC Assessment and Selection Course. Those who make it through the selection process go into the ITC, a seven-month regime that mixes instruction in advanced combat arms and tactics with the skills needed for foreign military training missions.

The selection process and ITC are not “tough man” contests, Davis stressed. “They are designed to identify Marines who have the right attributes required to serve successfully in special operations and highlight those individuals who show a propensity for making sound decisions while operating with minimal guidance in austere environments under adverse conditions.”

All MARSOC Marines receive some language training, but those who show a proclivity for language go through an advanced course in such languages as French, Spanish, Dari or Pashto.

MARSOC currently has nearly 2,400 Marines, Sailors and civilians, of an authorized manning level of 2,600, which it is projected to reach by the end of fiscal 2012.

“We always want more folks sooner because, frankly, there’s a war out there that needs as much force as we could apply against it,” Davis said.

But, he added, it is more important to get “the right individual into that training pipeline, versus just getting anyone in there.”

MARSOC gets some specialized equipment from SOCOM. But about 95 percent of its gear is provided



A Marine from 3rd Marine Special Operations Command teaches Haitian earthquake victims how to use a hand-cranked radio Jan. 21 at the Landing Zone 6 distribution center in Port-au-Prince during Operation Unified Response efforts that followed the Jan. 12 disaster.

by the Marine Corps and is the same as other Marines use. And that is the way they like it, Davis said.

“We are Marines,” he said. “What we do is special operations in this command. We have not at all cut away from the Marine Corps in any way shape or form. If anything, we bring all the best of the Marine Corps to U.S. SOCOM.”

The MARSOC motto is “Always Faithful, Always Forward.” And it clearly is meeting that second standard, based on its unit deployment pace, which went from four deployments in fiscal 2006, to 27 the next year, then to 39 and to 45 in 2009. In addition to Afghanistan, units have been sent to South America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and Southeast Asia.

In Afghanistan, MARSOC is under the command of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, headquartered at Baghram air base, not the Marine commander in Helmand Province.

The Marines continue to study whether MARSOC will become a designated career field, rather than having individuals move to other Marine units after a certain time in the command.

“SOCOM and the Marine Corps make a tremendous investment in our Marines, and if they are going to be subjected to the normal two-, three-year tour, it’s just a bad business decision that doesn’t optimize the investment you’re making in these individuals,” Davis said.

Meanwhile, he said, “we’re just trying to prove our worth every day on the battlefield: getting better tomorrow than we are today, so that both of our four-star headquarters are proud of what we do.” ■



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