



Great Power Competition and the GCE

At the time of this writing, Marine Corps ground combat forces, in cooperation with the Joint Force, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Iraqi partners, are completing their defeat of so called Islamic State terrorists and eliminating their ability to control terrain. In Afghanistan, a Marine Task Force continues to support the coalition fight against the Taliban in the Southwest stretches of the country. Fighting and winning against violent extremist organizations (VEO) has been our generational fight since 2001. The tactical performance and results of our Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF) over the last 18 years stand on their own merits and also stand the test of time. The honor, courage and commitment with which our Marines and Sailors have fought is second to none and is being duly recoded in the annals of Marine Corps history.

While we continue to deploy in support of the counter VEO fight, we also are providing forward based and forward deployed combat credible forces inside the contact layer to deter state adversaries, assure allies and partners, exercise, advise, and build partner capacity. We are also in a global contest with rising and increasingly malign state actors who vie for the attention and commitment of our partners. We are competing with and confronting these adversaries across diplomatic, economic, information and military lines. Our adversaries seek to undermine our alliances, threaten our democratic processes, execute intellectual property theft in cyberspace, attack and disrupt our information technology systems and they overtly violate international laws and norms. They are rapidly expanding their capability and capacity across all operational domains to threaten our Allies, the Homeland, and the rules based world order.

The path to the future is found within our Marine Operating Concept and Force 2025 which are the guideposts set by General Neller. Given the current challenges within and across the domains, MAGTFs and thus the ground combat element (GCE) must continue to make hard choices on divestment and modernization to ensure we pace ahead of the threats. We must ensure of our comprehensive readiness to fight and win in a sophisticated threat environment, characterized by denied or degraded conditions on a multi-dimensional battlefield to include vast subterranean complexes. The Marine Corps is the original Multi-Domain Task Force and must continue to provide exceptional lethality, agility and responsiveness to Combatant Commanders. Critical thinking and a spirit of innovation must be the norm in every unit. The use of artificial intelligence to enhance decision making within our battlespace functions will increase speed, tempo, and momentum.

What is clear is that we are not yet optimized for the fights that are coming in this century. It is the intellectual curiosity as found in the discourse within this periodical, the creativity within the force, and as always, the performance of each Marine on the battlefield that will be combined to ensure we soundly defeat any adversary, at any time, in any clime and any place. Thank you for helping to build a more lethal GCE.

Semper Fidelis,

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