



28 November 2018

To my fellow *Gazette* Readers,

In March of last year, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) published MARSOF 2030; our vision for the future. This document was our deliberate effort to examine what will be required of our personnel and our collective formations if they are to be successful in the competition and conflict of 2030. This publication was the culmination of a nearly two year effort examining the future operating environment, our organizational culture and characteristics, and a determination as to MARSOC's present (and future) required capabilities. This rigorous examination and associated war gaming efforts produced four recurring themes which the team developed into four distinct, yet interrelated, Innovation Pathways that support the overall vision. The four pathways are 'the Cognitive Raider,' 'MARSOF as a Connector,' 'Combined Arms for the Connected Arena,' and 'Enterprise-level Agility.'

Given our focus on the importance of the individual over hardware, it should come as no surprise that the Cognitive Raider is the centerpiece of our effort. It is the one that makes the other three pathways fully viable. For MARSOC, the Cognitive Raider is nothing short of a full re-examination of how we select, train, and educate our Raiders. In addition, it also extends into the mix of technologies with which we will enable our Raiders. The aim is to provide a competitive advantage that will allow MARSOF to out-cycle their adversaries, not only in terms of lethality, but within the 'Infosphere' as well.

Where the Cognitive Raider focuses on the individual, Enterprise-level Agility represents the other end of the spectrum and is MARSOC's bid for success as an organization. Enterprise-level Agility turns MARSOC's small size into a source of strength, one that provides SOCOM, in support of the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC), increased operational flexibility by leveraging all of the Command's capabilities in support of ongoing operations.

The two supporting concepts of Combined Arms for the Connected Arena and MARSOF as a Connector seek to expand how we understand, integrate, and then leverage emerging capabilities with or independently of more traditional supporting arms in the case of the first concept. The second builds upon organizational and personal relationships as the key component, bringing together and leveraging other elements of national power, in conjunction with key partners, against the challenge at hand. Much like the direction we are headed with the Cognitive Raider, these supporting efforts are expected to increase MARSOC's proximity to the information and cyber mission space.

Based on our exploration, we believe that these changes will require modifications to our organizational structure, force disposition, and method of employment. MARSOF 2030 should push us outside of our comfort zone and past existing boundaries, especially when it comes to our approach to recruiting, selecting, educating, training, and retaining our Raiders.

We appreciate the *Gazette* leadership allowing us to share our vision, and invite your thoughts and input. Semper Fidelis and Spiritus Invictus!

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