



Fellow *Gazette* readers,

Last year in this forum, I offered perspective regarding the imperative for Marines and MARSOC to adapt to meet the demands of a changing global security environment, emerging technology, and the Commandant's Force Design efforts. I am proud to report that over the last year MARSOC has been purposeful in developing and experimenting with new ideas, technologies, and concepts in order to modernize our team, meet the Commandant's intent, and remain prepared as the Nation's expeditionary force in readiness.

As we continue to drive along the innovation pathways of *Marine Special Operations Forces 2030*, our modernization efforts are deliberately connected with larger service and joint concepts like the Joint Warfighting Concept, Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations, and Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment. MARSOC's intent is to connect, integrate, and maximize Marine and Special Operations Forces (SOF) capabilities to operate in multiple domains simultaneously, sense and make sense of physical, cognitive, and virtual environments while shaping conditions to create asymmetric advantages for Service, naval, and joint forces. The development of such effects requires that SOF continue to evolve its role in competition and conflict.

As an initial step toward this end, we published the MARSOC Strategic Shaping and Reconnaissance (SSR) operating concept in March of this year. SSR is defined as those activities conducted by special operations elements in cooperation, competition, and conflict to gain awareness of adversarial intentions, capabilities, and actions in order to deter, disrupt, or increase the adversary's risk. SSR elements synchronize globally, deploy, and produce SOF effects against strategic threats across all domains while connecting interagency, joint forces, allied, and partner nation capabilities. To fully realize the SSR concept, MARSOC is currently undergoing a force structure and capability review while simultaneously executing an aggressive experimentation and wargaming plan.

As Marines and part of the United States Special Operations Command, MARSOC is uniquely tasked to serve as a connector and integrator of SOF, Marine, and Naval forces, bringing together capabilities, innovation, and experimentation efforts. Our comparatively small and flexible force allows us to rapidly understand, wargame and experiment with developing technology, concepts, and equipment. These ties have naturally flowed toward Combat Development and Integration, the Warfighting Lab, and Systems Command. However, our assessment is "stand-in" forces will require intentional relationships and interconnected capabilities at echelon more broadly.

To deter and defeat an opponent in the 21st century requires an integrated effort to leverage the strengths of units, agencies, allies, and partners. MARSOC's forward deployed elements are positioned and prepared to provide the joint force, specifically the stand-in force, multi-domain awareness, and effects in competition, crisis, and conflict.

Once again, we appreciate the leadership of the *Gazette* for allowing us this opportunity to report on our progress, and as always, invite your thoughts and input. Semper Fidelis, Spiritus Invictus, and Gung Ho!

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