

A Message From the Commandant of the Marine Corps

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America and her Marines together stand at the threshold of a challenging new age. We have seen glimpses of it already: growing international interdependency, near routine crisis and conflict, and increased demands for U.S. intervention. Evaluating the Corps in the context of this changed environment was the focus of nearly a quarter of our general officers, who comprised the General Officer Futures Group (GOFG). Beginning in February 2000, the group met monthly to carefully examine our Corps from the ground up with an eye on future requirements. The entire general officer community then validated the results of that lengthy endeavor at the September 2000, General Officer Symposium and at the recent Executive Off-Site.

Central to the GOFG's efforts was composition of a Vision Statement, printed on the facing page. Rooted in our traditions, yet reflective of emerging requirements, the vision articulates in fundamental terms who we are, what we will be, and, most importantly, how we will achieve our desired end state. The statement serves a number of purposes. It is a unifying articulation of strategic challenges, opportunities, and priorities; a general guide for modernization, and a durable and flexible expression of our view of tomorrow. Many who read it will observe, correctly, that the vision prescribes no radical change or mandate for wholesale transformation—with good reason. The GOFG concluded that the Corps requires only marginal adjustments to successfully adapt. We do, in fact, have it right. Our day-in, day-out commitment to innovation and experimentation and willingness to embrace change has ensured our continued viability. Consequently, we are not compelled to reinvent ourselves. What we do require is a well-planned, purposeful campaign to synchronize our efforts to improve our capabilities. The vision's carefully chosen words will serve as a lens to focus those activities and lead ultimately to a dramatically more capable Corps.

The next step toward realization of the vision—a Corps of enhanced strategic agility, operational reach, and tactical flexibility—will be the publication of a service strategy establishing critical goals and aims. That document will be followed by an overarching operational concept that will clearly describe the manner in which we will conduct operations in the future. These documents will touch every aspect of our institution and will be reflected in our doctrine, structure, training and education, and acquisition programs.

Due to the foresight of our predecessors and your dedicated efforts, the Corps is poised to confront the great challenges of the 21st century. This vision will guide us and ensure that we fulfill our mandate from the American people to remain the nation's premier total force in readiness.

