

In 9 years, The U.S Marine Corps will undergo a significant facelift. With the U.S military now shifting its focus from fighting insurgency in central Asia; to the indo-pacific region. This change in theatre has caused the marine corps to create a new doctrine on how to fight an island-hopping campaign. Thus was born Force Design 2030. A radical vision of how a peer versus peer capable marine corps would like according to Commandant Berger and other key strategists. Force design essentially returns the Marine corps to its Tun Tavern days. A light naval infantry rapidly deployed by navy ships for land operations.

The purpose of FD2030 is to optimize the marine corps for littoral and expeditionary advanced base operations. This is believed to be the key in fighting a war in the indo-pacific theatre. EABO is unique because it relies on a mix of multi-role small teams. That leverages assets such as new long-range anti-ship missiles and a new electronic warfare suite as force multipliers. EABO warfare is run by technology that the marines implement in a myriad of ways. EABO is driven by technology, not manpower.

For example, the Corps has recently begun fielding the Remote Operated Ground Unit For Expeditionary. ROGUE is essentially a JLTV that can operate both autonomously and remotely. The Corps is also actively developing high endurance autonomous capable drones for maritime recon that are armed. This upgrade in drone hardware is a huge step up from the current limited use of unarmed scouting. The end goal of this technology is to shorten the kill chain and remove unnecessary steps between target acquisition and termination.

A central goal of EABO is to support the Navy in sea and aerial denial operations so that its ships can operate more freely in contested waters, which would allow the Navy to focus on carrier strike group operations. The Corps plans on implementing a land-based variant of the naval strike missile onboard the Rogue enabled JTLV. The official name for the platform is the Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction system. NMESIS finally gives the Corps (the U.S military as a whole) the ability to engage naval targets from land. The NMESIS is capable of striking targets within at least a 100nm radius. It also boasts "sea-skimming," technology which the Corps claims make it highly resilient to countermeasures. The Corps also is deploying more ground/air task oriented radar. GATOR would allow the Marines access to non-aerial early warning radar capable of tracking manned and unmanned aircraft as well as projectiles. The GATOR can also be linked to the NMESIS, which will allow for target acquisition for future more extended-range anti-ship missiles. In Short, EABO is focused on eliminating threats over the horizon and supporting Navy operations.

To achieve the goals of FD2030, General Berger ordered the removal of all armored divisions from the Corps. He also significantly reduced the number of Artillery and attack helicopter battalions. This reduction in force capability frees up funding and streamlines logistics. However, the elimination of the M1 Abrams and the other platforms has severely limited the marine's ability for direct and indirect fire operations and close air support. Still, it did ultimately make the force more nimble. The end goal of creating a smaller corps also does not stop at equipment. As laid out in FD2030, Commandant Berger prefers having a small team with a few good men

than a battalion of average ones. This desire to reduce manpower will result in thousands of marines being denied reenlistment due to obsolete manpower and underperformance. The reduction in manpower, the Corps highest operating cost, could also help free more funds for weapons and equipment acquisition. General Berger stated at the Reagan National Defense Forum, "We have to provide the Marines what they need to operate in that environment. And if that [means] less Marines, I'm willing to do that."

As radical as FD 2030 is, there is no surprise that it has drawn sharp rebuke from critics. Some have even said that FD is such an insult to the Corps; that it would be better off disbanded. Many cite the hyper-fixation on EABO as a double-edged sword, which has left many strategists saying that FD2030 may provide a lethal EABO force for a conflict that may never happen. But provide a non-lethal force for a conflict that does happen. For example, under FD, The Marine Corps would struggle to bring lethality to the table in a Ukrainian conflict. Many critics recognize the need to plan for such contingencies but disagree that a force redesign is needed.

The goals of force redesign arent even contained within the Corps. The Corps is also doing its best to encourage the Navy to fund a new landing ship platform; named the Light Amphibious Warship Program. As of right now, the MEU operates as a unified force over three amphibious assault ships. That relies on air and sea assets to ferry Marines from sea to land. FD2030 believes that it can make the sea to land transition smoother with LAW's. The LAW's will allow each ground combat element to operate independently of each other, fitting the small team's focus of FD2030. Law's will directly land marines and house logistic and air support for the combat element. However, the adoption of these ships is facing more resistance than planned. However, the LAW's will be designed to support Marine operations. The development, construction, and maintenance funding would come directly from that naval surface fleet budget. The Navy is not wholly on board with the idea of pouring millions of dollars in ships that lack offensive along with servilely limited defensive weapons as well as survivability. However, the Navy has come around slightly to the idea by the Marines proposing to have funding for current amphibious attack ships to LAW's.

Another way to look at force design is to make the marine corps the most efficient force possible for EABO. To reduce operating costs on weapons systems that would be obsolete in a peer-to-peer war in the pacific. Suppose the marines are indeed called on to conduct an Island hopping conflict. It would make little sense for the Corps to hold on to Howitzers and Tanks under this campaign model . The same argument could also be made for manpower. As more autonomous technology such as ROUGE becomes operable. The need for Marines to operate weapons systems is reduced. If the Corps eliminated tanks simply because they are not needed for EABO. Why not get rid of the 3531 vehicle motor operator MOS? Or any other MOS that can be replaced by automation or simply does not meet the EABO criteria.

As much as it hurts to say the marine corps was never designed as a standalone force. Even though it was tasked with the role ever since the Korean war when the Corps essentially

became a second army. FD2030 seeks to remove that stigma, and lift the Marine Corps from being a redundancy army back to being a force with capabilities that only the Marine Corps poses. FD2030 has and will continue to make long-lasting and permanent changes to the Corps. Like it or not, Marines will need to adapt to being the tip of the spear for the Navy operations, by conducting EABO warfare in the indo-pacific.