

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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FOREWORD

Tactical success in combat does not of itself guarantee victory in war. *What matters ultimately in war is strategic success:* attainment of our political aims and the protection of our national interests. The operational level of war provides the linkage between tactics and strategy. It is the discipline of conceiving, focusing, and exploiting a variety of tactical actions to realize a strategic aim. With that thought as our point of departure, this publication discusses the intermediate, *operational* level of war and the military campaign which is the vehicle for organizing tactical actions to achieve strategic objectives.

The Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) clearly has operational as well as tactical capabilities. Thus it is essential that Marine leaders learn to think operationally. Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-2, *Campaigning*, provides the doctrinal basis for military campaigning in the Marine Corps, particularly as it pertains to a Marine commander or a MAGTF participating in the campaign. *Campaigning* applies

the warfighting philosophies in MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, specifically to the operational level of war. It is linked to the other publications of the MCDP series and is fully compatible with joint doctrine.

MCDP 1-2 supersedes Fleet Marine Force Manual (FMFM) 1-1, *Campaigning*, of 1990. MCDP 1-2 retains the spirit, scope, and basic concepts of its predecessor. MCDP 1-2 further develops and refines some of those concepts based on recent experiences, continued thinking about war, and the evolving nature of campaigning in the post-Cold War world.

The new version of *Campaigning* has three significant additions: an expanded discussion of the linkage between strategic objectives and the campaign, a section on conflict termination, and a section titled “Synergy” that describes how key capabilities are harmonized in the conduct of a campaign to achieve the strategic objective. These additions have been derived from the development of the other doctrinal publications in the MCDP series and joint doctrine.

Chapter 1 discusses the campaign and the operational level of war, their relationship to strategy and tactics, and their relevance to the Marine Corps. Chapter 2 describes the process of campaign design: deriving a military strategic aim from political objectives and constraints, developing a campaign concept that supports our strategic objectives, and making a campaign plan that translates the concept into a structured configuration of actions required to carry out that concept. Chapter 3

discusses the actual conduct of a campaign and the problem of adapting our plans to events as they unfold.

Central to this publication is the idea that military action at any level must ultimately serve the demands of policy. Marine leaders at all levels must understand this point and must recognize that we pursue tactical success not for its own sake, but for the sake of larger political goals. Military strength is only one of several instruments of national power, all of which must be fully coordinated with one another in order to achieve our strategic and operational objectives. Marine leaders must be able to integrate military operations with the other instruments of national power.

This publication makes frequent use of historical examples. These examples are intended to illustrate teachings that have universal relevance and enduring applicability. No matter what the scope and nature of the next mission—general war or military operations other than war—the concepts and the thought processes described in this publication will apply. As with *Warfighting*, this publication is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Its concepts require judgment in application.

This publication is designed primarily for MAGTF commanders and their staffs and for officers serving on joint and combined staffs. However, commanders at all levels of any military organization require a broad perspective, an understanding of the interrelationships among the levels of war, and knowledge of the methods for devising and executing a

progressive series of actions in pursuit of a distant objective in the face of hostile resistance. Marine officers of any grade and specialty can easily find themselves working—either directly or indirectly—for senior leaders with strategic or operational responsibilities. Those leaders need subordinates who understand their problems and their intentions. Therefore, as with MCDP 1, I expect all officers to read and reread this publication, understand its message, and apply it.

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Commandant of the Marine Corps

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Throughout this publication, masculine nouns and pronouns are used for the sake of simplicity. Except where otherwise noted, these nouns and pronouns apply to either gender.