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THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

Reading Military Texts from a Different Perspective

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Persuasive in peace, decisive in war, preeminent in any form of combat*—with these goals in mind, and constantly using such terms as "full-dimensional," "full spectrum," "dominant," and "dominance," the Joint Staff white paper *Joint Vision 2010* and its extension *Joint Vision 2020* paint a picture of where U.S. military forces should head as they move into the twenty-first century.[1] "Vision" papers of individual services, such as *Marine Corps Strategy 21,* follow the lead of the joint documents in their proclamations of capabilities within specific competencies. The claims are bold indeed; these vision documents declare that the U.S. military will be able to go everywhere and do everything. Realistically, that is not possible, but a reader is hard pressed to discern from the language of the texts that hard choices have been made, significant alternatives rejected. There seems to be a sentence or phrase to cover every eventuality of future conflict. This, of course, gives the sense that the vision statements are pablum, saying nothing by saying everything.

That, however, is an unfortunate and inaccurate impression. The vision documents are in fact more nuanced than they appear. But how can we get at their full meaning? One way to explicate vision documents is to adapt "deconstruction," a technique of reading that arose as a postmodernist philosophical school. To "deconstruct" a text is to use perspectives, and viewpoints that are, ideally, useful for understanding. Through this approach, attentive readers can examine even U.S. military "vision documents," clarify their content, and develop implicit alternatives to their central themes. After briefly outlining the technique, we will apply it to two current case studies.

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DECONSTRUCTION AND THE VISION TEXT

Broadly defined, deconstruction is a postmodern philosophy that denies the existence of objectively true meaning of texts. A "text" in this connection is anything that can be intellectually analyzed—a book, a film, even an activity. Deconstructionists argue that a given text has no single, independent "true" meaning established by the author but a variety of meanings that are totally dependent on the reader's perspective and that continually interact in different ways.

To "deconstruct" a text is to analyze it so as to discern not its putative central themes but those that are marginalized and left unsaid. A philosophical, literary, or academic deconstructionist goes farther, declaring these marginal and unspoken themes to be in fact the text's central meanings. By thus turning the text on its head, this method, taken to its logical conclusion, destroys the distinction between central and marginal meanings; for a deconstructionist there are merely *different* meanings, with arbitrary prioritization.[2] While useful analysis of military vision documents by this method requires a retreat from deconstruction's nihilistic extremes, much can be learned through this form of "thinking out of the box."

To get at marginal and "unsaid" themes, the first step is to identify clearly the central ones. In this connection, *how* something is said is as important as *what* is said. Military vision documents are written in the active voice, with strong verbs and modifiers. Central ideas can be identified by the repetition of words or phrases, especially as section titles, displayed quotations, graphics, or topic sentences of paragraphs. The organization of the text also points to central ideas. Vision documents tend to be put together in two ways: addressing the main point first and following with supporting material, and building up the supporting material into an argument that climaxes with the main point. Both patterns can be used simultaneously at different levels. For example, the overall structure of the text may be that of an argument building to a conclusion, while individual subsections are structured as main ideas followed by discussion. The central themes can be picked out fairly easily, by noting the repetition of certain phrases, examining the patterns of the writing, and discerning the placement of ideas within the patterns.

The central ideas of military vision texts can be divided into three conceptual parts: foundation, end state, and method. A *foundation,* the starting point for a vision statement, has two parts. One is an articulation of assumptions about the future security environment. These assumptions can have inwardly focused aspects (such as future U.S. national goals, interests, and policies) and outwardly oriented ones (directions of technological development, potential adversaries of the future). The second part of the foundation is a depiction of the present state of the organization. This description can consist of capabilities or current

employment concepts, but it usually focuses on character traits—the heritage and "enduring values" that represent the spirit of the organization. The *end state* sets forth the ultimate goal—in a sense, the "vision" itself. The end-state discussion describes the specific organizations, capabilities, and operational concepts that the military will need in order to cope with the future that has been portrayed. The end state, usually somewhat vague, focuses on concepts and capabilities rather than actual unit structures or hardware systems. The *method* is the "how" portion of the document—the path the service will take to proceed from the present force (described in the foundation) to that envisioned by the end state. The method is usually couched in terms of attitudes toward change and the relative importance of various aspects of expected change.

Central ideas may be repeated throughout the foundation, end-state, and method sections of the text. For instance, certain portions of the foundation discussion might be reiterated in the end-state portion in order to highlight the end state's logic by reconnecting it to its premises. Likewise, the end state will probably be addressed in the method portion in order to emphasize the linkage between the two. This repetition makes the central ideas mutually supportive and readily identifiable.

Marginal ideas are secondary to the central ones, but they appear in the text and may even be repeated. Sometimes the only noticeable differences between main and subsidiary points are slight shades of meaning or emphasis. Close examination of the structure of the text and alertness to the use of certain grammatical devices are crucial in determining which themes are subsidiary. For instance, secondary points are usually referred to in caveats, or qualifiers, to central points; phrases such as "While *X* can never be discounted" and "Also important is *X*" are clues that *X* is a marginal idea. The sequence in which ideas are discussed and the relative strength of the modifiers (adjectives or adverbs) applied to them are also indicative of what is primary and what is not. Points referred to in a long list of disparate items, seemingly "tacked on" at the end of a section of text, are likely to be of lesser priority.

If marginal ideas are those that the author considered barely important enough to mention, the "unsaid" points, the "possibilities left out," are those either thought not important enough to mention, or important *not* to mention, or not even thought of by the author. In any case—that which "goes without saying," that which is "better left unsaid," or that which was not recognized—this is an awkward concept to explain. Two techniques will help discern the possibilities that are implicit but left out: inferring the opposite of certain central ideas (especially in the foundation section) and elevating marginal ideas to central importance. The development of possibilities left out, however, is inevitably fraught with risk. For example, a discussion of central ideas dependent on new

technology is likely to omit mention of the possibility that technological progress may stop; to identify it (simply because it is theoretically possible) as an unsaid idea, however, is not realistic or analytically very useful. Nonetheless, this deconstruction technique can reveal possibilities that, if not probable or congenial, are worth consideration.

The last step of deconstruction is synthesis. A text has by now been broken into three categories: the central, marginal, and unsaid themes. While the central themes embody the main thrust of what the text actually said, a study of the marginal and omitted ideas may be more fruitful and enlightening. All three categories, however, should be examined together, to see what synthesis they inspire—ideas that will represent the payoff from the labor of deconstruction.

JV 2010 AND *JV 2020*

Of the U.S. military vision documents now published, *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020* are the most appropriate for a first demonstration of deconstruction-based analysis, because they address U.S. military power as a whole. Service-level visions, in contrast, intentionally marginalize and leave out important possibilities in order to observe the boundaries of service roles. Further, service visions should also fit under the conceptual umbrella of *JV 2010* and *JV 2020;* deconstructing the joint texts first should lay the necessary groundwork for examination of the service visions.

Joint Vision 2010 and *2020* must be considered not as two documents but as one, divided into two parts. *JV 2020* is the more current, but it is an addendum or extension of *JV 2010* rather than a stand-alone document. It relies on *JV 2010*'s foundation; in fact, the end-state section of *JV 2010*—a vision of the force in 2010—is part of the foundation of *JV 2020*. Analyzing the two texts as a single whole allows a more complete listing of marginal ideas and left-out possibilities. As will be seen, though, some of the more interesting points to be gleaned arise from the doctrinal changes that appear in *JV 2020*.

The foundation of *Joint Vision 2010* postulates a future of evolutionary change, wherein U.S. interests and strategy do not significantly change. Military technology will be decisive and will continue to advance along its present lines, producing more precision and mobility, and also, most importantly, a vast increase in information available to forces, about both themselves and the enemy. The international environment also will present, in the *JV 2010* vision, a continuation of current trends; there will accordingly be uncertainty, and the United States will have to be prepared to deal simultaneously with a wide range of state and nonstate adversaries. *Joint Vision 2010* assumes that the United States will hold to its present policies of ensuring security for its people and possessions and of promoting domestic prosperity and worldwide democracy. The U.S.

military will continue to be primarily a warfighting organization, characterized by highly professional personnel and technological superiority; it will not, however, see a large increase in resources made available to it (*JV 2010,* pages 1–34).[3]

The *JV 2020* foundation is the same, with one important exception—that due to the rapid pace of worldwide change, U.S. forces cannot assume that they will enjoy technological superiority in all conflicts. In particular, asymmetrical options may be available to foes that could neutralize technological advantages (*JV 2020,* pages 1–45).

The end states envisaged by *JV 2010* and *JV 2020* are basically the same. In both documents the U.S. military of the future will be a warfighting force that is small, protected, mobile, sustainable, and lethal. It will be able to react rapidly and throughout the world. It will mass its effects (that is, its "fires," the collective impact of its long-range attacks) and deliver them precisely, rather than massing physically the weapons themselves. *JV 2020* differs from *JV 2010* only by increasing the "degree" of its adjectives: *smaller, more* protected, *more* mobile, etc. The overarching concept of both *JV 2010* and *JV 2020* forces is to manifest "full spectrum dominance"—the ability to fight anywhere with sufficient superiority to defeat any foe with minimal loss to themselves (*JV 2010,* pages 1–34; *JV 2020,* pages 1–45).

> *To "deconstruct" a text is to analyze it so as to discern not its putative central themes but those that are marginalized and left unsaid.*

The method sections of *JV 2010* and *JV 2020* are different, but they share two themes—the progress of technology and the development of the human element (organization, tactics, leadership). *JV 2010's* method is to exploit the American combined advantage of technology and highly professional personnel (*JV 2010,* pages 1–34). For its part, *JV 2020,* in line with its shift in foundation, emphasizes innovations in human factors in order to offset the potential loss of technological superiority. This shift in method is subtle but continuously repeated throughout *JV 2020.* In fact, the emphasis given this point in the text suggests that it may be the primary reason that *JV 2020* was published (*JV 2020,* pages 1–45).

With the central themes thus developed, our next step is to identify the marginal themes. There are three significant marginal themes in *JV 2010:* the impact of the "fog" (uncertainty, imperfectness of information) and "friction" (delay, interference, inertia) of war on operations; the role of massed forces; and the conduct of "military operations other than war" (MOOTW).

Joint Vision 2010 mentions fog and friction only to deprecate them, to predict that their effects will be minimized by anticipated advances in technology:

While friction and fog of war can never be eliminated, new technology promises to *mitigate* their impact [*JV 2010,* page 16; emphasis supplied, here and throughout].

Although this will not eliminate the fog of war, dominant battlespace awareness will improve situational awareness, decrease response time and *make the battlespace considerably more transparent* to those who achieve it [*JV 2010,* page 13].

JV 2020, however, refutes the idea that fog and friction can be marginalized:

Information Superiority neither equates to perfect information nor does it mean the elimination of the fog of war [*JV 2020,* page 12].

Joint Vision 2020's recognition of the inevitability of fog and friction—declared positively, without the qualifications used in *JV 2010*—is representative of the shift in emphasis of the later document from technology to the human element in conflict.

Joint Vision 2010 always refers to the secondary concept of the physical assembling of large forces (as opposed to the concentration of their effects) only in the context of exceptions to the expected norm of future operations:

In the past, our capabilities often required us to physically mass forces to neutralize enemy power [*JV 2010,* page 17].

Extensive physical presence *may* later be necessary to accomplish the assigned mission [*JV 2010,* page 27].

Joint Vision 2020 does not mention massing of actual forces even as a secondary concern, but neither does it refute *Joint Vision 2010* on this point. The clear implication is that for the smaller, mobile military foreseen by *JV 2010* the ability to mass large forces for a campaign is not of primary importance.

The third secondary concept of *JV 2010* is that of military operations other than war. Although MOOTW considerations are mentioned throughout the text, they are always presented as subsidiary to warfighting:

In addition we should expect to participate in a broad range of deterrent, conflict prevention and peacetime activities [*JV 2010,* page 4].

Other operations, from humanitarian assistance in peacetime through peace operations in a near hostile environment, have proved to be possible using forces *optimized* for wartime effectiveness [*JV 2010,* page 17].

Joint Vision 2020 follows the lead of its predecessor in treating military operations other than war as of less than vital importance:

It *also* includes those ambiguous situations presiding between peace and war [*JV 2020,* page 8].

Achieving full-spectrum dominance means that the joint force will fulfill its *primary* purpose—victory in war, *as well as* achieving success across the range of operations [*JV 2020,* page 9].

Joint Vision 2020 adds three new marginal ideas, points that are not present at all in *Joint Vision 2010:* technological innovation, information superiority, and multinational and interagency operations. The marginalization of technology in *JV 2020* (though the white paper assumes that the technological improvements foreseen by the earlier document will occur) is in line with the paper's central idea, expressed in its foundation section, that the United States cannot assume it will enjoy technological superiority in the future. *Joint Vision 2020* seeks to redress the imbalance in favor of technology of *JV 2010:*

Realization of the full potential of these changes requires *not only* technological improvement, but the continued evolution of organizations and doctrine [*JV 2020,* page 12].

Although technical interoperability is essential, *it is not sufficient* to ensure effective operations [*JV 2020,* page 21].

Our thinking about command and control must be *conceptually* based, *rather* than focused on technology and material [*JV 2020,* page 40].

JV 2020's marginalization of information superiority goes hand in hand with its treatment of technology. Where *Joint Vision 2010* held up information superiority as an essential force multiplier, *Joint Vision 2020* subsumes it within the concept of "decision dominance"—an overarching concept that includes nontechnology based elements. Information superiority is only one part, and not the most important, of "decision dominance."

The creation of information superiority *is not* an end in itself [*JV 2020,* page 11].

While changes in the information environment have *led some to focus solely* [*JV 2010*] on the contribution of information superiority to command and control, it is *equally necessary* to understand the complete realm of command and control decision making, the nature of organizational collaboration, and *especially*, the human in the loop [*JV 2020,* page 38].

The last marginal concept of *JV 2020* is that of multinational and interagency operations. *Joint Vision 2010* treats multinational operations as insignificant and barely mentions interagency operations. *Joint Vision 2020* discusses both concepts at length, but always as secondary to the central idea of unilateral joint military action. There is no expectation that either will be routine.

To coordinate military operations, *as necessary*, with government agencies and international organizations [*JV 2020,* page 5].

> The joint force of 2020 will integrate protective capabilities from multinational and interagency partners *when available* and will respond to their requirements *when possible* [*JV 2020,* page 33].

What has been left out of the doctrinal papers? With one exception, the same major possibilities are absent from both *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020:* that of a major change in U.S. national goals and interests, that of the emergence of a single "peer competitor," and that of the primary focus of the military shifting from warfighting to operations other than war. The exception is the idea of human considerations, such as doctrine and organization, driving technology in the development of future forces. *Joint Vision 2010* does not mention the possibility, but *JV 2020* makes it a central theme. The "absences" of a change to national interests and of a new peer competitor are perceived by reversing central ideas of the joint visions—the continuity of U.S. national interests, and a multiplicity of state and nonstate adversaries. That any shift to operations other than war has been omitted is revealed by considering the implications of converting MOOTW, actually a marginal concept, into a primary one.

Are any of these three "left-out" possibilities of analytical value? A change to U.S. national interests, as defined by the joint vision documents, is very unlikely. *JV 2010* defines U.S. national interests so broadly—ensuring security of the nation's people and possessions, ensuring domestic prosperity, and promoting worldwide democracy—that it is hard to imagine other interests that would take their place (*JV 2010,* page 3). Different emphases might arise, but there are no reasonable opposites. However, the prospects of a peer competitor emerging or of military operations other than war becoming primary are less improbable; neither is out of the realm of possibility. Inclusion of these ideas would substantially change the central themes of both joint vision papers.

Does deconstruction of *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020* produce any insights worth pondering? There seem to be three. First, there is a *shift in emphasis*—from technology over human factors in *JV 2010,* to the reverse in *JV 2020. Joint Vision 2020* otherwise binds itself so closely to *JV 2010* that this difference is obscured. It is not true, however, as many might assume, that neither text says anything very different from the other. This shift in philosophy, whether intended or not, is an important one that should be clearly acknowledged.

Both joint visions make military operations other than war *a secondary priority* to warfighting—although, aside from Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, at least, U.S. forces currently spend most of their time executing them. As a consequence, large formations are not envisioned in the small, mobile force of the future, yet they are required for many of the "human intensive" other-than-war

missions, such as peacekeeping. Perhaps this implies the idea of creating within the services a force specialized for operations other than war, with proportionately more personnel but fewer assets for agility and precision strike.

Joint Visions 2010 and *2020* forecast a force able to *go anywhere and fight anyone,* as opposed to a specific foe in a particular theater. For practical purposes, there are problems with such an all-encompassing approach. Deconstruction suggests there might be value in competing joint visions, each focused on a different potential adversary. These visions would be more than operational plans, based on forces already in place; rather, they would redesign the entire joint force as necessary to meet and defeat most effectively the given foe. These "hedge" visions would still be secondary to *JV 2020* or its successors, but they could be wellsprings of ideas.

"THE VISION STATEMENT OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS" AND *MARINE CORPS STRATEGY 21*

The current Marine Corps "vision" documents are "The Vision Statement of the U.S. Marine Corps" (for short, the "USMC Vision Statement"), originally released as a naval message, and *Marine Corps Strategy 21* (or *MC Strategy 21*). The Marine documents explicitly claim to support *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020*.[4] The USMC Vision Statement is incorporated verbatim in *MC Strategy 21,* on the first page; nonetheless, it should be treated as a separate text, because its explanatory notes shed significant light on both documents.

What can deconstruction of the Marine visions tell us with respect to the joint texts? We begin as before, examining each of the three main parts of the two documents. The foundation is the single largest section of *MC Strategy 21* (four of nine pages). The emphasis there points to the central idea in the Marine texts: that the Marine Corps already embodies the correct model for the future.

> The [General Officers Futures Group] concluded that the Corps requires only marginal adjustments to successfully adapt [for the future]. We do, in fact, have it right.[5]

The Marine texts' foundation reflects a national security environment that interestingly contrasts with that of the joint visions, an environment in which the United States is likely to face both state and nonstate actors in conflicts across the spectrum. In a chaotic setting, large-scale conventional warfare will be the exception, and a variety of lesser contingencies the rule (*MC Strategy 21,* pages 4–5). Although the point is not explicitly made, it is safe to assume that the Marines would recognize the same national interests as does *Joint Vision 2010:* ensuring domestic security and prosperity, and promoting worldwide democracy. The USMC Vision Statement, however, adds a more detailed assumption:

> Opportunities and challenges in the world's littoral regions will increase America's reliance on the continuous forward presence and sustainable maritime power projection of naval expeditionary forces [USMC Vision Statement].

While this statement is not at odds with anything in *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020*, neither is it supported by any passages in the joint texts. The declaration reflects a predictable maritime bias, but also a distinct political and strategic assumption.

The current status of the Marine Corps, in the view of the documents, is that, with its highly trained personnel, it can provide combatant commanders with mission-tailored Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs). These task forces are able to deal with a large range of crises and contingencies across the spectrum of conflict, including forward presence and quick strategic response (*MC Strategy 21,* pages 2, 3, 5).

The end state outlined in the foundations of the Marine vision texts is, significantly, strikingly similar to their current-status statements:

> The Marine Corps will enhance its strategic agility, operational reach, and tactical flexibility to enable joint, allied, and coalition operations and interagency coordination. These capabilities will provide combatant commanders with scalable, interoperable, combined-arms Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) to shape the international environment, respond quickly to the complex spectrum of crises and conflicts, and gain access or prosecute forcible entry operations [USMC Vision Statement; *MC Strategy 21,* page 1].

This envisioned end state is further confirmation that the Marine Corps' central idea is improvement of the current force, not transformation to a new type of force. The Marine end-state force is simply an amphibious version of the joint end-state force. The *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020* end state was to be a smaller force, protected, mobile, and sustainable, able to react rapidly throughout the globe and to mass the effects of its precise, lethal strikes without physically massing its own elements. The Marine vision documents do not directly address precise lethality or the massing of effects, but the passages related to improving operational reach and tactical flexibility can be interpreted as covering those two joint concepts. The Marine papers support no views that would be contrary to any stated joint concept; the Marine texts may not match the joint texts adjective for adjective, but the improved Marine air-ground task forces fit well within the *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020* parameters.

The method espoused in the Marine vision texts is one of evolution and improvement; the most frequently used verbs in the Marine vision texts are "enhance," "evolve," and "expand" (*MC Strategy 21,* pages 6–8). This approach emphasizes the recruitment and retention of high-quality personnel by

promoting traditional core values and a "warrior ethic," as well as the improvement of operational capabilities by "optimizing" current structure and "capitalizing" on innovation (*MC Strategy 21,* pages 6–8). *Joint Vision 2010* and *2020* revolve around the concepts of technology and "human elements" (such as doctrine and organization); the Marine vision texts are not explicit in this area but seem to match more closely *Joint Vision 2020,* with its emphasis on concepts and organizations rather than the impact of new technologies (*MC Strategy 21,* pages 6–8).[6]

Having established the central ideas of the Marine texts, the deconstructionist reader can pull out from them the significant marginal points. There is only one—that sustained conventional combat operations are secondary in likelihood, and thus importance, to other deterrence and contingency operations at the lower end of the conflict spectrum. The technique of the Marine texts is to arrange potential employment options and capabilities in lists; the fighting of battles always appears at the end of these lists, sometimes with a qualifier, sometimes without.

> These forces will promote national interests, influence vital regions, and fight and win the nation's battles [USMC Vision Statement; *MC Strategy 21,* page 1].

> Every Marine and Marine unit is ready to rapidly task organize, deploy, and employ from [the continental United States] or while forward deployed to respond and contain crises or, *if necessary,* to immediately engage in sustained combat operations [*MC Strategy 21,* page 2].

> Throughout our Nation's history, Marines have responded to national and international brushfires and crises and, *when necessary,* war [*MC Strategy 21,* page 3].

> As an expeditionary, task-organized, combined arms force with superb small-unit leaders, we are prepared to promote peace and stability or, *if required,* defeat our Nation's adversaries [*MC Strategy 21,* page 5].

> Multiple belligerents and a blurring of distinctions and national affiliations among terrorist groups, subnational factions, insurgent groups, and international criminals will complicate an environment where *a direct attack is often the least likely course of action* [*MC Strategy 21,* page 5].

The Marine vision texts do not exclude the possibility of major combat operations; their marginalization concerns only their likelihood. Nonetheless, in this respect the Marine documents diverge significantly from *Joint Vision 2010* and *Joint Vision 2020*. Both joint texts presume the opposite, emphasizing warfighting over other operations.

The Marine texts do not directly address the "fog and friction" of combat or the role of large physical-presence forces, which were mentioned in the joint documents as secondary issues. The Marine warfighting doctrine of maneuver

warfare, which is restated in *MC Strategy 21,* agrees with *JV 2020* that fog and friction are inherent parts of conflict and cannot be marginalized.[7] The Marine emphasis on maritime forces could be understood as discounting the need for large physical-presence ground forces, but it begs the question of the size of the maritime forces required instead. The relative marginalization of major theater war in favor of operations other than war and such lesser crises is the only distinct secondary idea.

Three "possibilities left out" suggest themselves. The first would be a reversal of the marginalization of major combat operations. Such a shift would emphasize the Marine Corps role in warfighting at the possible expense of its ability to maintain forward presence or respond to small-scale contingencies. The second major possibility left out of the Marine vision texts is that of an end-state force radically different from the present Marine air-ground task force concept. Such a reversal would go against the grain of the Marine texts, which postulate that evolution, not revolution, is the appropriate path. The last possibility left out of the Marine texts mirrors one from *Joint Vision 2010 and 2020:* that of designing the Marine Corps to meet the threat of a specific future peer competitor.

This deconstruction of the two recent Marine Corps vision documents offers three ideas for consideration. First, the U.S. military might want to develop a "hedge" capability to address operations other than war. The Marine Corps seems to be offering itself as that capability and may want to commit to develop itself further in this direction. Such a choice could reduce the Marines' contribution to major-theater-warfare situations, but it would increase their utility in what is apparently going to be the most prevalent form of military employment.[8]

Second, the Marine Corps should look to doctrinal revolution as well as evolution. The present direction may be correct, but that assumption should not stifle development and experimentation of concepts that do not involve the Marine air-ground task force as now known. Such concepts could involve the elimination or severe curtailment of various elements of the task force in order to allocate more resources to the others. The Marine air-ground task force should not be dogma.

Finally, the Marine Corps may want to develop along lines devised to fight a specific adversary.[9] Such visions, if carried far enough, may lead to the development of new ideas and capabilities that could also be useful in a broader sense.

None of the considerations arising from these two case studies are fully developed and usable as they stand; perhaps they are not feasible at all. What is important for present purposes, however, is that they were not self-evident at the outset. They emerged from the process of deconstruction; this demonstrates the

usefulness of that method for closely analyzing texts and generating ideas for further study.

Military officers are continually encouraged to "think out of the box." It is difficult, however, to break out of established and habitual perspectives. Deconstruction helps a reader do this by offering a method to perform a new kind of analysis. With some adaptation, the deconstruction technique can also be used on other military texts, such as more concrete doctrinal publications. Although doctrine manuals are not organized like "white papers" and vision documents, their central ideas can still be made to reveal themselves in unfamiliar and unexpected lights. Their secondary points can be extracted and explored in useful critiques; like vision statements, doctrine is sometimes expressed in weak and vague terms. In those and other kinds of texts, deconstruction reveals ideas and themes that are present or implicit but do not become apparent in a conventional reading. This analytical technique can be helpful to military readers, as well as the scholars for whom it was developed, in forcing them to see beyond what a text *seems* to say, to apply critical and creative thought to understanding what it *means.*

NOTES

1. U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Vision 2010* [hereafter *JV 2010*] (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Office [hereafter GPO], July 1996), pp. 2–34; and U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Vision 2020* [hereafter *JV 2020*] (Washington, D.C.: GPO, June 2000), pp. 2–45.

2. Glenn Ward, *Teach Yourself Postmodernism* (Chicago: NTC/Contemporary Publishing, 1997), pp. 94–101. Deconstruction is credited to the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida. The primary texts on deconstruction are difficult reading. For our purposes an introductory text is suitable.

3. The textual sources for the summarized central themes are indicated throughout each of the texts.

4. U.S. Navy Dept., *Marine Corps Strategy 21* [hereafter *MC Strategy 21*] (Washington D.C.: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 2001), p. 5.

5. Commandant of the Marine Corps Message to All Marines [hereafter CMC ALMAR] 42/00, "The Vision Statement of the United States Marine Corps," message date-time group 152000Z November [15 November, 8 P.M. Greenwich time] 2000.

6. Of the thirty "aims" deployed, ten could be considered primarily human based, seven are technology based, and thirteen are a combination of technology and human elements.

7. U.S. Navy Dept., *Warfighting,* Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1 (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, June 1997), pp. 5–9; and *MC Strategy 21,* p. 9.

8. This "MTW/MOOTW" argument bears some similarities to the Marine Corps struggle in the 1920s and 1930s whether amphibious warfare should replace its traditional role as colonial infantry.

9. Marine Corps development of amphibious warfare owed much to planning for a war with Japan.