





## Preface

This publication is the latest in an evolutionary series that describes how the Navy-Marine Corps team will contribute to the defense of our nation. It supersedes the 2002 *Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations*, refining and expanding upon that document as well as earlier papers like *From the Sea* and *Forward...From the Sea*. This concept is principally guided by national strategy as articulated in *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, and *The National Strategy for Maritime Security*. It provides the naval concept under which the forthcoming *Navy Operating Concepts*, *Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment*, and existing or emerging functional and enabling concepts will reside. Specifically, this concept calls for more widely distributed forces to provide increased forward presence, security cooperation with an expanding set of international partners, preemption of non-traditional threats, and global response to crises in regions around the world where access might be difficult.<sup>1</sup>

This document provides our "Commanders' Intent" to guide the considerable creativity and judgment of our Sailors and Marines in applying a set of principles and methods within the framework provided by *Sea Power 21* and *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Marine Corps*. The end-state is de-centralized decision-making and execution based on broad, centralized guidance.


We face many changes in the national security climate in the years ahead. These changes will include a rise in asymmetric approaches by a diverse array of rising nations, failing states, and non-state actors such as transnational terrorists and criminals who may act with state sponsorship. The diversity of these challenges demands that we capture the full potential of our capacity for organizational innovation. We must do this principally to help win the nation's wars, but also to foreclose opportunities before potential adversaries can challenge our national security through non-traditional means.

In order to maximize our contribution to the joint, inter-agency, and coalition environment, we must always:

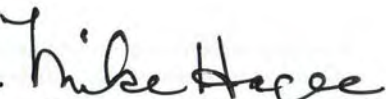
- Look first to one another to fully leverage our strong historic interdependence.
- Conduct assessment and consultation before taking unilateral action that may affect one another.
- Recognize that open discussion and debate is acceptable provided we have a common goal in mind.

We understand that this discourse may become passionate. During World War II, Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly “Terrible” Turner and Lieutenant General Holland M. “Howlin’ Mad” Smith were renowned for their volcanic arguments about operational design, force organization, and tactics during the drive across the Central Pacific, yet together they formed an unbeatable team and wrote one of the greatest chapters in our history.

The Naval Service, and the nation, is well served when we follow their example of teamwork guided by open and frank discussion. The changing operational environment requires that we eliminate redundancies and forge greater interdependence between us. The overarching goal is greater and more efficient alignment beginning at the service headquarters level. We charge all hands to conduct experimentation, wargaming, seminars, and debate in order to more fully understand and implement the guidance presented herein. We expect that this intellectual renaissance within the Naval Service will enable us to meet the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and reinforce the preeminence of U.S. Naval forces to help defend the homeland and win the nation’s wars.



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# Introduction

The United States finds itself in a new strategic era and faces a security environment composed of numerous and diverse challenges, threatening our national interests. These challenges include a complex mix of regional and rising peer competitors, states who sponsor terrorism, failing states that undermine regional stability, and a variety of violent extremists, insurgents, pirates, criminals, and paramilitary forces who seek to destabilize legitimate governments. Moreover, these non-state



actors operate asymmetrically across national boundaries, often in collusion with state sponsors. Tempo, flexibility and adaptability will ensure our competitive advantage and allow us to proactively foreclose these threats. The Navy and Marine Corps team provides Combatant Commanders with access, mobility, staying power, and a mix of



capabilities that uniquely contribute to meeting these evolving operational requirements. This *Naval Operations Concept* outlines how naval forces will be optimized for effective employment across the full range of strategic challenges.

## Purpose

This concept represents our unified vision for the future and describes how, when and where the Navy and Marine Corps will contribute to the national defense and maritime security strategies. It is intended as an intellectual stimulus for evolving our maritime strategy and refining the Navy-Marine Corps team in order to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is written for a wide audience, to include:

- The public at large, to promote understanding of how U.S. Naval forces are employed daily to promote global economic and political stability while retaining the ability to fight and win conflicts large and small.
- Our joint, inter-agency, and multinational partners, to explain how the Navy and Marine Corps will support the Combatant Commanders' efforts to counter traditional, irregular, catastrophic and disruptive challenges as part of a joint or combined campaign.
- Sailors and Marines, to illustrate how their efforts directly contribute to the nation's defense as well as to foster innovation and initiative, while maintaining unity of effort, as we refine our forces to best serve our nation in an ever-changing security environment.

## National Strategy and the Security Environment

The security environment is characterized by a combination of traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive challenges. **Traditional** challenges are posed by nation states employing recognized military forces in well-understood forms of competition and conflict. **Irregular** challenges come from both state and non-state actors as well as their sponsors, employing unconventional methods to counter the traditional advantages of stronger opponents. **Catastrophic** challenges involve the acquisition, possession, and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or methods producing similar effects. It should be noted that natural disasters, economic collapse and human atrocities often have the same effect as WMD and other catastrophic challenges. **Disruptive** challenges will come from adversaries who develop and use breakthrough technologies to impact social and commercial infrastructure. An example of a disruptive challenge would be the use of hacking to infiltrate a nation's financial infrastructure in order to cause confusion and global economic instability. Potential adversaries may use any, or indeed all, of these means in various asymmetric combinations.

The United States remains preeminent in traditional warfare. As the September 11, 2001 attacks illustrated, however, our adversaries will seek to offset that strength through irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive methods. They will likely use these methods in combination, creating a hybrid form of conflict that has both traditional and non-traditional characteristics. These adversaries operate across national boundaries and

depend upon support from a variety of state and non-state actors for safe havens, financing, recruiting, weapons and other resources. Defeating such adversaries will require the judicious application of all elements of national power. While our military forces will continue to locate and destroy the enemy, we will also have a growing role in supporting American diplomatic, informational and economic efforts around the world. This is particularly important wherever there are failed or failing states that could provide a fertile breeding ground for potential adversaries to use as bases of support. All elements of national power will be employed in pursuit of the following strategic objectives:



- ***Secure the United States from direct attack*** by actively confronting, early and at safe distances, those who would threaten us—especially those who would do so with catastrophic means.
- ***Secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action*** by ensuring that key regions, lines of communication and the global commons<sup>ii</sup> remain accessible to all.
- ***Strengthen existing and emerging alliances and partnerships*** to address common challenges.
- ***Establish favorable security conditions*** by countering aggression or coercion targeted at our partners or interests.

The United States will seek to accomplish those objectives through more widely distributed forward forces that can ***assure allies and friends, dissuade potential adversaries, deter aggression and counter coercion*** regionally, yet possess the agility to rapidly re-position and merge with reinforcements deploying as part of a global response to crises. When necessary, that global response will include ***defeating adversaries***.

In addition to fighting the nation’s wars, U.S. Naval forces must adjust the way they operate along the three guiding principles as outlined in the *National Strategy for Maritime Security*:

- *Preserve freedom of the seas*
- *Facilitate and defend commerce*
- *Facilitate the movement of desirable goods and people across our borders, while screening out dangerous people and material*

Eventually we will have new tools to complement our current force, but in the near term we must learn to use what we have in new and innovative ways to best contribute to the nation’s security.

## The Operating Environment and Emerging Strategic Missions

Since non-state threats are generally able to thrive in under-governed areas, U.S. Naval forces are likely to operate in and around such regions. Current examples include the Afghanistan – Pakistan border; the Iraq – Syria border; Chad; the Gulf of Guinea; the Horn of Africa; and portions of Southeast Asia and South America. During the past quarter century, our naval capabilities have been applied in more than 76 operations across the spectrum of crisis and conflict. As Figure 1 illustrates, all but four of these events took place within these areas. The illustration also

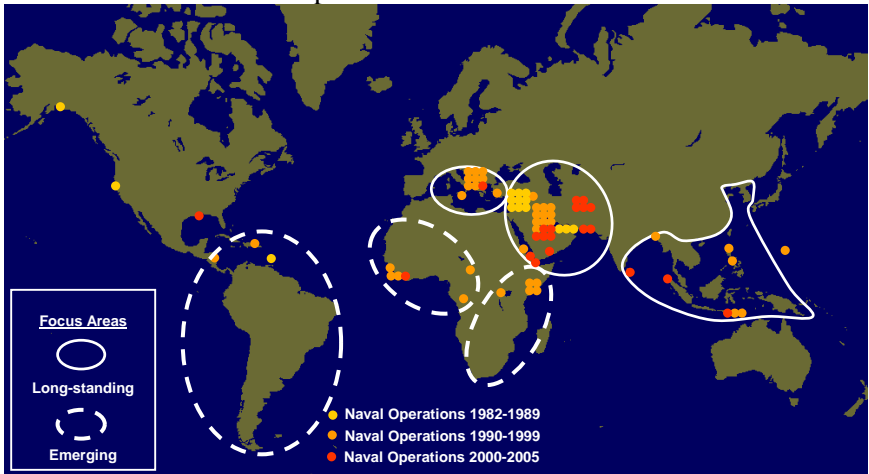


Figure 1

reveals that these unstable areas are largely littoral—coastal regions subject to naval power and influence. We can anticipate that the Combatant Commanders will increasingly employ U.S. Naval forces in those areas of the world where our security and economic interests are

concentrated. This approach will aim to forestall security challenges through proactive engagement in these focus areas.

The growing trend of violent, transnational extremism is the most prevalent destabilization factor in a significant portion of these areas. In addition to ethnic and religious intolerance, many of these developing regions are also troubled with economic challenges and infectious diseases. Collectively, these problems are especially severe in the densely populated urban centers so common to the world's littorals, resulting in discontented populations ripe for exploitation by extremist ideologues as well as international criminal networks. These transnational threats extend their reach by using navigable waterways as the means to smuggle hazardous cargoes, conduct human trafficking, perpetrate acts of piracy, and disrupt the flow of international commerce. The potential impact of such threats on world peace and the global economy is enormous.

### **The Littoral Areas of the World**

*Conceptually, the littoral is comprised of two segments. The **seaward** portion is that area from the open ocean to the shore which must be controlled to support operations ashore. The **landward** portion is the area inland from the shore over which friendly forces can be supported and defended directly from the sea.*

The significance of securing the maritime domain cannot be overstated. Salt water covers more than two-thirds of the earth's surface and more than 90% of the world's trade travels by water, largely via a network of 30 mega ports. It is estimated that more than 75% of the world's population and 80% of the capital cities are located in the littorals. Waterways may serve as either a conduit or barrier for our adversaries.

These adversaries will likely employ a variety of means against us. Among them, **terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, major combat operations, and information operations** impose the greatest concern. Decentralized, self-reliant, innovative, and networked groups will employ terrorism to threaten U.S. interests at home and abroad. The continued proliferation of nuclear weapons and other WMD increases the likelihood of extremist groups obtaining and using catastrophic capabilities. While the United States is oriented on countering these non-traditional challenges, other nations may be emboldened to pursue regional, or even global, objectives through major combat operations.

Whether perpetrated by extremist ideologues, criminal elements, or nation states, these acts of aggression will likely be employed to generate protracted conflict aimed at eroding U.S. resolve. They will be complemented by information operations to include propaganda, media manipulation, and attacks on information systems in order to undermine U.S. credibility and determination while promoting their own.

In recent years, our Sailors and Marines have been committed to a wide variety of missions outside the realm of traditional combat operations, a trend that is expected to increase in the years ahead. This is reflected in the framework outlined in the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review. Rather than addressing non-traditional challenges as mere subsets of traditional ones, it describes separate but overlapping strategic mission sets, with unique capabilities and requirements in each. These strategic missions are: *homeland defense*; *war on terror/irregular warfare*; *conventional campaigns*; and global, transnational, and regional *deterrence*. Embedded within these strategic mission areas are continuous regional *shaping and stability operations*. The proper balance of these mission sets might change depending on the place and time. Achieving the right balance depicted in Figure 2 requires a properly weighted level of effort as dictated by the operational environment.



Figure 2

## Description of the Naval Challenge

U.S. Naval forces have historically accomplished the important naval missions of forward presence, crisis response, deterrence, sea control, and power projection. These missions remain the cornerstone of our force capability. The post 9/11 security environment has, however, increased emphasis on the non-traditional mission areas of civil-military operations, counterinsurgency, counter-proliferation, counterterrorism, maritime security operations (including drug interdiction), information operations, air and missile defense, and security cooperation with an expanding set of partners. *The challenge for the Navy and Marine Corps today is to remain capable of traditional naval missions while simultaneously enhancing our ability to conduct non-traditional missions in order to ensure that naval power and influence can be applied at and from the sea, across the littorals, and ashore, as required.*

## Naval Missions

U.S. Naval forces are adaptable and have utility across the spectrum of operations. By adaptively task-organizing current and emerging Navy and Marine Corps capabilities into closely integrated force packages tailored to the needs of the Combatant Commanders and their component commanders, we can enhance our capability and capacity to balance the varied and competing demands of the national strategy. In support of national strategy, the Navy and Marine Corps will size, shape, and globally posture our forces to conduct:

- **Forward Naval Presence.** The Navy-Marine Corps team will deploy to, or station in, focused areas overseas to demonstrate national resolve, strengthen alliances, deter, and dissuade potential adversaries, and enhance our ability to respond quickly to crises. For example, Commander, SEVENTH Fleet interacts with our friends and allies throughout the Pacific, while remaining ready to assume Combined Force Maritime Component Command responsibilities under Combined Forces Command should war erupt on the Korean peninsula. Additionally, COMSEVENTHFLT may assume joint or combined task force command responsibilities in an emerging crisis or conflict. The enduring mission of forward naval presence remains the cornerstone of the Naval Service's contribution to national security. We will seek opportunities to increase our presence in

focus areas as determined by the security environment and the needs of each region.

- **Crisis Response.** The Navy-Marine Corps team will continue to provide a timely, worldwide response to unforeseen and rapidly unfolding natural disasters and manmade crises. Our forward forces will be first on scene in an emerging crisis and will provide key enabling



capabilities for other government and private organizations and the introduction of follow-on forces and resources. They may also assume or facilitate joint or combined task force command responsibilities, as recently demonstrated by the command element of III Marine Expeditionary Force following the tsunami in Southeast Asia. The application of maritime power, in this case by the LINCOLN and BONHOMME RICHARD strike groups followed



up by the hospital ship MERCY, kept the footprint ashore small, built goodwill, and eased the transition to assistance by host nation and private organizations. Similarly, our Sailors and Marines have provided assistance following Hurricane Katrina, the earthquake in

Pakistan, and the mudslide in the Philippines. Our Navy-Marine Corps team has also conducted crisis response under more hostile conditions, such as the noncombatant evacuations of the American Embassies in Somalia and Liberia, and the tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel in Pakistan and Bosnia. More recently, elements of the IWO JIMA Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) diverted from the Red Sea to aggregate with USS MOUNT WHITNEY, USS GONZALEZ, USS TRENTON, USS BARRY, and the high speed vessel SWIFT in the Mediterranean in order to evacuate thousands of American citizens from war-torn Lebanon. Our command and control capability, both afloat and ashore, as well as our ability to operate in and from the world's oceans, will continue to make our forces well suited for global crisis response in the future.

➤ **Expeditionary Power Projection.**

Enabled by sea basing, the Navy-Marine Corps team provides the joint commander with global reach and access in order to take the fight to the enemy and help win our nation's wars. Amphibious operations, strike warfare, information operations and naval special warfare deliver flexible, scalable and sustainable offensive capabilities at a time and place of our choosing. These may involve major campaigns such as DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM or the



The KEARSARGE ESG

more limited scope of ALLIED FORCE. More recently, Navy special operations forces operating from USS KITTY HAWK and two Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) (MEU (SOC)) operating from amphibious ships conducted a forcible entry deep into the Afghan interior to open access for the joint force. Our ability to rapidly concentrate sea-based forces that are robust enough



SEAL delivery vehicle team in the Atlantic.

to prevail against likely foes, from significant distances in spite of challenges to access, will continue to be a critical and unique U.S. Naval contribution to the joint or combined campaign.

- **Maritime Security Operations.** Policing the maritime commons will require substantially more capability than the U.S. or any one nation could possibly provide. Under the “1,000 Ship Navy” concept, U.S. Naval forces will partner with a diverse array of multinational, federal, state, local and private sector entities to ensure freedom of navigation, the flow of commerce, and the protection of ocean resources. Key among those partners, both abroad and at home, is the U.S. Coast Guard. Collectively and with due respect to national sovereignty, we will secure the maritime domain from nation-state threats, terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration. The recent capture of Somali pirate vessels by Expeditionary Strike Group EIGHT demonstrates our commitment to ensuring freedom of the seas against an expanding number of irregular threats. Joint Inter-Agency Task Force SOUTH,



ESG-1 destroys a dhow used to smuggle drugs.

a partnership of eleven nations, nine U.S. government agencies and all five uniformed services formed to counter narco-terrorism, successfully interdicted 219 metric tons of cocaine in 2004 and 252 metric tons in 2005.

- **Sea Control.** Control of the sea remains critical to our ability to operate in future environments. U.S. Naval forces will maintain the capability to destroy enemy naval forces, suppress enemy sea commerce, protect vital sea-lanes, and establish maritime superiority in support of a joint or combined operations. Control of the sea enables access and the ability to sea base. During Operations DESERT SHIELD /DESERT STORM, our maritime superiority limited Iraqi mine laying in the Arabian Gulf, interdicted their seaborne trade, and facilitated the delivery of allied



CSG-12 exercising divisional tactics in the Atlantic.

equipment and supplies, 90% of which came via strategic sealift. For this enduring naval mission to remain a key enabler for future joint and multinational campaigns, we must maintain our preeminence in anti-submarine and surface warfare, especially with regard to swarming small craft and other unconventional seaborne threats.

- **Deterrence.** U.S. Naval forces will deter and dissuade potential adversaries from acts of aggression by imposing the credible risk of conventional, unconventional, and nuclear consequences. During the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, surface combatants, sea-based Marines and attack helicopters operated in the Arabian Gulf to deter the belligerents from expanding the conflict and disrupting the flow of oil from the region. Operation EARNEST WILL provided tanker escort while also demonstrating U.S. determination to oppose threats to our interests in the Arabian Gulf. Various acts of Iraqi aggression throughout the 1990's were contained by timely naval responses. Several of these included strike missions by carrier aircraft, surface combatants, and submarines, while others involved the rapid aggregation of amphibious forces to employ Marines on the Iraq-



USS PENNSYLVANIA returning from her 50th deterrent patrol.

Kuwait border. Additionally, our submarines provide the strategic deterrence that prevents other nations from employing weapons of mass destruction against the U.S. and our friends and allies.

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**Maritime Dominance...**  
**In an Uncertain and Dangerous World**  
(A Notional Operation)

*The Expeditionary Strike Force (ESF) had been formed for less than 72 hours, but already was functioning as a cohesive unit. Its creation was enabled by the re-aggregation of the NIMITZ Carrier Strike Group (CSG) and the PELELIU Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) with its imbedded MEU (SOC). Both strike groups had been distributed across the theater executing the Combatant Commander's "Phase Zero" Shaping and Stability plans in support of U.S. military and national strategic objectives. As part of these engagement operations, both NIMITZ and PELELIU embarked training teams, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and medical personnel. Additionally, USS FLORIDA (SSGN 782) was positioned with a Joint Special Operations task force embarked, to conduct covert operations against terrorist cells operating in the area. Both strike group commanders had emphasized conventional operations during the inter-deployment training cycle and had even been able to flex the awesome combined capability of an ESF prior to deployment. This extra effort was now paying big dividends in the current crisis as units reconfigured for possible combat operations.*

*The NIMITZ CSG was re-aggregated by the numbered fleet commander in response to rising tensions amongst nations claiming sovereignty over an inhabited island chain, rich with natural resources, within the region. One of the nations claiming sovereignty, Orange, is a rising maritime power and has significantly increased spending on its offensive capabilities. Several nations in the region have requested that the U.S. and other partner nations expand operations to counter Orange's influence within the island chain. In addition to the deterrent effect provided by its striking power the NIMITZ air wing, in conjunction with coalition aircraft, has provided critical ISR and combat support for these expanded operations.*

*Subsequent to these events a devastating typhoon ravaged the inhabited islands. Several allied nations in the region requested that the U.S. contribute to the humanitarian assistance effort. The immediate response to this request was to send USS GONZALEZ (DDG 66), USS OGDEN (LPD 5), and a Maritime Pre-positioning Squadron. Helicopters and landing craft air-cushioned (LCAC) immediately began transporting food and water to the most devastated areas and brought the most critically injured back to OGDEN to receive medical attention. Coalition naval units also converged on the area and Nimitz, with significant command, control and intelligence capability, served as Coalition Force Maritime Component Commander*

*flagship under the Coalition Task Force Commander who is coordinating operations from the regional operations center.*

*Tensions with Orange have risen further due to the humanitarian assistance operations occurring within the disputed coastal waters. Without warning, an Orange patrol craft fired at one of OGDEN's LCACs as it approached the shore. No casualties or significant damage resulted from the attack and the patrol craft immediately departed the area. Orange responded to protests over the attack by stating that the U.S. and its allies in the region were violating Orange sovereign territory. They warned that further violations would be met with a much stronger response. At the same time, eight ships departed from Orange's main naval base and proceeded towards GONZALEZ and OGDEN. Additionally, full-scale mobilization of all Orange armed forces was reported both in the press and through intelligence sources. To deter further aggression, the United States countered by forming an ESF. NIMITZ's air wing immediately increased its sortie rate of combat aircraft providing support and surveillance to the region.*

*The rapid formation of the ESF appears to have taken Orange by surprise and they have halted their eight-ship flotilla about 250 miles away. NIMITZ continued flying an expanded rotation of combat patrols and overtly making its presence felt throughout the area of operations. Concurrently, the amphibious forces have been conducting demonstrations and combined-arms exercises. The integration between NIMITZ CSG and PELELIU ESG has occurred flawlessly. Additionally, the Forward Deployed Naval Force (FDNF) CSG and ESG have sortied from their homeports in Japan and are making best speed to join the ESF on station. In preparation for possible conflict with Orange, Navy and Marine Corps resources have been organized as the core of a Joint Task Force (JTF). Army and Air Force units throughout the region have been prepared to support the JTF. Providing an emphatic message of resolve to Orange, numerous nations from within the region and beyond have formed a "Coalition of the willing" seeking to preserve stability in the region.*

*Tensions have somewhat decreased now that Orange responded to a request from the international community to contribute their flotilla to the continuing typhoon relief coalition operations. Orange stated that other operational requirements precluded their flotilla's joining relief efforts, but that they appreciated the assistance being given the inhabitants of their islands. The flotilla returned home without further incident.*

➤ **Security Cooperation.** While forward deployed, our Sailors and Marines will be critical members of the joint and inter-agency team that interacts with an expanding set of international partners to build defense relationships, develop friendly capabilities for self-defense



and multinational operations, promote cultural awareness and regional understanding, and enhance strategic access. Always conducted with the utmost respect for individual national sovereignty, these cooperative activities will include assisting host nation governments in freeing and/or protecting their societies from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Developing the Iraqi armed forces, training with the Thai and Indonesian armed forces, supporting the Georgia Train and Equip Program, helping Africans combat illegal activity along their coastline, building Yemeni Coast



Ships from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Pakistan, New Zealand, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States conducting security cooperation in the North Arabian Sea.

Guard capacity to protect their economic infrastructure, conducting UNITAS exercises with South and Central American partners, and promoting interoperability with the Indian Navy, are recent examples of this naval mission. Additionally, the establishment of CTF-150, a multinational maritime security force operating with the U.S. FIFTH Fleet and rotationally commanded by coalition partners such as Germany, The Netherlands, and Pakistan, demonstrates our mutual commitment to safeguarding the maritime domain. In addition to the expansion of specialized Navy and Marine Corps capabilities for foreign internal defense, U.S. Naval forces in general will increasingly perform security cooperation missions. Maritime security cooperation also allows us to operate together with partner

nations at sea when political considerations may preclude interaction on land.

- **Civil-Military Operations.** Forward deployed U.S. Naval forces, in conjunction with our joint and inter-agency partners, will establish relationships with local, regional and national governments, private organizations, and civilian populaces in friendly, neutral, or hostile areas in order to advance U.S. objectives. Civil-military operations may be conducted as a means of preventing conflict, or as a critical aspect of a counterinsurgency or counterterrorism campaign.

These operations may involve providing humanitarian and civic assistance to the local populace in conjunction with military operations and exercises. Activities may include the provision of health care, construction of surface transportation systems, well drilling, construction of basic sanitation facilities, and rudimentary construction and repair of



1st Battalion, 2nd  
Marines restoring a  
school in Djibouti.

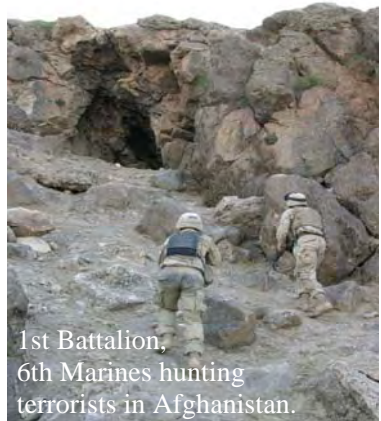
public facilities. Recent Navy and Marine Corps actions in East Timor exemplify how our capabilities will be applied to proactively influence events, as do ongoing naval construction battalion operations in Jordan, the Seychelles, and the Horn of Africa. Operations in the Horn of Africa also demonstrate our capability to provide the core of a combined or joint task force command element, initially accomplished by II Marine Expeditionary Force and more recently accomplished by Commander, Carrier Strike Group SIX. The Navy and Marine Corps have also conducted civil-military operations within the larger context of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan.

- **Counterinsurgency.** Forward deployed U.S. Naval forces will conduct and/or support military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions to defeat insurgencies. These actions will be synchronized and integrated with joint and coalition efforts to apply all instruments of national power to support a host nation government, populace, and military in their efforts to effectively resolve the conditions that sustain discontent or



insurrection. In addition to ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, U.S. Sailors and Marines have supported other, less publicized efforts to diffuse insurgencies in Africa, Southeast Asia and Colombia.

- **Counterterrorism.** The Navy-Marine Corps team, partnered with other agencies, will locate, interdict, and eliminate terrorists and the networks that support their activities. Additionally, we will pursue every opportunity to discredit extremist ideologies and undermine support for terrorist organizations. Central to this mission are intelligence collection, network and infrastructure attack, hostage or sensitive material



recovery, and psychological and information operations. During the early phases of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Task Force 58 projected SEAL teams and two MEUs (SOC) from amphibious ships against objectives deep inland to remove terrorist sanctuaries.



Today, we continue to pursue terrorists in Afghanistan. Currently, in Operation SEA DRAGON, our expeditionary strike groups are being employed to deny terrorists use of the sea as a venue or enabler for terrorist operations. We also continue to work alongside our North Atlantic Treaty Organization partners in Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOR to deny terrorists and those who support them the ability to operate across the Mediterranean Sea. U.S. Sailors and Marines can expect a continually expanding role in the war on terrorism.

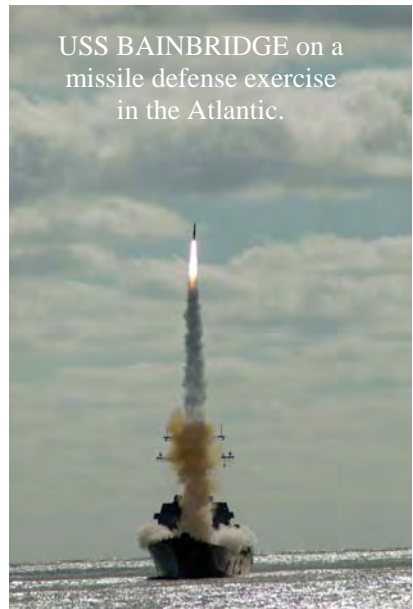
- **Counter-proliferation.** U.S. Naval forces will be employed to detect, monitor, and defeat the threat and/or use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States, our military forces, friends, and allies. In recent years the U.S. has partnered with several allies to expand our collective ability to locate and intercept the transfer of WMD and associated materials. This



cooperation has resulted in the interception of aluminum tubes likely bound for North Korea's nuclear weapons program and seizure of chemicals from the North Korean cargo vessel *Be Gaehung*. We will continually refine and expand our participation in this crucial international effort.

➤ **Air and Missile Defense.**

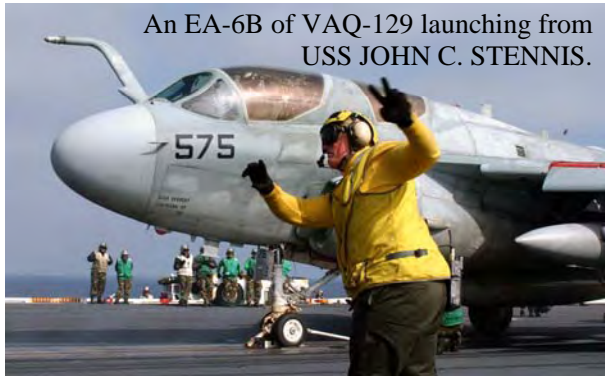
Forward deployed U.S. Naval forces contribute to joint air and missile defense by providing the capability to detect and destroy enemy aircraft and missiles in flight. When directed, they provide offensive capabilities to defeat enemy aircraft and missile systems by physically and electronically attacking bases, launch sites and associated command and control systems. These capabilities protect joint and multinational forces operating overseas, allied and friendly nations, and provide the first echelon of homeland defense-in-depth. The growing threat of ballistic missile attack requires continued emphasis of this naval mission.



➤ **Information Operations.** U.S. Naval forces will use and protect information to influence adversaries, advance friendly objectives, and shape the operating environment to our advantage. The emphasis on strengthening alliances and partnerships and establishing favorable security conditions outlined in theater security cooperation plans demands that we enhance our ability to plan, implement, and assess information operations. Whether conducted by forward deployed forces or through reach back capability, information operations must be informed by an understanding of the operating environment, not only from our own perspective, but also from our adversaries' as well as that of neutral parties. Additionally, naval information operation capabilities play an important role in securing our nation from direct attack and maintaining freedom of action. The universal and effective employment of these capabilities

will be critical to countering our adversaries' use of irregular and disruptive techniques. In recent years we have vastly enhanced our technological capabilities and assigned corresponding organizational responsibilities for information operations.

This means that in addition to overarching influence planning and assessment, U.S. Naval forces can provide foreign



language broadcasts, media production and delivery, network operations and exploitation, radar and communications electronic warfare, and technical military deception. Although technology and organizations are important, our ability to effectively employ information operations is derived from the ability of our personnel—culturally aware, operationally savvy, and technologically proficient—to judiciously employ their skills in order to achieve the desired strategic, operational, and tactical effects.

## Guiding Naval Principles

In conducting the diverse array of missions described above, our leaders will be guided by enduring naval principles that require creativity and judgment in application. U.S. Naval operations will be planned and executed consistent with the following naval principles:

- ***Agility.*** Within a strategic environment characterized by uncertainty, U.S. Naval forces must possess the ability to quickly adapt to meet new and diverse operational requirements and thereby foreclose opportunities to irregular or conventional forces.
- ***Coordinated Global Influence.*** In addition to the impact U.S. Naval operations have regionally, consideration must be given to the effects generated globally as an element of U.S. strategic communications.

- ***Deployability and Employability.*** To meet specific operational requirements U.S. Naval forces must be right-sized and shaped, necessitating that all personnel and resources are readily available to operate forward.
- ***Interoperability.*** U.S. Naval forces must maximize the ability to integrate with the joint force, as well as our inter-agency and multi-national partners, to achieve integrated and interdependent operations. Interoperability implies systems, capabilities, organization and cultural awareness working in harmony across all elements of an operation.
- ***Persistent Presence.*** To gain cultural awareness and positive regional influence, U.S. Naval forces must be capable of sustaining forward operations both afloat from forward sea bases and ashore for extended periods. Additionally, this persistence will enable prolonged operations during periods of crisis and conflict.
- ***Adaptive Force Packaging.*** To maximize the desired effect, operations will be resourced from a global menu of interdependent joint and naval capabilities.
- ***Precision.*** Appropriate naval capabilities must be matched to designated tasks in order to achieve the overarching purpose, while minimizing unintended consequences. Precision requires continuous assessment of effects and refinement of approach to ensure appropriate capabilities are being judiciously applied in pursuit of the desired outcome.
- ***Speed.*** To seize initiative and achieve desired effects, U.S. Naval forces must be sized, shaped and postured to minimize response time and rapidly execute assigned missions inside our adversaries' decision cycle.
- ***Unpredictability for Our Adversaries and Reliability for Our Friends.*** Our operations must deny our adversaries the ability to exploit familiar deployment and employment patterns; yet assure our friends of our continued persistent commitment to our common interests.

# The Foundation for Naval Operations

To facilitate the creative and judicious application of the principles described above, the Navy and Marine Corps share a common operational outlook and approach. Successful fulfillment of the broad range of naval missions is built upon a foundation of:

- ***Leadership and Professionalism***, central to every facet of our operations at sea and ashore. Leadership and professionalism are developed through the active pursuit of formal training and education, independent reading and study, real-world experience, mentoring, and adherence to high personal and professional standards.
- ***Mission Type Orders***, the practice of a higher commander communicating his intent to promote subordinate initiative in execution. Also known as "mission control," it is characterized by centralized guidance and decentralized decision-making and execution. Mission type orders facilitate execution of distributed and disaggregated operations in the complex and dynamic environment described above. Our enhancements to information sharing will improve our ability to integrate and collaborate with our joint, multinational, and inter-agency partners.
- ***Global Awareness***, a broad term for the cumulative result of professional development, technological enhancements, and cooperative information sharing. Professional development includes promoting regional and cultural familiarity and understanding, allowing U.S. Sailors and Marines to act on relevant information in a prudent and timely manner. To gain this level of awareness, we must broaden our intelligence capabilities to include the littoral. Technological enhancements and cooperative information sharing include the ability to exchange relevant information across networked military, governmental and private organizations, regardless of nationality or level of authority. In doing so, we recognize that sharing at the unclassified or lowest classification level possible offers the highest benefit in terms of gaining trust and substantive cooperation from a wide range of international partners.
- ***Interdependence***, the reliance on unique capabilities each sea service contributes towards accomplishing the various naval missions. In

addition to achieving interdependence between the Navy and Marine Corps, we must also proactively seek to integrate the unique capabilities resident in the other services as well as other governmental agencies, partner nations, non-governmental agencies and private venture organizations.

## Methods

Developing the capability and capacity to fulfill the entire range of naval missions will require enhancements to our methods of organizing, training, equipping, deploying and operating. We must continuously develop innovative methods to further our contribution to national security. Some of the methods below, utilizing current force capabilities, have already demonstrated their utility and are being applied on a wider basis. Others are emerging methods which might be employed to make better use of our current force and serve as example to inspire further innovation. One example of an emerging method is the “1,000 Ship Navy” concept, which acknowledges that globalization has created economic and security interdependencies between nations, and that no nation can go it alone; the policing and protecting of the maritime commons is in the collective interests of all nations. As such, a global maritime network of willing international navies will be required to ensure the maritime commons are safe and free for the use of all.

- ***Globally Networked Operations*** – Establishing a scalable open access/open architecture information system to enhance organizational flexibility and global awareness. Our system must facilitate the rapid information sharing required to expeditiously task-organize and employ Navy and Marine Corps forces from worldwide locations, while appropriately safeguarding sensitive or classified information.
- ***Distributed Operations*** – Increasing our ability for independent, unified action by geographically separated, yet globally, regionally, or tactically integrated, networked forces. Decentralized action will permit wider, more diverse application of naval power and influence. The connectivity afforded by distributed operations permits rapid re-aggregation or reinforcement where military power projection must be quickly applied. It also places a premium on the situational awareness and judgment of junior leaders, thereby necessitating enhancements to professional development.

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## **Agile, Scaleable, and Relevant**

(A Historical Perspective)

*Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) exemplifies the naval missions, principles and approach articulated in this concept. Immediately following the events of September 11, 2001, the VINSON, STENNIS, ROOSEVELT and ENTERPRISE carrier battle groups (CVBG), with a mix of Navy and Marine squadrons embarked, were directed to the North Arabian Sea.*

*Similarly, in September 2001, the 15th MEU (SOC) and the PELELIU Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) were training in Australia as part of their **forward presence** mission when they were directed to make best speed to the North Arabian Sea. En route, they managed to accomplish their preplanned **civil-military operation** in East Timor, which included the vertical lift of heavy construction equipment and provision of health services to remote areas inland.*

*Nearing the North Arabian Sea, the MEU/ARG was directed by Commander, U.S. FIFTH Fleet to be prepared to conduct a non-combatant evacuation of more than 13,000 foreign nationals from Pakistan, should civil unrest follow the pending announcement of an alliance with the United States. That **crisis response** contingency was the first of numerous missions in the weeks to come. In rapid succession the MEU/ARG: initiated **security cooperation** with Pakistani forces to establish a forward operating site at Jacobabad for a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF); supported **counterterrorism** by providing a quick reaction force for a special operations raid and flying Harrier strikes against targets in Afghanistan; carried out **maritime security operations** in coordination with the Pakistan Navy; and conducted **crisis response** by tactically recovering a crashed U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter. As these operations in the Pakistan—Afghanistan area were ongoing, at the request of the American ambassador in Qatar the MEU/ARG provided a discrete, over-the-horizon reaction force for **crisis response** during a meeting of the World Trade Organization. Additionally, other elements of the MEU/ARG provided humanitarian assistance to fulfill a **civil-military operations** mission in Djibouti. The net result was that numerous task-organized elements of a single MEU/ARG, distributed across an area 1753 nautical miles wide, demonstrated the agility to simultaneously conduct multiple missions in cooperation with a variety of joint, multinational, and inter-agency partners.*

Meanwhile, **expeditionary power projection** into Afghanistan began on October 7 when VINSON launched the first strike missions against Taliban and al-Qaeda targets. The volume of strikes increased, especially in support of anti-regime forces in the north, as the additional CVBGs converged on the region. In mid-November, the 26<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC) and the BATAAN ARG, diverted from the Mediterranean, aggregated with the 15<sup>th</sup> MEU (SOC)/PELELIU ARG to form Task Force 58 (TF 58). Naval Special Warfare teams and Navy and Marine Corps fighter/attack squadrons from four carrier strike groups conducted extensive strikes against Taliban and al-Qaeda targets, including support to the anti-regime forces in the north. Additionally, Navy P-3s served as the critical enablers of long-duration communications relay and aerial reconnaissance. On 25 November TF 58 opened a second front in the south by commencing the longest ship-to-objective maneuver in history, moving 400 miles inland to seize the desert airstrip south of Kandahar. Renamed “Forward Operating Base (FOB) Rhino,” it supported the introduction of additional joint forces as well as the isolation and the eventual seizure of Kandahar, the last political and military stronghold of the Taliban regime. Supported and sustained from a sea base 450 miles away, FOB Rhino facilitated the projection of combat power several hundred miles further inland. Concurrently, TF 58 conducted sensitive site exploitation in support of **counter-proliferation** as well as continued strikes and raids. These tasks were accomplished through the integrated application of TF 58’s organic combat power, carrier air, strategic airlift, and cooperation with special operations forces, operatives from other government agencies, and anti-Taliban forces.

Throughout Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, U.S. Naval forces applied the guiding naval principles that will ensure the scalability, agility, and relevance demanded in the future.

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- **Adaptive Force Packaging: Right Force, Right Time, Right Place** – Optimizing the combination of people and platforms to provide the right force at the right time given a particular operational requirement. Current naval force packages must be complemented by alternative, non-standardized options appropriate to a broader range of missions. Additionally, proper inclusion of joint, inter-agency, and private resources will provide efficient and effective force packages tailored to a specific mission.

- **Aggregate, Disaggregate, Re-aggregate** – Expanding our ability to re-group capabilities for maximum employment options across the spectrum of operations. U.S. Naval forces are likely to deploy in a given configuration, disperse to accomplish missions such as forward



presence and security cooperation, and then be called upon to merge with Navy, Marine Corps, joint, or inter-agency elements to assume different missions such as crisis response or expeditionary power projection.

- **Cross Fleet Standardization** – Developing the common tactics, techniques and procedures that will improve the efficiency of globally sourced forces. Standardizing routine procedures associated with planning, communications, intelligence, fires, maneuver, logistics and force protection will facilitate effective employment of Navy and Marine Corps forces.
- **Task Focused Training** – Increasing the speed and agility of our forces by training to specific operational requirements. Concentrating our preparations on those tasks most likely to be encountered during a given period or assigned mission will increase deployment flexibility and capacity.

- **Cultural Awareness** – Enhancing our ability to understand how social, political, economic, ethnic and religious factors impact the operational environment. In today’s complex world even minor tactical actions can have strategic implications, necessitating refinements to professional development so that U.S. Sailors and Marines have the requisite skills to work successfully across cultures to project our stabilizing influence. In non-traditional naval missions this is critical – without it, the mission will fail in the long run.



- **Sea Basing** – Providing operational maneuver and assured access to the joint force while significantly reducing our footprint ashore and minimizing the permissions required to operate from host nations. With a sustainable logistics tail safely at sea, sea basing leverages the ability to operate from international waters. We are exploring innovative operational concepts that combine sea basing with adaptive force packaging that will further support national security and the Combatant Commanders’ objectives worldwide. One such concept is the Global Fleet Station (GFS). GFS is a persistent sea base of operations from which to coordinate and employ adaptive force packages within a regional area of interest. Focusing primarily on Phase 0 (shaping) operations, Theater Security Cooperation, Global Maritime Awareness, and tasks associated specifically with the War on Terror, GFS offers a means to increase regional maritime security through the cooperative efforts of joint, inter-agency, and multinational partners, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations. Like all sea bases, the composition of a GFS depends on Combatant Commander requirements, the operating environment, and the mission. From its sea base, each GFS would serve as a self-contained headquarters for regional operations with the capacity to repair and service all ships, small craft, and aircraft assigned. Additionally, the GFS might provide classroom space, limited medical facilities, an information fusion center, and some combat

service support capability. The GFS concept provides a leveraged, high-yield sea based option that achieves a persistent presence in support of national objectives. Additionally, it complements more traditional CSG/ESG training and deployment cycles.

- ***Building Partner Capacity*** – Increasing our capacity to work with foreign counterparts and their ability to work with us. In essence, it amounts to cooperating with friendly nations to help them safeguard their share of the sea’s resources, stabilize their littorals, and contribute to international peace and security. Protecting the freedom of the seas and the integrity of international borders will require more capacity than any one nation can provide, meaning that we must develop the partnerships, protocols and procedures that will permit nations with similar goals to cooperate for the common good – the operating premise of the “1,000 Ship Navy.” Building partnership capacity will promote regional security and stability through more capable, participatory coalitions and alliances.



Multinational partners steaming in formation during RIMPAC 2006, the world’s largest biennial maritime exercise.

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## **Proactive and Persistent** (A Future Sea Story)

*Five coastal nations, all with considerable natural resources essential to the global economy, recently requested international assistance in countering challenges to their sovereignty imposed by poverty, disease, poor governance, insurgency, and terrorism. As a result, the United States has established a Global Fleet Station (GFS) in the region. USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12), uniquely manned and equipped, has served as the central platform in the GFS for two years. Her complement of Sailors and Marines has been adaptively packaged and trained to accomplish a diverse set of missions, to include civil-military operations, maritime security, and security cooperation.*

*Prior to arrival in the region they began coordination with U.S. Embassy personnel, including the Naval Attaché (a foreign area officer), representatives from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. These U.S. officials, all fluent in local dialects, had spent the previous six months working with local law enforcement officials, civil and military authorities, and private citizens to assess host nation needs and build working relationships. This interaction allowed the Sailors and Marines to effectively focus their actions on the immediate needs of alleviating distress and improving security. As the local citizenry recognized and grew to appreciate this assistance, mutual trust and confidence increased. Over time, these relationships resulted in identification of additional requirements as well as the generation of better intelligence, leading to changes in capabilities resident in, and operations conducted from, the GFS. These included the arrival of U.S. Army veterinarians to curb disease in the livestock, Coast Guard small boat specialists to assist local forces in patrolling the littoral and protecting oil platforms, civil engineers from the Air Force and Navy to improve infrastructure, civilian health care professionals to initiate preventative medicine programs, and international legal experts to promote governance.*

*While the presence in the Gulf was intended as a peaceful one, the enduring need for vigilant, combat readiness demonstrated itself one night when pirates attacked SHREVEPORT due to the mistaken notion that she was providing logistic support to the oil platforms. SHREVEPORT's embarked helicopters, which had been providing lift support for infrastructure repairs to roads and building ashore, in coordination with local patrol craft demonstrated their versatility by sinking several pirate boats. Subsequently, Sailors, Marines, and local authorities boarded the remaining pirate vessels and obtained information leading to the discovery of a terrorist camp.*

*Upset that the GFS (which had been so beneficial to the region) had been attacked, the local population provided numerous tips on terrorist activities. From this information a coordinated series of raids were conducted involving Marines and local forces to remove a terrorist training facility and key terrorist support activities.*

*While the mix of people, platforms and resources in the GFS has continuously evolved, the local nations have grown to count on the GFS presence to build their partner capacity as a means of enhancing the security and economic development of the region.*

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## **Desired Outcomes and Effects**

This concept espouses an approach for organizing and employing Navy and Marine Corps capabilities to meet the strategic challenges of the Global War on Terrorism/Long War. It seeks to make best use of the resources we have today to counter the existing threats in our current strategic environment. While efforts are underway to create new platforms and programs in response to our new challenges, we must and will maximize every Sailor and Marine's contribution to our national security. In short, this concept is about how we are going to use what we have today differently to best fight and win the War on Terror, positively participate in the global maritime community, yet remain prepared to counter or defeat future threats against the United States, be they traditional, irregular, disruptive or catastrophic.

The naval missions, principles, foundation and methods described in this concept are intended to achieve a positive end state comprised of the objectives articulated in our national strategy. The Navy-Marine Corps team exists to ensure that: favorable security conditions are established; our strategic access is secured and global freedom of action is retained; our alliances and partnerships are strengthened; and most importantly, that the United States is secure from attack.



Notionally, application of the approach discussed in this concept will involve the establishment of one or more sea based fleet stations where needed by Combatant Commanders to provide persistent ***forward naval presence***. The capabilities resident within each of these fleet stations will vary based on the evolving mission needs of the Combatant Commanders, challenging our adversaries to discern our operating patterns while still providing sufficient persistent presence to reassure friends of our continued commitment. On a routine basis, our Sailors and Marines will likely operate together from a variety of ships, aircraft and small boats to conduct ***maritime security operations*** in sea lanes, coastal areas, and rivers in order to protect the world's waterways from terrorist activity, piracy, drug smuggling, and environmental threats. These activities will likely involve ***security cooperation*** with the forces of nations with similar goals. Meanwhile, other Sailors and Marines, also projected from and supported by the ships of the fleet station, may be conducting ***civil-military operations*** and ***security cooperation*** ashore within the larger context of ***counterinsurgency***. Still others may be proactively working with a neighboring country to prevent the expansion of instability through ***civil-military operations*** designed to alleviate conditions that spawn discontent among the population, while also conducting ***security cooperation*** to enhance the host nation's self-defense capability and capacity. In yet another neighboring country, our Sailors and Marines may be conducting reconnaissance, surveillance, strikes, and raids in support of ***counterterrorism***, or recovering and safeguarding sensitive materials in support of ***counter-proliferation***. Concurrent with all of these missions, globally distributed U.S. Naval forces will provide both conventional and nuclear ***deterrence*** while also contributing to the ***air and missile defense*** of joint forces, our multinational partners, and the first echelon of homeland defense-in-depth. By posturing some of our interdependent capabilities within globally distributed fleet stations, U.S. Naval forces will possess the speed to provide immediate ***crisis response*** to natural disasters or man-made crises occurring within the region.



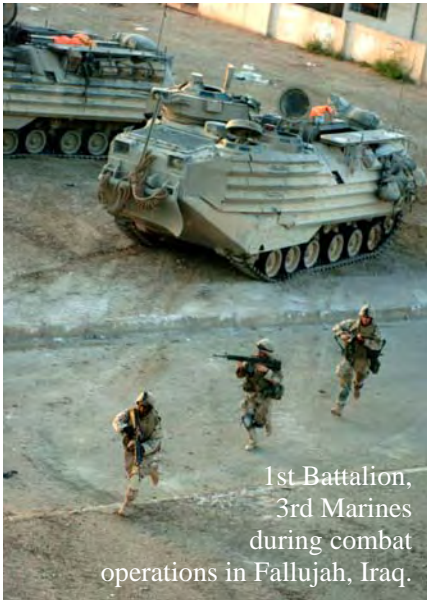
Evacuating an American family from a crisis area.

When larger crises occur, the requisite Navy and Marine Corps capabilities can be rapidly concentrated from those strike groups already



Multi-Strike Group Operations in support of VALIANT SHIELD.

forward on deployment or en route, or other deployment ready groups capable of meeting the needs of the Combatant Commanders. This massing of capabilities may be required to overcome a wide range of challenges, from significant natural disasters to major combat operations. U.S. Naval forces may be called upon to demonstrate the agility to perform any or all of the missions described above, as well as *sea control* and *expeditionary power projection* as part of a joint or combined campaign.



1st Battalion,  
3rd Marines  
during combat  
operations in Fallujah, Iraq.

Regardless of the size, scope, nature, or duration of the mission, U.S. Naval forces will employ complementary *information operations* to support the Combatant Commanders objectives and exert coordinated global influence.

It is now up to us to understand the principles and methods presented in this concept and apply them as needed. As with any concept, it is only as good as the people who execute its intent. We will rely heavily on the innovation, initiative, expertise and devotion to duty of Sailors and Marines in applying the ideas articulated in this concept towards successfully meeting the varied and competing demands imposed by an evolving and dynamic set of strategic challenges. We cannot predict the future with certainty. This concept, however, provides a common Navy-Marine Corps approach that can be applied by bright, creative Sailors and Marines to adapt and succeed in an ever-changing security environment.



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<sup>i</sup> For further reading, see *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, and *The National Strategy for Maritime Security* available on-line at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/intro.html>, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nds1.pdf>, and [http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/HSPD13\\_MaritimeSecurityStrategy.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/HSPD13_MaritimeSecurityStrategy.pdf) respectively.

<sup>ii</sup> Global commons include international waters, airspace, space, and cyberspace.

# Naval Operations Concept Construct

## Commander's Guidance: Leverage Historic Interdependence, Assess/Consult, Open Discussion/Debate With a Common Goal

Strategic Missions	Naval Missions	Guiding Naval Principles	Methods	Strategic Objectives/Outcomes
Homeland Defense (HLD)	Forward Naval Presence	Agility	Globally Networked Operations	Help Win the Nation's Wars
War on Terror (WOT)/ Irregular Warfare (IW)	Crisis Response	Coordinated Global Influence	Distributed Operations	Establish Favorable Security Conditions
Conventional Campaigns	Expeditionary Power Projection	Deployability and Employability	Adaptive Force Packaging: Right Force, Right Time, Right Place	Secure Strategic Access & Retain Global Freedom of Action
Deterrence	Maritime Security Operations	Interoperability	Aggregate, Disaggregate, Re-aggregate	Strengthen Alliances and Partnerships
Shaping and Stability Operations (SSO)	Sea Control	Persistent Presence	Cross Fleet Standardization	Secure US from Attack
	Deterrence	Adaptive Force Packaging	Task Focused Training	
	Security Cooperation	Precision	Cultural Awareness	
	Civil-Military Operations	Speed	Sea Basing	
	Counterterrorism	Unpredictability for Our Adversaries and Reliability for Our Friends	Building Partner Capacity	
	Counter-proliferation			
	Air and Missile Defense			
	Information Operations			

**Foundations of NOC: Leadership and Professionalism, Mission Type Orders, Global Awareness (Maritime Domain Awareness and Beyond), and Interdependence**