

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 10-05-2007		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Insurance Policy or Force Provider: Operational Considerations for Employing the Expeditionary Strike Group and Marine Expeditionary Unit				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Robert T. Meade, Major, USMC Paper Advisor (if Any): LtCol Joseph Rutledge, USMC				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT The Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) with embarked Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) is an adaptable, flexible force that provides the Combatant Commander (CCDR) with a unique crisis action planning and response capability. Since 2003, the CCDR, U.S. Central Command has routinely employed the MEU in Iraq and detached from its parent ESG and amphibious shipping. While this employment option may provide the operational commander increased combat power in Iraq, it also diminishes his ability to rapidly respond to crisis situations and advance U.S. strategic interests abroad. In addition, when the MEU is committed in Iraq and unable to respond to a crisis, the already overburdened joint force is required to establish <i>ad hoc</i> organizations to meet the objective. This paper proposes that when employing the ESG/MEU, the CCDR should consider options that afford maximum flexibility, security, and unity of command to mitigate risk to the joint force, advance U.S. interests, and facilitate rapid response to potential crises in the geographic area of responsibility. Ultimately, this operational employment parameter could generate significant positive strategic consequences for the CCDR and the nation.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS MEU, ESG, Crisis, Security Cooperation, Forward Presence, Risk, Flexibility, Security, Unity of Command					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

Insurance Policy or Force Provider:

**Operational Considerations for Employing the
Expeditionary Strike Group and Marine Expeditionary Unit**

by

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Major, USMC

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

10 May 2007

Abstract

The Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) with embarked Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) is an adaptable, flexible force that provides the Combatant Commander (CCDR) with a unique crisis action planning and response capability. Since 2003, the CCDR, U.S. Central Command has routinely employed the MEU in Iraq and detached from its parent ESG and amphibious shipping. While this employment option may provide the operational commander increased combat power in Iraq, it also diminishes his ability to rapidly respond to crisis situations and advance U.S. strategic interests abroad. In addition, when the MEU is committed in Iraq and unable to respond to a crisis, the already overburdened joint force is required to establish *ad hoc* organizations to meet the objective.

This paper proposes that when employing the ESG/MEU, the CCDR should consider options that afford maximum flexibility, security, and unity of command to mitigate risk to the joint force, advance U.S. interests, and facilitate rapid response to potential crises in the geographic area of responsibility. Ultimately, this operational employment parameter could generate significant positive strategic consequences for the CCDR and the nation.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) in 2003, the Combatant Commander (CCDR), U.S. Central Command, has routinely employed the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)¹ in Iraq separated from its parent Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) and amphibious shipping. Here, the CCDR must weigh the benefit of committing the MEU within a mature theater² against the risk of being unable to support other objectives or respond quickly to a crisis. The MEU's deployment to trouble spots in Iraq does, for many reasons, enhance the combat effectiveness of the overall joint force. On the other hand, some employment options may better support the CCDR's requirements than others. Therefore, this paper proposes that when employing the ESG/MEU, the CCDR should consider options that afford maximum flexibility, security, and unity of command to mitigate risk to the joint force, advance U.S. interests, and facilitate rapid response to potential crises in the geographic area of responsibility. Ultimately, this operational employment parameter could generate significant positive strategic consequences for the CCDR and the nation.

The United States' ability to respond rapidly and manage global crises effectively sends powerful messages of national strength to adversaries and commitment to international partners.³ Crises, or lesser contingencies as described in the National Defense Strategy, include operations such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, noncombatant evacuation operations, and search and rescue operations. These missions are normally characterized by shorter planning, response, and execution times than large scale combat operations.⁴ Although shorter in duration, successful crisis response missions protect and advance U.S. interests abroad while demonstrating U.S. goodwill to the international community.⁵

The ESG offers a unique capability to the operational commander. Made up of three surface combatants (e.g. cruiser, destroyer, or frigate), one submarine (SSN), one Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG), and one embarked MEU, the ESG deploys with a multitude of naval and “expeditionary strike” capabilities.⁶ The ESG commander and staff are designed to bridge the gap between the tactical and operational levels of command and bring added capacity for planning and execution to the CCDR.⁷ The MEU, a well trained and adaptable force that specializes in crisis action planning and response is capable of performing tactical missions across the range of military operations (ROMO).⁸ When integrated with its assigned MEU and ARG, the ESG becomes a formidable Navy-Marine Corps task force capable of performing missions on land and sea. Unfortunately, the number of ESG/MEUs deployed is limited. Normally, the Navy and Marine Corps can support simultaneous deployments of two to three ESG/MEUs on a continuous basis.⁹ One ESG/MEU each is generally available to European Command, Central Command, and Pacific Command for tasking.

COMMITTING THE MEU DETACHED FROM THE ESG

In an operational environment with many competing priorities, the CCDR must choose when and where to use his limited resources. When operating in mature theaters, employing the MEU detached from the ESG provides the CCDR notable advantages in the operational factors of force, space, and time. First, the MEU is a force multiplier that is unrivaled in training, readiness, and morale. Each MEU undergoes a strict pre-deployment training plan for six months prior to deployment.¹⁰ Further, each MEU battalion and

squadron conducts individual and unit training, and undergoes a combat readiness evaluation before joining the MEU.¹¹ In all, each element of the MEU's Marine Air Ground Task Force has trained and prepared for its missions for more than one year before deployment. Likewise, the MEU brings its equipment and sustainment to the area of responsibility (AOR) in an immediately employable state of readiness. Prior to embarkation, the MEU focuses its efforts on achieving the highest personnel and equipment readiness.¹² Less tangible, but equally important, the MEU's high state of readiness and training generates an *esprit de corps* among its members, translating into increased morale and unit cohesion. Training, readiness, and morale are key indicators of unit combat effectiveness to the CCDR.¹³ These factors are particularly valuable to the operational commander when determining employment options for the MEU and assigning battlespace.

The MEU's ability to operate independently, geographically detached from larger forces, makes it an appealing employment option for operational commanders in crisis situations and mature theaters alike. Here, the operational commander considers potential gaps in the battle area and assigns the MEU to locations unsuitable or unpractical for regular forces.¹⁴ The MEU's organic ability to integrate maneuver with ground and aviation fires to achieve combined arms effects assures the operational protection of both the MEU and other forces it may flank. Further, the MEU's self-sustainment capability, provided by its Logistics Combat Element (LCE), reduces re-supply concerns and extends the operational reach of the operational commander. During OIF, the MEU has been employed to trouble spots throughout the AOR. The most recent example of the operational commander's willingness to plug the MEU into the hard to reach areas is the 15th MEU's employment from

November 2006 to March 2007 in the far Western Al Anbar Province, along the Syrian and Jordanian borders.¹⁵

Along with force and space benefits, the MEU provides the operational commander with distinct advantages in factor time. First, with its organic assault support capability, the MEU can insert and extract personnel and equipment more rapidly than regular forces and with minimal coordination. Next, the MEU's immediate availability, with no need for joint force, U.S. Transportation Command, or Time Phased Force Deployment Data coordination, makes its employment timely and efficient for both the operational commander and his staff. Finally, the MEU's ability to perform a wide range of missions without additional training or equipment¹⁶ makes it considerably more appealing to the operational commander in need of forces than the arduous process necessary to request and receive joint forces via the formal request for forces system.

In August 2004, the theater commander in the Iraq Theater of Operations (ITO), Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I), needed a force capable of dealing with the revolutionist Muqtada Militia. The CCDR detached the 11th MEU from its parent ESG and assigned it to the theater commander. The MEU Commander was given control of additional forces and tasked with the security of An Najaf. After several days of heavy fighting, the MEU, in conjunction with coalition and Iraqi forces prevailed in dispersing the Muqtada Militia and establishing security in the city.¹⁷ The MEU's ability to act as a force multiplier and accomplish the most challenging assignments, with or without the ESG, makes it an appealing employment option to the operational commander in need of first rate forces.

Clearly, there are advantages to employing the MEU in mature theaters. This essay does not dispute the decisions of CCDRs and other operational commanders who choose to

separate the MEU from its parent ESG and commit it to the current ITO. On the other hand, the same reasons that make the MEU a valuable tool in a mature theater also make it an invaluable asset for expeditionary and crisis action environments. By employing the ESG and MEU together, the CCDR and subordinate operational commanders can leverage the full capability of the force without compromise. Moreover, committing the MEU in a mature theater, separated from the ESG, levies risks to the overall joint force and impedes the operational commander's ability to respond to crisis and advance other U.S. interests abroad.

MITIGATING RISK TO THE JOINT FORCE

Among the key risk considerations associated with committing the MEU to a mature theater are joint force availability, strategic deployment, and operational mobility. Foremost, joint force availability considers other forces willing and able to respond to crisis situations. The combatant commands (COCOMs), including Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), have established Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ) to improve crisis response time.¹⁸ The SJFHQ in a geographic COCOM has the advantage of AOR situational awareness, but the JFCOM SJFHQ must prepare for a wider range of geographic employment possibilities.¹⁹ Upon identification of a potential crisis response mission, the SJFHQ utilizes its regional expertise to conduct contingency planning, identify and assemble required forces, and arrange logistics requirements.²⁰ During this planning and deployment process, the unresolved crisis may continue to escalate resulting in the loss of valuable response time for the joint force. In addition, forces assembled to respond to such contingencies may be the

same forces that were recently deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, which violates dwell considerations and causes unnecessary hardships on Service members and their families.

Once the SJFHQ determines the nature of the crisis and the required capabilities to deal effectively with the situation, it must arrange strategic lift assets to move the required personnel and equipment to the area of operations. Depending on the nature and location of the crisis, this can prove to be a serious challenge. First responders, deploying from the continental United States or forward operating bases to distant locations, are forced to move via airlift as sealift options are too slow. On the other hand, strategic airlift capacity is limited, and requires improved runways and follow-on ground transportation. When responding to crisis in Third-World Nations, the intra-theater movement becomes as challenging as the inter-theater lift. Inadequate Host Nation Support (HNS) and unimproved roadways hinder the mobility of the force. Getting the right personnel, equipment, and supplies to the crisis situation, in time, can become more challenging than the mission itself. Challenging as it may be, the joint force is capable of providing the CCDR alternatives for crisis response. However, do these alternatives truly mitigate the risk and provide a comparable capability to the ESG/MEU team during crises?

The ESG/MEU provides the CCDR a packaged capability that is immediately employable during crises. Its forward deployed posture facilitates the expeditious movement of personnel and equipment, via sealift, to the area of operations. Once in the area, the ESG/MEU is capable of conducting amphibious offloads thereby negating the requirement for improved ports and airfields. If expeditionary airfields are available, the MEU's organic A/C-130 aircraft, available on a 72 to 96 hour tether, are capable of transporting people and things within the theater.²¹ Further, when commanded by a general or flag officer, the ESG

HQ is capable of assuming the role of a “mini” Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters (CJTF).²² This capability provides the CCDR with both a means for first response and a command and control structure for the employment of follow-on forces. Ultimately, the ESG/MEU helps mitigate the CCDR’s risks associated with planning, organizing, and deploying a joint force by providing a forward deployed, immediately employable capability for crisis management.

In 2005, U.S. forces were called upon to provide relief after devastating earthquakes killed and injured over 100,000 people and left another 3.5 million displaced in Pakistan.²³ Based on his proximity to the incident and availability, the Commander, ESG-1 was assigned the mission of establishing and leading the CJTF to respond to the disaster. Assembling specific capabilities from the joint force, including U.S. Air Force expeditionary airfield units, naval mobile construction units, and army medical units, the ESG-1 staff led a successful effort that paid terrific dividends in improved international opinion to the United States.²⁴ However, this mission was far more challenging for the joint force than necessary. Among the lessons learned and identified by the ESG-1 commander were the need for joint humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) training, the “rigidity” of the force flow process for HA/DR missions, and the ability to minimize the U.S. footprint - all capabilities an ESG/MEU brings to the table.²⁵ Prior to the earthquake, 13th MEU was disembarked and detached from ESG-1 for employment in the ITO.²⁶ Employing the MEU in the ITO fenced it from immediate retasking and left the ESG with no tactical HA/DR capability. In turn, the joint force was required to assemble a capability from scratch rather than using its best trained, prepared, and equipped forces for the job. Indeed the result was effective, but at the expense of efficiency. By employing the ESG and the MEU as a team, the combatant

commander could have simplified the planning, expedited the response time, and reduced the overall requirements on an already overburdened joint force.

ADVANCING U.S. INTERESTS

Along with managing the risks associated with crisis response, the CCDR must also consider the ESG/MEU's contributions to U.S. interests worldwide before committing the forces. The ESG/MEU provides the CCDR with a key capability to execute Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) initiatives that can produce positive effects far outweighing their costs. When the ESG/MEU is available to conduct military exercises with foreign armed forces, its actions strengthen diplomatic ties between the United States and the participating nations.²⁷ ESG/MEU exercises conducted in the territorial waters of partner nations demonstrate the U.S. commitment to strategic allies. Even port visits help to bolster strategic relationships when individual Marines and Sailors spend money in foreign economies and spend time talking to citizens, all the while promoting American principles. Whether the ESG/MEU is conducting exercises with foreign militaries or simply entering a port-of-call, its actions serve to assure allies of the continued U.S. commitment to the security of a region.

In addition to assuring allies, the ESG/MEU provides the CCDR with a continuous sea-based forward presence that serves to deter and dissuade potential adversaries from committing aggressive actions.²⁸ Similar to the psychological effects generated by positioning a Carrier Strike Group (CSG) off the coast of a belligerent state, the ESG/MEU's mere presence can deter potential hostilities.²⁹ Amplifying the psychological impact, the ESG/MEU brings a formidable "expeditionary strike" (air and ground task force) capability

that can also put boots on the ground and hold key terrain.³⁰ Unfortunately, without the MEU, the ESG only possesses limited strike capability. Removing the MEU from the ESG is like removing the aircraft from the CSG. The end result is a naval asset with limited utility. Further, when the MEU is committed and separated from the ESG, belligerents gain a clear picture of the disposition of U.S. forward presence forces. In other words, adversaries no longer worry about the ESG/MEU's ability to impact their activities. Committing a MEU in an environment such as the current ITO may temporarily increase coalition combat power, but only at the expense of strategic versatility.

During joint shaping operations, the ESG/MEU clearly provides a means for the CCDR to assure allies, and deter and dissuade adversaries. Equally as important, however, is the capability the ESG/MEU provides when a hostile action requires a kinetic military response. When the time comes to defeat an enemy, the ESG/MEU serves as an immediately employable joint task force (JTF) enabler.³¹ Whether the CCDR needs to secure a critical port or airfield to facilitate the throughput of follow-on forces or merely establish a presence to suppress hostilities, the ESG/MEU possesses command and control structure and tactical capability to execute the task. Once in the joint operations area (JOA), the ESG/MEU enables establishment of joint force operational functions from intelligence collection and sustainment coordination to the protection of inbound forces. In all, the ESG/MEU is a single force capable of supporting a wide range of U.S. strategic objectives, from assuring allies to deterring and dissuading adversaries to defeating enemies, when necessary.³²

RESPONDING TO CRISIS

While some crisis missions afford the CCDR the luxury of establishing an *ad hoc* JTF, others require an immediate response with specially trained forces. Noncombatant evacuation operations, TRAP missions, and certain disaster relief scenarios require a specially trained force with organic capabilities such as those found on the ESG/MEU. Its unique integration of special operations and conventional forces gives the CCDR a capability unlike any other in the Department of Defense.

Imagine if the 24th MEU was disembarked and conducting security operations in Iraq in July 2006 when the American Ambassador in Lebanon requested support. What options would the Department of Defense have to respond to this time sensitive issue? Would a task organized, ad hoc, joint task force be capable of responding quickly and with the appropriate capability sets (people, training, and equipment) necessary to evacuate safely American citizens? The answer is “it depends.” The United States military with its joint force structure is versatile and capable of responding to almost any event, at any time. However, while this “can-do” mentality impresses senior decision makers, the reality is that a Non Combatant Evacuation Operation requires specially trained, equipped, and rehearsed forces. Throwing an *ad hoc* organization at the problem may get the job done, but with greater risks to both the military forces and the evacuees. Fortunately, the 24th MEU was conducting exercises in Jordan in July 2006 with the Iwo Jima ESG. Upon receipt of the warning order, the 24 MEU deployed its Forward Command Element (FCE) to Cyprus and re-embarked its forces aboard the amphibious shipping for transit to the Lebanon Joint Operations Area (JOA).³³ ESG-3, which was forward deployed to Bahrain, assumed operational control of the 24th MEU and

Iwo Jima ESG, and was designated Combined Task Force 59 (CTF-59) for the operation.³⁴ Here, the ESG/MEU team responded and worked as designed. The ESG's command structure provided a bridge from the operational to the tactical level allowing the MEU to plan and execute the tactical tasks. Ultimately, the ESG/MEU team successfully processed over 14,000 American citizens and 499 third country nationals from Lebanon to intermediate staging bases and naval vessels.³⁵

Another example that demonstrates the unique capability of the MEU is the 8 June 1995 rescue of Air Force pilot Captain Scott O'Grady in Bosnia. At that time, MEUs deployed aboard ARGs in a more traditional Commander Amphibious Task Force (CATF)/Commander Landing Force (CLF) relationship. The ESG command structure was not introduced until November 2002.³⁶ However, this example demonstrates the MEU's ability to perform a mission that is unsuitable for other forces and with efficiency unattainable by an *ad hoc* JTF. With less than two hours of planning to conduct the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) mission, the 24th MEU, with air support from the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Carrier Battle Group, commenced the rescue of Captain O'Grady. While this sounds like an amazing feat for any unit, one must understand the nature of the MEU. The MEU pre-plans equipment, personnel, and courses of action to execute potential TRAP and other missions as part of its pre-deployment training cycle. Further, the MEU's sea-based operations give it the ability to plan, launch, and recover missions from a secure location. For an *ad hoc* JTF, or even SOF, the O'Grady TRAP would have required significantly more planning and logistics at the cost of time.³⁷

Time and again, senior commanders criticize the efficiency of the manning process involved in establishing a JTF; the December 2004 Tsunami Response was no different.³⁸

On 26 December 2004, a massive earthquake off the coast of Indonesia caused devastating tsunamis throughout the region.³⁹ The United States immediately began a massive relief effort called Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE. At this time, the USS Bonhomme Richard (BHR) ESG and the 15th MEU were in the vicinity of Guam, enroute to Iraq to conduct security and stability operations (SASO). By 4 January 2005, the BHR ESG had arrived in Banda Aceh to support the HA/DR operations. While the ESG/MEU's timeliness is noteworthy in this example, the key here is its flexibility. During the eight days it took to steam from Guam to Banda Aceh, the ESG/MEU completely reoriented its focus from SASO in Iraq to HA/DR in Indonesia. This versatility is a core capability of the ESG/MEU. Unfortunately, this versatility is limited when the ESG and MEU are separated and the MEU is disembarked. Being tethered to the ESG's amphibious ships provides the MEU the security and mobility needed to enable its full range of capabilities. Following HA/DR operations in Indonesia, the ESG/MEU was again reoriented to Iraq where the 15th MEU was disembarked and employed for approximately 45 days south of Baghdad.

CONCLUSIONS

The ESG/MEU concept has generated its share of criticism. However, when properly employed, its basic premise of incorporating a forward deployed command to manage higher level operational concerns for the MEU is sound. Whether deployed aboard amphibious ships, positioned at a forward operating base, or designed as a fly-away capability, the ESG's forward focus provides the CCDR options for command and control of joint force headquarters during a crisis.⁴⁰ When the ESG is paired with the MEU, the CCDR possesses

a force package capable of providing first responder action during crisis and enabling the arrival of follow-on units, if necessary.

While the examples clearly illustrate the unique capabilities of the ESG/MEU for crisis response, they also show the advantages that can be gained by employing the forces together. Whether utilizing the ESG/MEU in a mature theater or responding to contingencies in an austere environment, the CCDR should consider options that afford maximum security, flexibility, and unity of command. By following these tenets, the CCDR can mitigate risk to the overall joint force, support fully national strategic objectives, and respond to unique crisis situations suitable only for a sea-based force.

Unfortunately, when the MEU is committed in a mature theater, separated from its assigned ESG, the CCDR and the nation lose valuable consequence management capacity. Foremost, the ESG/MEU is designed and trained to work as an insurance policy for the United States, responding to contingencies when they arise. While the MEU is fully capable of operating in a mature theater, this practice seems to violate the joint force principle of assigning the right force to the right job. What's more, less capable joint forces are often required to fill in when the MEU is committed. The CCDR must resist the temptation to employ the MEU, separated from the ESG, despite force shortfalls and the obvious combat power benefits brought by the MEU.

While the primary function of the ESG/MEU is crisis action oriented, there are multiple employment options for a mature theater that won't disrupt its flexibility, security, and unity of command, but will still support the CCDR's requirements. Critical to these options are keeping the ESG/MEU command and control structure intact, keeping the MEU within reach of its sea-base, and employing the MEU so as to enable quick retasking and

redeployment. With these principles in mind, the CCDR and/or subordinate operational commanders can employ the ESG/MEU in either expeditionary environments or mature theaters, without compromising its core capabilities. More importantly, adhering to these employment options will ensure the ESG/MEU is ready when the nation calls.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide the CCDR specific options for employing the ESG/MEU in mature theaters or expeditionary environments without compromising its unity of command, flexibility, or security.

The CCDR should seek employment options that maintain the command relationships between the ESG and the MEU to facilitate rapid redeployment and retasking in the event of crises. For this concept to work, however, the ESG/MEU must be reserved for missions within its operational reach. While this may have been a limiting factor in austere environments in the past, current technology has enabled sea-based units to extend beyond traditional limits. On the other hand, options for employing the ESG/MEU together in a mature theater seem less relevant. In the current ITO the ESG/MEU are routinely separated so the MEU can be employed in theater, under the operational control of another headquarters. While this may be the easiest method, it is not the best. Rather than break the command relationship between the ESG and MEU, the CCDR, in coordination with subordinate operational commanders, could utilize the ESG/MEU to cover the seam between the maritime environment and the land environment.⁴¹ The naval forces of the ESG can assure proper coordination between themselves and the deepwater naval operations while the

MEU's operations section can handle coordination with land forces.⁴² This employment option leverages the unique sea and land capabilities of the Navy and Marine forces while keeping the MEU in reach of its sea-based aviation, intelligence, and logistics support.⁴³ And, by keeping the ESG and MEU tied both geographically and through their command structure, the CDR can mitigate the risk associated with not being capable of responding rapidly to crises. In addition, the continuous reach-back to its sea-base provides the MEU with operational protection and sustainment far less achievable in traditional land based operations.

The CDR should capitalize on the inherent security gained by the ESG/MEU's sea-based platforms when assigning its missions. In fact, there are many missions the ESG/MEU can perform from an embarked position in either an austere environment or in a mature theater. During Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE, the Government of Indonesia requested that the U.S. military minimize its footprint in order to not suggest a permanent presence to the local population. The ESG/MEU responded by moving the majority of its personnel and equipment back to the amphibious shipping at night and returning in the morning to continue its HA/DR activities. In a mature theater, the ESG/MEU can also perform a wide range of missions for the operational commander from its embarked position: Amphibious raids, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), and mass casualty evacuation to name a few.⁴⁴ These missions are generally short in duration and allow the ESG/MEU to plan, launch, and recover from its sea-base. In turn, the ESG/MEU is capable of using the sea to achieve security, maneuver, and surprise. Likewise, employing the ESG/MEU from its sea-based position affords the CDR maximum flexibility for retasking or committing his forces.

The CCDR should consider the range of capabilities the ESG/MEU brings to the joint force and employ it in such a manner that does not limit its flexibility. Although not considered a popular tactical mission, the operational reserve is a critical operational consideration that requires the dedication of first class forces. In a mature theater, the ESG/MEU provides the operational commander with the necessary combat power and leadership to serve as the operational reserve. When it is time to commit the reserve, the ESG/MEU possesses the capability to reach the objective and reinforce success without augmentation. When not committed, the presence of the ESG/MEU serves to confound the enemy, challenging his decisions of where to attack or defend. The operational commander decides when and where to commit the ESG/MEU and thereby retains the ability to retask as desired. The ESG/MEU provides the CCDR and/or subordinate operational commanders with a force that can serve as the operational reserve without compromising its inherent operational flexibility.

NOTES

¹ Prior to Feb 2006, MEUs deployed with an organic special operations capability and were called MEU (SOC)s. Following the creation of Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) in Feb 2006, MEUs are only considered Special Operations Capable (SOC) when a Marine Special Operations Company (MSOC) is under the tactical control of the MEU Commander. Once deployed, the Special Operations Commander in theater has operational control of the MSOC and can remove it from the MEU and employ as required. Throughout this paper, the Marine Expeditionary Unit will be identified as MEU regardless of its special operations capability.

² The term “mature theater” refers to a “non-crisis” situation, such as the current ITO, where the operational commander has established operational functions, dedicated conventional and unconventional forces, and an established request for forces process for soliciting additional units from the joint force.

³ Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: 2005), 21-22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington DC: 2005), 12.

⁶ Christine E. Brooms and Kim Deal, “What is an Expeditionary Strike Force?,” USMC ESF/ESG Assessment Study Task 3, Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analysis (September 2003): 11-12; Timothy Callahan, “Expeditionary Strike Group Operations,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, Mar 2006, 90, no. 3, (March 2006): 26-28.

⁷ Col Michael R. Kennedy, “Expeditionary Strike Group Concepts and Recommendations,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 90, no. 3 (March 2006): 18.

⁸ U.S. Marine Corps, Policy for Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU (SOC)), MCO 3120.9B (Washington DC: 2001), 1-5.

⁹ LtCol Jim Western, “Headquarters Marine Corps Status of Forces Brief,” Powerpoint, 4 February 2004, Arlington, VA: Defense Department Advisory Committee on Women in the Services

¹⁰ United States Marine Corps, Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) Predeployment Training Plan (MEU (SOC) PTP), MCO 3502.3A (Washington DC: 2001), 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Enclosures 2-6.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³ Milan Vego, *Operational Warfare*, NWC 1004 (Newport, RI: 2000), 59-73.

¹⁴ Vego, 72; Professor Vego considers marines, airborne units, and special forces “elite” and distinct from “regular [army] forces.”

¹⁵ Captain Leticia Reyes, “Task Force Bullrush Completes mission in Rutbah,” *15th Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Operations Capable*, 30 March 2007, http://www.usmc.mil/15thMEU/PAGES/STORY_PAGES/070330_toa.htm/ (accessed 29 April 2007).

¹⁶ MCO 3120.9B, 2-5.

¹⁷ Anonymous, “Battle for An Najaf, August 2004,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, 88, no. 12 (Dec 2004): 10-14.

¹⁸ “Standing Joint Force Headquarters Core Element,” *United States Joint Forces Command Website*, http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact_sjfhq.htm/ (accessed 29 April 2007).

¹⁹ John T. Bennett, “DOD Puts JFCOM Standing Joint Force Headquarters on Fast Track,” *Inside the Pentagon* no. 3 (June 2004): 1-3.

- ²⁰ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Task Force Headquarters, JP 3-33 (Washington, DC: 16 February 2007), IX-14.
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- ²³ Lefever.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Lt Ron Flanders, ESG 1 Public Affairs, "ESG 1 Disestablished after Operational Excellence", *Navy News Stand*, 22 July 2006, http://www.news.navy.mil/search/print.asp?story_id=24799&VIRIN=26495&imagetype=1&page=1/ (accessed 29 April 2007).
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- ³¹ Kennedy, 18.
- ³² NDS, i.
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- ⁴⁰ Flanders; Kennedy, 20; Lefever.
- ⁴¹ Kennedy, 22.
- ⁴² Ibid., 22.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 22.
- ⁴⁴ MCO 3502A, 6.

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