

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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**THE MARITIME PREPOSITIONING PROGRAMS: A COMBATANT
COMMANDER'S
FORCE EQUALIZER AND LOGISTICAL LIFEblood**

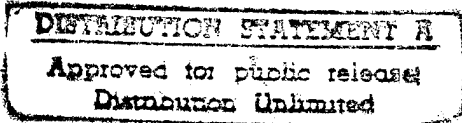
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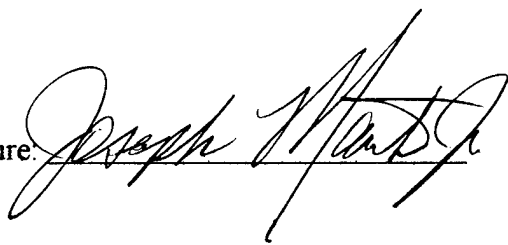
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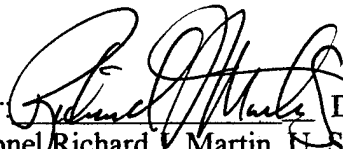
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ABSTRACT

THE MARITIME PREPOSITIONING PROGRAMS; A COMBATANT COMMANDER'S FORCE EQUALIZER AND LOGISTICAL LIFEBLOOD

by Colonel Joseph Martin, Jr., USMC

This monograph explains why the maritime prepositioning programs (MPPs) are required to support forward presence, deterrence, and force projection missions of the Joint Force Commander (JFC). It describes the Marine Corps' Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF) and Army's Prepositioning Afloat (APA) Programs as national strategic assets available to combatant commanders to prosecute military operations and military operations other than war (MOOTW).

The MPPs have proven their strategic and operational importance in Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Restore Hope, and Vigilant Warrior. Since the service component experienced delays in MPP reconstitution efforts after Operations Desert Storm and Restore Hope, the JFC should be responsible for MPP reconstitution operations. His involvement in the reconstitution effort is important to ensure these assets are rapidly regenerated and available to prosecute a second major regional contingency, if required.

This paper concludes that since the MPPs are viewed as national strategic assets, then reconstitution operations should get the highest military visibility. We do not know when the next belligerent power will test U.S. military resolve or threaten vital interests, but we must be always operationally ready to deter or defeat the challenge.

INTRODUCTION

There should be no doubt to anyone that the United States stands alone as the world's only super power. With the post cold-war era over, a major war with the former Soviet Union today is unlikely. One apparent reaction by American policy makers during this period of relative calm is to reduce military force levels across the board. Yet, as former President Bush once stated, the world remains a dangerous place--and our ability to project power will underpin United States strategy in the post cold-war era more than ever before. We as a nation cannot retreat from the world's problems nor can we adopt an isolationist philosophy. We must be able to deploy and sustain substantial forces in parts of the world where land prepositioning of equipment is not feasible. The United States strategy tasks the nation's armed services to move personnel and equipment to distant areas, at a pace and in numbers sufficient to field an overwhelming force.¹

The demand to move equipment calls for the maritime prepositioning of supplies and equipment aboard ships. These ships must be strategically positioned and located where they can arrive at potential trouble spots so that United States vital interests can be protected. **With the continued reduction in the United States military force structure and the growing national debt, the investment made by the Department of Defense in the Maritime Prepositioning Programs (MPPs) will ensure any current or future combatant commander, that is, the Joint Force Commander (JFC), that he/she will have the support of these national strategic assets to prosecute the next major regional contingency or military operation other than war (MOOTW). Since the MPPs are viewed as a national strategic asset, the JFC that directs or requests the use of a particular MPP should be responsible for the MPP reconstitution.**

WHY IS THERE A NEED TO PREPOSITION SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT ABOARD SHIPS?

The maritime prepositioning concept was first applied by the U.S. Army (on a limited scale) in 1964 with the creation of a Forward Floating Depot (FFD) Ship Squadron that was configured to provide broad base materiel support to a generic three-brigade task force in the Pacific Ocean Region. The supplies and equipment from the FFD were utilized during the early days of the Vietnam War. In an answer to the massive Warsaw Pact threat, the Army initiated the Prepositioning of Organizational Materiel Configured in Unit Sets (POMCUS) program. The successful program achieved credibility in the 1970's with the prepositioning of forward land based materiel and supplies in Europe. Emphasis in the POMCUS program was placed on land prepositioning of equipment and sets that could be immediately married to incoming combat units airlifted from Continental United States (CONUS). This concept was later carried forth in the development of the MPP.²

The Marine Corps' MPP is a one of a kind logistics venture. In 1979 the United States, and then President Carter, received a jolting lesson in the importance of strategic reach when this nation found itself incapable of projecting a credible forward presence in response to the Iranian hostage crisis and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Significant concerns were raised in regards to the nation's ability to effectively project adequate forces to retain open access to the Middle East oil supplies. The concerns led to the pronouncement of the "Carter Doctrine" in January 1980. The Carter Doctrine proclaimed that oil supplies in the Persian Gulf Region represented a vital national interest. As a direct result, the Rapid Deployment Force was formed

in February 1980 at MacDill Air Force Base near Tampa, Florida, under the command of Marine General P.X. Kelley. General Kelley's main task consisted of establishing a realistic, sustainable presence in the region that went beyond the existing capabilities resident in the carrier battle groups and amphibious forces. Answering the concerns of President Carter and the Defense Department, General Kelley recommended that the void be filled with a Prepositioned Marine Amphibious Brigade suite of equipment and 15 days of supplies. The equipment would be embarked aboard existing Military Sealift Command shipping and berthed at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. With the backing of Secretary of Defense Brown, the Near-Term Prepositioning Ships (NTPS) program (precursor to the Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS)) was born.³

No information could be found to determine why the U.S. Army abandoned its FFD programs. However, but another part of the answer to the question of why there is a need to preposition supplies and equipment aboard ships is found in the Congressionally mandated Mobility Requirements Study (MRS). Congress ordered an update its mandated MRS to redefine airlift and sealift requirements for a series of wartime scenarios. In April 1991, the Joint Staff and the Department of Defense (DOD) completed their interim response to the MRS. In January 1992, DOD provided its final MRS response to Congress. The report revealed a call for the construction or major conversion of 20 large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ships. Eleven of these ships would be retained for fast sealift. The remaining nine would be assigned prepositioning roles.⁴ It was this Congressionally mandated MRS that resurrected and spearheaded the U.S. Army's involvement in prepositioning equipment aboard ships.

The fact that the nation does not have enough strategic air and sea lift to rapidly get men

and materiel to the employment area is not the only reason to preposition supplies and equipment aboard ships. More importantly, overseas bases may not be readily available as they were during the cold-war era. Political and social trends abroad may make it more costly and difficult for this nation to maintain bases, facilities and burden-sharing, and host nation support (HNS) arrangements in specific countries and regions.⁵ The Marine Corps' Maritime Prepositioning Ships program and the U.S. Army's Afloat Prepositioning program provide this nation with a logistical strategic edge and give operational combatant commanders the logistical support in the initial phase of any operational campaign.

THE U.S. MARINE CORPS' MARITIME PREPOSITIONING FORCE (MPF)

Since its inception, the Marine Corps has viewed its MPF as a strategic deployment option to the Unified Commander-in-Chief (CINC). The main mission of the MPF is to rapidly combine the substantial prepositioned stocks of supplies and equipment aboard ships with the airlifted manpower of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) to establish a formidable fighting force. This force can deploy anywhere in the world and is capable of sustained operations for 30 days. The MPF is naval in character and it is complementary to amphibious operations. Upon arrival in the employment area, a MEB-sized MAGTF (with the support of the arrival and assembly group) can complete offload of essential supplies and equipment and be declared ready for combat operations in as little as seven days.

The MPF can perform the following tasks:

- Occupy advance naval bases
- Occupy key areas dominating sea lines of communication
- Position land-based aviation for barrier or denial operations against enemy fleet and air forces

- Support regional campaigns
- Support/reinforce allies or amphibious operations
- Send political/diplomatic signals
- Establish sizable force in support of sustained operations
- Assist humanitarian and disaster relief operations⁶

The MPF is built around a MAGTF comprising a Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Forward Command Element, Ground Combat Element, Aviation Combat Element, and Combat Service Support Element. When combined with the Naval Support Element, which supports the offload of the MPF ships, and the fixed and rotary wing assets that are airlifted or flight ferried to the employment area, the Marine force can project a fully capable MAGTF of approximately 17,300 personnel. When employed, the MPF MAGTF combat capabilities exemplify three principles of the National Military Strategy, i.e., strategic agility, power projection (the forte of U.S. Naval power), and a decisive force with heavy mechanized armor, medium range artillery, vertical lift, close air support, etc.. Figures 1, 2, and 3 of Appendix A, reflect some of the major items of equipment already prepositioned aboard each of the three MPS Squadrons (MPSRONs) or included in the fly-in-echelon.⁷ In addition to the items reflected in Figures 1, 2, and 3, each MPSRON is also prepositioned with 30 days of sustainment supplies.⁸

A unique capability the MPF provides to combatant commanders is operational flexibility through the development of "crisis action modules" and "deterrence force modules" (CAMs/DFMs). CAMs/DFMs were devised in early 1991 and they provide additional capabilities for deterring or influencing regional conflicts and certainly increased the utility of the MPF. CAMs/DFMs enhance force deployment flexibility by using an individual MPS to support specific contingencies. All three MPSRONs now have the ability to support down to a MPF

MEU-sized MAGTF (approximately 2,600 personnel strong) specifically configured to support security, peacekeeping, counternarcotics, counterterrorism operations, and carry out various peacetime contingencies and military operations other than war.⁹

The Marine Corps sees the concept of CAMs/DFMs as a method that will make the MPF strategic tool become more the "CINC's choice" when response to a crisis is required. As the nation's "9-1-1" force, the Marine Corps and its MPF play a significant role in the Navy and Marine Corps strategic concept "Forward ...From the Sea" with the chief goal of thwarting aggression by regional powers. MPF is a key support ingredient in providing the muscle for naval power in the littorals. Although the U.S. Army has recently resurrected its Afloat Prepositioning program, it also provides combatant commanders with significant warfighting capabilities.¹⁰

THE U.S. ARMY'S AFLOAT PREPOSITIONING PROGRAM

In 1992, the MRS recommended that the U.S. Army preposition supplies and equipment aboard 16 ships. The ships are intended to introduce a heavy brigade and a basic theater logistics capability by C+12. The Army Preposition Afloat (APA) Program is expected to be fully operational in 1998, where the ships are expected to be strategically located in a "swing" position between Southwest Asia and Korea.¹¹

The Army Strategic Mobility Program (ASMP) was initiated after the MRS and stated that the Army must be prepared to rapidly deploy up to a five-brigade contingency force, to include required support and follow-on forces as required in support of national military objectives. The Army explored APA as a means of accomplishing this task. The APA operation

provides combatant commanders with deployment flexibility and increased capability to rapidly respond to operational crises with a credible heavy mechanized force. APA operations are based upon the concept of flying the brigade personnel into the employment area by strategic airlift to marry up with the prepositioned supplies and equipment and be combat ready by C+15.¹² The APA heavy brigade, with a tailored force of anywhere from 6,000 to 16,000 soldiers and 15 days of prepositioned sustainment support, can perform the following tasks:

- Augment an amphibious deployment or operation
- Occupy or augment an advance lodgment
- Establish both offensive and defensive operations
- Reinforce allies with a credible force prior to hostilities and sustain relations with allies and coalition partners through routine exercises and operations
- Establish a sizable combat force to enable closure of additional forces and to support the theater commander's campaign
- Provide a rapid peacetime response in support of military operations other than war
- Provide economy of force through reduction of strategic airlift requirements¹³

The APA heavy brigade concept represents a new warfighting capability centered around two armored and mechanized battalions plus support. It will draw the majority of its sustaining combat and combat service support supplies and equipment from prepositioned assets. The APA heavy brigade will enter the employment area with an operational capability tailored to meet the combatant commander's operational requirements. When employed, the APA heavy brigade has the warfighting capability of an Army Corps with heavy mechanized armor, medium artillery, low-ranged air defense, etc.. Figures 4 and 5 of Appendix B, reflect some of the major items of equipment prepositioned aboard a combination of 14 ships.¹⁴

In an effort to provide combatant commanders with more operational flexibility, the Army

has configured their APA ships to support four basic force modules:

- **Force Module D:** Force structure of approximately 1,428 soldiers, equipment and sustainment to provide the initial port opening support for small humanitarian missions.
- **Force Module C:** Force structure of approximately 2,551 soldiers, equipment and sustainment to provide minimum port support operations for major peace enforcement and humanitarian missions.
- **Force Module B:** Force structure of approximately 3,711 soldiers, equipment and sustainment to provide limited port support operations for small regional contingencies.
- **Force Module A:** Force structure of approximately 5,652 soldiers, equipment and sustainment to provide full port support operations for major regional contingencies.¹⁵

The APA force module concept consists of one ship configured to support a tailored, sized element of the APA heavy brigade. This concept is similar to the Marine Corps' CAM/DFM concept and when viewed jointly, these MPPs provide combatant commanders a rapid, deployable force equalizer with the logistical tail to be self-sustaining until routine supply replenishment can began flowing into the employment area. The capabilities of the MPPs were tested in Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Restore Hope, and Vigilant Warrior.

OPERATIONAL USE OF THE MARITIME PREPOSITIONING PROGRAMS

With an understanding of the strategic and operational importance of why this nation needs maritime prepositioning of supplies and equipment and having reviewed the capabilities and combat power the MPPs provide combatant commanders, it is time to focus on the real aim of this monograph, that is, command responsibility for reconstituting MPPs. Joint Publication 4-0 states that logistics is the service responsibility.¹⁶ I would argue that since the MPPs are viewed

as strategic assets, the ultimate responsibility should rest with the combatant commander. To argue this point, I will draw upon the uses of MPPs in several past operations. The lesson learned primarily from Operations Desert Shield/Storm and Restore Hope will form the basis for my argument.

Operations Desert Shield/Storm. On 2 August 1990, Saddam Hussein's army invaded Kuwait. Little did he know that his invasion would unleash an extraordinary series of events that included a massive build up of American and coalition forces and one of the largest operational logistics efforts known in recent history. These events culminated seven months later in defeat of the Iraqi Army and the liberation of Kuwait. The Marine Corps' MPF played a pivotal/critical role in providing supplies and equipment to American forces that significantly contributed to accomplishment of the combatant commander's overall mission. Additionally, the early arrival of the MPF provided an important addition to the deterrence efforts on the ground.¹⁷

On 7 August 1990, MPS-2 was given the orders to deploy from its home station in Diego Garcia and transit to Jubail, Saudi Arabia. Three of the five ships sailed immediately and arrived in Jubail on 15 August. The two remaining ships were undergoing the MPS maintenance and arrived in country on 26 August. On 8 August MPS-3, which is home based in Guam, sailed to Southwest Asia (SWA). It arrived in Jubail on 29 August.¹⁸ When a further build up was ordered in November, the Atlantic Ocean-based MPS-1, sailed to SWA. The addition of the third MPSRON's load brought equipment and sustainment to 50,000 Marines and Sailors. The MPF program certainly proved its strategic and operational worth in these operations.¹⁹

During early deployment of U.S. military forces, the combatant commander,

USCINCCENT, made a crucial decision to ensure the greatest amount of ground combat power was available in country as soon as possible. He accelerated deployment of combat forces and deferred deployment of theater logistics forces. Although many units were self-sustaining initially, some U.S. Army units began to experience logistical shortages. These ground units relied for a short time on HNS and food and water supplies from the MPF.²⁰ Had it not been for the rapid arrival of the MPF in SWA with these needed supplies, the defensive and deterrence missions could have been severely hampered. The availability of MPF assets was deemed critical since the theater logistics structure did not mature until mid-November. What effect the availability of MPF assets had on the combatant commander's decision to change the flow of forces is not documented, but I believe it had a profound effect. Let's examine its utility in a military operation other than war.

Operation Restore Hope. In December 1992, U.S. forces arrived in Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope. This multinational expedition was under the command of Marine Lieutenant General R.B. Johnston and his I MEF Command Element formed the nucleus of the combined task force. Somalia had been devastated by two years of civil war, and the government had basically ceased to exist. Bands of looters and gunmen had laid waste to the country and relief organizations could not deliver food to the people dying from hunger.²¹

Unlike the Gulf War where there were facilities and the support of host nations as willing and able as those in SWA, the theater of operations during Operation Restore Hope was bare based and remote. Extensive strategic and operational lines of communication, poor airfields and port facilities, and a total lack of host nation infrastructure caused sustainment difficulties during

the initial phase of the operation. All U.S. forces were reliant on the support provided by the Marine Corps' service support assets and organizations from the MPF. This support was provided through D+50, although the Joint Task Force Support Command (JTFSC) had assumed many of the support functions before that date. The JTFSC's mission was to provide theater logistics and medical support to U.S. forces and limited combat service support to coalition forces.²² Again, the rapid deployment capability of the MPF (in this case MPS-2) with supplies and equipment provided the combatant commander critical logistics support, as attested below:

There is no question that pre-positioned shipping was a valuable asset in Somalia. In particular, Marine Corps Maritime Prepositioned Ships (MPS) were able to offload essential equipment and supplies early in the deployment, despite the austerity of the port facilities. The ready availability of this logistical support not only reduced airlift burdens but also allowed UNITAF to adapt the MPS equipment packages to the unique requirements of a peacekeeping operation.²³

Operation Vigilant Warrior. In October 1994, Saddam Hussein again threatened the stability in the Persian Gulf region. Iraqi forces moved southward along Kuwait's border exhibiting a willingness and ability to threaten its neighbors and to jeopardize access to the rich oil fields that have been the lifeblood of the industrialized world. Immediately, U.S. forces were sent to the region. The strong, rapid U.S. response during Operation Vigilant Warrior demonstrated our military capability and averted another war.

Operation Vigilant Warrior was a resounding success for several reasons. First, the decisive response of our National Command Authority (NCA) backed by the overwhelming support of Congress and the people, sent a message of this nation's resolve. Second, the superb performance of our trained and ready forces, both forward deployed and those moving on short

notice from the U.S. or standing alert. This provided a clear and convincing demonstration of the nation's military power. Third, it validated the importance and criticality of the enhancements to our forward presence and the need for land prepositioned equipment in the Persian Gulf region. Finally, it marked the first time (at least to my knowledge) that the U.S. Army employed its APA in an operation.²⁴

The U.S. Army 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) was among the first U.S. units to respond to the NCA's call. Instead of spending time readying their equipment for a month's journey by rail and sea, the first elements departed from Fort Stewart within 24 hours after being alerted. Within a week of receiving the alert notice, a battalion task force was moving toward the Iraq-Kuwait border, and three other battalion task forces involved in the operation were on the ground in Kuwait. If the U.S. Army did not have an armored brigade's worth of equipment stored in Kuwait and in the APA, it would have taken nearly a month to position a U.S.-based brigade to counter the threat from Iraq.²⁵ Logistics is the key to operational phasing and here again we see the importance of maritime prepositioning and the capabilities it provides the combatant commander in the initial phase of an operation. It is the combatant commander's force equalizer and logistical lifeblood, and he should treat it like that especially during reconstitution or regeneration operations.

**WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECONSTITUTION OF
THE MARITIME PREPOSITIONING PROGRAMS?**

Since its inception, the success of the Marine Corps' MPF program has been proven through countless military operations, to include MOOTW, and various training exercises. The investment in ships, supplies, equipment, and the maintenance facility has been money well spent

in the defense of this nation. The U.S. Army's APA program (although still evolving) is proving (through operations like Vigilant Warrior) that it is on the right track to becoming just as capable as the MPF program. These two MPPs, being strategically located as they are, provide this nation with forward presence and deterrence capabilities that are simply not matched anywhere in the industrialized world. Because the MPPs are viewed as national strategic assets, the combatant commander, i.e., the JFC, that directs or requests the use of a particular MPP should be responsible for reconstitution operations.

This responsibility should not be interpreted to mean that the combatant commander himself or his immediate staff should remain in the employment area until every piece of equipment is accounted for and loaded back aboard the appropriate ship. It does mean however, that the combatant commander be fully apprised on a periodic basis of the combat and deployment readiness of each ship as it is being reconstituted. Once the appropriate service component commander reports that the ships have reached a combat and deployment readiness status above 95 percent, the combatant commander should then report to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, thus bring to closure the executed operational campaign. The reporting procedures could be established via the message process or some other reporting means.

The responsibilities of combatant commanders are the development and production of joint operation plans and planning and conducting military operations in response to crises. Other planning activities include:

- Conducting strategic estimates.
- Assisting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in developing national military strategy.
- Formulating theater of functional strategies in conformance with national strategic plans.

- Developing campaign plans for conducting large-scale military operations.
- Preparing and executing joint OPODs assigned by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- Identifying and planning for contingencies not specifically assigned by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- Preparing plans required to discharge responsibilities described in the UCP and the UNAAF.²⁶

None of the responsibilities listed above specifically address MPP reconstitution operations, because, as mentioned earlier, logistics is defined as a service responsibility. But, if combatant commanders are responsible for developing campaign plans for conducting large-scale military operations, it should be incumbent upon them to be involved with the MPP reconstitution effort. Due to the rapid response and logistics capabilities the MPP provides, I cannot see any combatant commander not factoring in the MPP equation when developing a large-scale operational campaign. After all, we do not know the time that the next belligerent force is going to rise up and test U.S. military resolve, as did Iraq. This could very well happen while our warriors are celebrating and parading after just having successfully prosecuted a major regional contingency (MRC). After all, the National Military Strategy supports a two MRC force in which MPPs use weigh significantly. If we do not reconstitute the MPPs rapidly, how will we fight? I would think that the combatant commander would want to know the MPP readiness condition.

On 28 February 1991, offensive operations in SWA ceased, and shortly thereafter, the combatant commander and his staff departed the employment area. In fact, most of the combat warriors left and returned to America for a hero's welcome. Meanwhile, Marines from various combat service support units remained in SWA and were joined by Marines from Blount Island Command. These Marines were put under the command of Marine Forces SWA

(MARFORSWA) for the sole purpose of MPF reconstitution operations. Knowing the strategic and operational importance of the MPP, MARFORSWA worked around the clock to complete the in-country reconstitution, but despite their herculean efforts, back load of the three MPSRONS was not completed until October 1991.²⁷

Although reconstitution operations were completed, it was not without some problems. First, information regarding the HNS infrastructure that was established during the entire phase of Desert Shield/Storm by contracting personnel, obviously departed SWA the same time of the combatant commander. Marines responsible for reconstitution operations had little or no information as to where to go to have MPP containers repaired or to purchase repair parts. Additionally, little information was known as to the availability of wood, POL, agricultural washdown support, EPA requirement, etc..²⁸

Second, reconstitution operations required an abnormal amount of material handling equipment (MHE) that was not left in SWA by departing forces nor was it readily available through HNS. This problem was compounded during the early phase of reconstitution when some of the MHE available would malfunction and Marines in SWA, lacking the information regarding available HNS, had to negotiate agreements to have them repaired. These negotiations wasted a lot of time.²⁹

Finally, there was a lack of supply accountability on the part of various service commanders. When commanders and their units departed SWA they took with them equipment that was required for MPP reconstitution. Serviceable equipment with MPF identification markings was found in the SWA Defense Reutilization and Marking Office (DRMO), a place

normally established for disposal of unserviceable items of equipment. Additionally, an inordinate amount of vehicles were missing windows and doors, all appearing to have been taken off for air circulation. Many of these items were recovered from DRMO.³⁰ Having to query units (most of which were back in CONUS) as to the whereabouts of principle end items for MPF reconstitution caused major delays in reconstitution operations.

The only major problem that was experienced during the reconstitution effort after Operation Restore Hope was that it was extremely difficult to recover most of the supplies and equipment from MPS-2 in a timely manner. In fact, some items were left in country and sold to the U.S. Army. The supplies and equipment from this MPSRON provided logistical support for approximately 28,000, including 11 coalition countries and United Nations personnel and was literally scattered everywhere.

Someone may say that the MPP reconstitution problems identified above would have occurred even if the combatant commander was responsible for reconstitution operations. I would have to disagree. If the combatant commander was responsible for reconstitution operations, he would have ensured that contracting personnel who had established HNS arrangements would have remained in the employment area to coordinate the necessary purchases and equipment maintenance requirements. He would have ensured that his subordinate commanders would have accounted for supplies and had left the proper principle end items of equipment in country to be back loaded aboard the ships. This is not to say that service component commanders cannot do their jobs, nor should it be implied that the combatant commander does not have enough on his plate, but as the combatant commander, he has directive

authority over logistics. Being included in the responsibility channels, he could acutally exercise this authority to direct other service components to provide those missing MPP assets. The MPPs are national strategic assets and they should be treated as such.

RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS TO CURRENT MPPs

The capabilities of the nation's MPPs are second to none but some enhancements to the programs would significantly improve operational logistics and give us a further combat edge as we enter the 21st Century. The following enhancements are provided for consideration:

a. Lessons learned from various operations have revealed the need for improvements in MPF lift. This enhancement would add one additional ship to each of the MPSRON. These ships would be loaded with heavy engineer support equipment, fleet hospitals, USMC joint task force infrastructure equipment, and expeditionary airfield (EAF) sets. The EAFs would increase our combined-arms combat power without depending on existing airfields or aircraft carriers.³¹

b. The Blount Island Command post facility (the MPF maintenance facility) is leased through the year 2005. The 13 commercial RO/RO ships comprising MPS are also leased from three separate sources and the leases will expire between the years 2009 and 2011. The Marine Corps and/or Military Sealift Command need to make every effort to purchase the facility and ships. Some may disagree with me on the purchase of the ships because we lock ourselves into a particular ship type. I would argue that leasing does the same. The Marine Corps will have to aggressively search for a long term solution to this problem.

c. Currently the Army's APA program does not include bulk liquids. The U.S. Army is going to have to come to terms with the issue of placing bulk Class III (POL) and water in the

APA. Past experience from the Marine Corps' MPF program shows that inclusion of bulk liquids significantly enhances the operational flexibility especially when employed to places where there is little or no HNS infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

This nation has historically reduced military force structure after every major war, and despite the overwhelming defeat of the Iraqi Army by U.S. Military and coalition forces in the Gulf War, it has been business as usual. At this juncture, none of us in military uniforms really know what the military structure will look like as this nation enters the 21st Century. But one thing is for certain, that as long as there are nations in the world where leaders espouse different ideologies, cultures, religions, and human values, there will be a need for this nation to have the capability project power abroad to deter a belligerent's aggressive action or to operationally defend our national vital interests.

U.S. policy makers have cleverly divided the world and assigned specific areas of responsibility to combatant commanders. These combatant commanders are tasked with the development and production of joint operation plans and planning and conducting military operations in response to crises. One of the strategic tools available to combatant commanders when planning military operations or MOOTW is MPPs. Although logistics is currently a service responsibility, MPP reconstitution operations should rest with combatant commanders. The MPPs are national strategic assets and should be treated as such.

MPF Ground Combat Equipment

- 530 Trucks, HMMWV
- 109 Amphibious Assault Vehicles
- 72 TOW Carrier Trucks
- 30 M1A1 Tanks
- 30 Howitzers, Medium M198
- 25 Light Armed Vehicles
- 76 Launcher Tub TOW
- 96 Machine Gun MK-19 (MOD)
- 74 Machine Gun M240

Figure 1

MPF Aviation Combat Equipment

- 36 F/A - 18A/C/D Fighter/Attack Aircraft
- 20 AV-8B Harrier V/STOL Attack Aircraft
- 5 EA-6B Prowler EW Aircraft
- 12 KC-130 R/F Hercules Aerial Refuelers
- 24 CH-53D/E Super Stallion Helicopters
- 12 CH-46E Sea Knight Helicopters
- 18 AH-1W Super Cobra Attack Helicopters

Figure 2

Appendix A

MPF General Combat Support Equipment

- 1200+ Stationary/Mobile Radio Sets
- 14 Rough Terrain Cargo Handlers, 50K
- 8 25-Ton Drott Cranes
- 8 600K Amphibious Assault Fuel Systems
- 320 Mobile Electric Power Generators
- 6 Road Graders
- 2 Runway Sweepers
- 17 D7G Caterpillar Tractors
- 100+ Forklifts
- 41 Reverse Osmosis Water Purifier Units
- 1500+ General Purpose/Command Post Tents
- 8 Helicopter Expedient Refuel Systems
- 1100+ Light, Medium, and Heavy Trucks
- 2 Field Hospitals (120 and 60 beds)
- 1 Aviation Immediate Maintenance Activity Facility (Embarked aboard Aviation Logistics Support Ship (TAVB) which arrives in theater D+30)

Figure 3

APA Ground Combat Equipment

- 154 Bradley's W/TOW Missiles
- 123 M1A1 Tanks
- 100 Armed Personnel Carriers
- 40 Armed HMMWV
- 24 self-propelled Howitzers
- 10 Bradley's for Stinger Teams
- 10 HMMWV's for Stinger Teams
- 9 Multi-Launch Rocket Systems

Figure 4

APA General Ground CS/CSS

- Heavy/Medium Ground Trans (2,352 Wheeled Vehicles and 1,273 Trailers)
- Ammunition Handling/Distribution
- Engineer Combat/Service Support
- POL Storage/Distribution
- Supply Storage/Distribution
- Port Operations/Construction
- 300-Bed Field Hospital

Figure 5

Appendix B

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