

Expeditionary Strike Force - A Practical Solution in the Littoral Domain?

CSC 2004

Subject Area National Military Strategy

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Preface

A plethora of transformational bumper stickers encouraged me to propose to understand naval or, worse yet, maritime strategy. Strategy is complicated - similar to three-dimensional chess. I found it challenging to limit my examination of naval strategy and some of its corresponding practical applications to the scope of this paper. My conclusions are general in nature and probably oversimplify a very complex topic.

In my research I found that in spite of a Herculean effort to change the way it employs its forces, the Department of the Navy's operational focus remains platform-centric, with the carrier and a corresponding battle fleet mentality as the centerpiece of a forward deployed strategic naval presence. This focus reflects an early 20th century naval strategy greatly influenced by Alfred Thayer Mahan. This is a remnant of a Cold War mindset that holds the forward deployed battle fleet's presence and the decisive battle at the center of its strategic vision. My thesis states that, in application, current joint and naval strategic thought should more closely resemble Sir Julian Corbett's theory on maritime strategy. Emerging operational concepts that support it should include more interdependence between each service. Unfortunately, this mentality does not influence the contemporary employment alternatives of naval forces.

A Mahanian naval strategy is not relevant in a world where we are engaged in a continuous war against terrorism being fought through a series of limited engagements. Today, Corbett comes closer to relevance. Throughout this process of examination, two questions consistently come to my mind: First, when no pure competitor exists for the United States Navy, why does it continue to prepare for decisive battle? Second, why do

the services consciously avoid combining capabilities to create a more integrated, interdependent, and balanced joint force?

In an effort to transform, the Navy is conducting a series of experiments to develop the Expeditionary Strike Force (ESF) as an operational concept. Naturally, this concept quickly developed a Mahanian flavor - focusing on the ability to create numerous naval task forces capable of simultaneous and independent employment throughout the world. The Navy calls these task forces “strike groups” because of their ability to provide decisive strike capabilities. In an effort to create more strike groups, the carrier navy extended a warm hand - otherwise attached to a traditionally cold shoulder - to the amphibious navy. Ultimately, in greater or lesser number, these strike groups could unite - forming an Expeditionary Strike Force if the situation demanded a larger naval force. This approach to command and control at the operational level of war is problematic and nearly proved fatal to Great Britain during the Falklands War.

I propose that each regional combatant commander develop a maritime strategy modeled on ideas presented by Sir Julian Corbett. The Joint Force Maritime Component Commander would develop and implement this strategy. The Expeditionary Strike Force would fall under the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander, who would develop regionally focused operational capabilities to implement its regionally focused maritime strategy. Although most forces would come from the Navy, the Expeditionary Strike Force should be a joint force. The Joint Force Maritime Component Commander should form maritime joint task forces from the Expeditionary Strike Force, as required, to operate in the world’s littoral regions. This proposed Expeditionary Strike Force construct will give the Combatant Commander a maritime component with the capability

to plan and execute at the operational level of war. In this paper, I examined the Navy's Expeditionary Strike Force experiments in light of current national, joint, and service, strategic, and operational concepts and proposed a maritime Expeditionary Strike Force as an alternative to an outdated Mahanian naval concept.

Researching and writing on a contemporary topic proved challenging. Some of the ideas covered in this paper evolved during my research. They will continue to evolve in an ever-present challenge to meet diverse interests. The information provided in this paper is current as of April 29, 2004.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Craig Swanson and Commander Paul Grgas for their guidance during this paper's research and development, for their assistance in forming my thoughts, and in preparing the paper's content. I would also like to thank Mr. Noel Williams, from CETO for his assistance refining and focusing my topic. Finally, I would like to thank Colonel Vince Goulding, USMC (retired) from the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory for his assistance in selecting and refining my topic and for providing valuable feedback on the finished document.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Expeditionary Strike Force - A Practical Solution in the Littoral Domain?

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Thesis: The Department of the Navy's strategy is founded on the writings of the wrong Naval theorist and fails to address the operational requirements of the 21st century.

Discussion: An intelligently constructed maritime strategy combined with inventive and interdependent joint operational concepts will enable the Department of the Navy to meet future demands in the world's littoral regions. The Navy's operational focus remains platform-centric, with the carrier and a corresponding battle fleet mentality as the central focus of a forward-deployed strategic naval presence. This focus is a reflection a naval strategy greatly influenced by Alfred Thayer Mahan. It is also a remnant of a Cold War naval mindset that held the forward deployed battle fleet's presence and the decisive battle at the center of its strategic vision. This visualization is not relevant in a world where no peer competitor exists for the United States Navy. In an effort to transform, the Navy is currently conducting a series of experiments to develop an operational concept called the Expeditionary Strike Force (ESF). Naturally, this concept quickly developed a Mahanian flavor - focusing on the ability to create numerous naval task forces capable of simultaneous, independent, employment throughout the world. The Navy calls these task forces "strike groups" because of their ability to provide decisive strike capabilities. In an effort to create more strike groups, the aircraft carrier navy has extended a warm hand from a traditionally cold shoulder to the amphibious navy. Ultimately, in greater or lesser number, these strike groups could unite and form an Expeditionary Strike Force if the situation demanded a larger naval force. This approach functionally forms naval assets around the ability to strike. The Department of the Navy's single function focus takes a narrow view of maritime strategy and limits the Navy's flexibility in providing joint, capability-based, operational forces to Regional Combatant Commanders.

Recommendation: Each combatant commander should develop a maritime strategy centered on the Joint Force Maritime Component and influenced by Sir Julian Corbett's principles. This strategy would reside under the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC). The Expeditionary Strike Force would also fall under the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander, who would develop its regionally focused and interdependent operational capabilities. Although most forces would come from the Navy, the Expeditionary Strike Force should incorporate each service's core competencies. The Joint Force Maritime Component Commander should form maritime joint task forces from the Expeditionary Strike Force as required to operate in the world's littoral regions. This proposed Expeditionary Strike Force construct will give the combatant commander a maritime component with the capability to plan and execute at the operational level of war.

INTRODUCTION

Whosoever can hold the seas has command of everything. The Athenian diplomat and naval commander, Themistocles, proclaimed this truth in the 5th century B.C. The statement remains equally as valid in a modern world as it was in ancient times. Today, the United States' dynamic global interests, challenges, and security threats demand regionally focused strategies implemented through interdependent and innovative operational concepts. The United States military should enable these concepts through functionally organized and joint, capability-based employment alternatives. These employment options should apply across the full spectrum of conflict with an eye toward the world's littoral regions. President George W. Bush highlighted the military's challenge in a June 1, 2002, speech at the United States Military Academy:

Our security will require transforming the military you will lead - a military that must be ready to strike at a moments notice in any dark corner of the world.

The Department of the Navy must transform to meet these requirements.

An intelligently constructed maritime strategy combined with inventive joint, capability-based, operational concepts will enable the Department of the Navy to meet future demands in the world's littoral regions. However, while the Department of the Navy's strategic and operational focus conceptually calls for transformation, its employment alternatives remain platform-centric. They remain dominated by a Cold War battle fleet mentality focused on forward-deployed naval presence and force projection that looks for the "decisive" battle.

Today, the Navy and the Marine Corps occupy a unique position to exploit emerging technology's potential to initiate corresponding changes in operational

concepts, patterns, and organizations. Through constructive service integration and interdependence, America's Armed Forces can develop a capability-based force that will transform maritime operations to support current and future strategic objectives.

This paper examines current national, joint, and naval strategic and operational concepts, on-going naval experiments, and historical examples to determine what strategy, corresponding operational concepts, and employment alternatives the Department of the Navy should develop to meet 21st century security challenges in the world's littoral areas. If properly developed, this force will provide the operational nucleus for the joint maritime component's . . . *sea-air-land team trained to respond to Unified (Combatant) Commanders as they execute national policy.*¹

¹ Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, and Commandant of the Marine Corps, . . . *From the Sea, Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century*, September 1992, 2. URL: <<http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/policy/fromsea/forward.txt>> accessed December 28, 2003.

CHAPTER 1

ON MARITIME STRATEGY

Mahan is dead - long live Mahan. In some ways, this represents a rally cry for the Department of the Navy as it moves to create a fully integrated, interdependent, and operationally joint 21st century naval force. A strategically practical person could observe that the United States will increasingly conduct warfare less as an entirely American Cold War (single-service) military force and more as a joint (multi-service) and combined (multi-national) affair. This fact, however, runs counter to the Navy's traditional Mahanian employment of its battle fleet and represents a paradox for a tradition-bound service in the midst of transforming itself. This conflict sets the stage for a transitional strategic period fraught with thorny operational challenges for the Department of the Navy.

The Department of the Navy's transitional period began in earnest in 1989 with the Soviet Union's collapse and the Department of Defense's subsequent move away from single-service operational concepts. Keeping this in mind, the Department of the Navy's challenge now becomes one less of shaping military capabilities to address the short-term transitional environment, than one of modeling these capabilities so that they meet the challenges of the transitional period and provide a legacy for future operational employment alternatives. Naval operational concepts designed during this transitional period must support a set of coherent regional maritime strategies crafted to meet unique regional demands with direct links to the National Military Strategy. This approach will provide a solid foundation to support current and future United States' interests, while addressing challenges and security concerns.

The emerging national, joint, and service concepts examined in this paper share a common theme calling for smaller and more operationally agile forces capable of delivering precision engagement independent of host nation support. The underlying naval concepts appeal for leveraging technology to develop greater lethality with a smaller sea-based force. Colonel Robert O. Work, in *The Challenge of Maritime Transformation: Is Bigger Better?* identifies this theme - not as a new concept - but as an operational trend that began at the end of the Cold War (1989) and continues today.

Colonel Work demonstrates that since 1989, as the fleet decreased in numbers, its capability to deliver long-range strike power actually increased. In 1989, the fleet included 104 large surface combatants, 15 deployable aircraft carriers, and 4 battleships, for an escort to capital ship ratio of 5.5:1. In 2001, there were 80 combatants and 11 carriers, a 7.27:1 ratio. Notably, the 24 fewer combatants carried 784 more land attack missiles than the 1989 fleet.² Furthermore, only 48 of 123 ships could deliver long-range air or missile strike in 1989. Notably, he observes that aircraft carriers represented 15 of these ships. In 1989, the Navy concentrated the fleet's strike power in its aircraft carrier force - maintaining a non-carrier strike-to carrier strike ratio of 2.2:1. Today, 95 percent of the Navy's capital ships and combatants contain a strike capability. This shift increased the non-carrier strike to carrier strike ratio to 6.8:1.³ This demonstrates that the Navy's ability to organize its naval task forces away from an aircraft carrier centric force increased three-fold in the past thirteen years.

In spite of these facts, the Navy remains focused upon deploying a fleet composed entirely of naval assets, organized from numbered fleets equally divided between East

² Colonel Robert O. Work, USMC (Ret.), *The Challenge of Maritime Transformation: Is Bigger Better?* (Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2002), I. Cited hereafter as Work.

³ Work, I-111.

Coast, West Coast, and Overseas homeports. Currently, the Department of the Navy forms its transformed fleet into a series of standardized naval strike groups designed to project naval power throughout the world. Although the structure creates more naval strike groups, this organization represents a failure to adopt the interdependent and interoperable joint force presented in the emerging operational concepts. The principal failure is a lack of service interdependence – the idea that the concept will fail unless each service contributes its core competencies. The missing linkage reveals a conflict between naval concept development and emerging geopolitical and military reality. The Department of the Navy must develop regionally oriented maritime strategies that will provide a foundation for capability-based employment of joint maritime forces to meet threats in the world's littorals. Surprisingly, this conflict is not a new one. A look at the turn of the 20th century provides a beginning for this discussion.

Mahan Versus Corbett

Two early 20th century naval theorists, Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) and Sir Julian Stafford Corbett (1854-1923) sought to develop theories of warfare involving sea power's application in their maritime nation's national military strategy. They wrote during transitional periods for their respective nations - creating fundamentally different theses. Ultimately, Mahan's theories dominated strategic thought in the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Germany, throughout the 20th century. His ideas continue to influence it today.

Mahan based his ideas upon a scientific historical analysis of Great Britain's rise to global colonial and imperial prominence. His thesis closely followed French military

theorist Antoine Henri Jomini's (1779-1869) theory of land warfare in three major areas. First, it focused upon offensive naval power as the key to strategic success in warfare. Second, it stated that scientific principles control all strategy. Third, to result in victory, these principles prescribed offensive action to mass a fleet against that of the enemy and destroy it in a decisive battle.⁴

Mahan presented these ideas in, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783*, and applied them to United States' naval strategy. The Jominian application of Mahan's theory focuses on lines of operation and decisive points. Mahan points out that, during war or peace, sea power applied to produce command of the sea acts indirectly to produce strategic success more effectively than other elements of military power. Under Mahan, navies and armies compete for the strategic spotlight and the resources that accompany it.⁵

Strategically, Mahan believed that command of the seas ensured national mobility in war that led to decisive battle on sea as well as on land. Mahan advocated a defensive strategy that included an offensively applied massive battle fleet capable of extended operations in foreign waters. Theoretically, this fleet kept foreign navies too occupied dealing with a credible force to attack the United States. Mahan placed an emphasis on main fleet engagement as a way of seizing command of the sea, and saw command of the seas as a decisive instrument in war.⁶ The United States' success in World War II validated the Mahanian notion of naval warfare. This influence has led generations of United States naval strategists to focus on Mahanian ideas of forward presence, engagement, and decisive battle.

⁴ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History 1660-1783* (New York: Dover Publications, 1987), 1-24. Cited hereafter as Mahan.

⁵ Mahan, 29.

Sir Julian Corbett developed a broader perspective and was one of the first naval theorists to stress integrating land and sea forces in a national strategy. Focusing on Prussian warfare theorist Carl Von Clausewitz' (1780-1831) idea of limited war, Corbett's strategic thinking might well apply better to today's world of terrorism and regional wars than it did to his own time. In *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, he articulated disenchantment with decisive battles, preferring a concept of geographically shifting and limited sea control. For Corbett, the issue involved controlling vital areas of the sea, as opposed to commanding every bit of ocean. Corbett praised inter-service cooperation and amphibious operations, believing that elements of military power should work together. While maintaining the importance of naval strategy, Corbett focused on a maritime strategy - referring to it as the principles governing a war where the sea is a substantial factor. This view reflected Great Britain's imperial needs in the early 20th century. Although the United States does not possess an empire, *per se*, its current strategic goals of maintaining strong economic ties between democratic nations closely resembles Great Britain's goals during Corbett's time.⁷

Corbett viewed naval strategy as determining the fleet's movements while it played its part in an overall maritime strategy that included land forces. He cautioned against unaided naval pressure - stating that purely naval action could only work through a process of exhaustion. Such thought seemed to underscore his belief that it was almost impossible for naval action alone to decide a military contest and might even result in an inconclusive political settlement where each side saw itself as the victor.⁸

⁶ Mahan, 29-89.

⁷ Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 3-11. Cited hereafter as Corbett.

⁸ Corbett, 15.

When the military developed a maritime strategy its paramount purpose concerned determining the mutual relations between the army and the navy in a war plan. Corbett's trinity included: supporting or obstructing diplomacy (war as a continuation of politics or a form of political interaction where states fight battles instead of writing notes); protecting or destroying commerce; and supporting or defeating shore operations.⁹ The operational application of Corbett's theory encompassed a Clausewitzian theory of war with a maritime focus - making a distinction between naval and maritime strategy. Corbett noted,

*Possessions that lie oversea or at the extremities of vast areas of imperfectly settled territory are in an entirely different category from those limited objects which Clausewitz contemplated. History shows that . . . they can be isolated by naval action sufficiently to set up the conditions of true limited war.*¹⁰

For Corbett naval warfare represented a spectrum that was offensive and defensive, limited and unlimited in nature from blockade to war of extermination. Corbett concluded that limited war is the essence of maritime strategy. This sort of strategic thinking enabled Great Britain, a maritime nation with a small army acting in conjunction with a powerful fleet, to become a truly global empire. His emphasis on limited war and the importance of what we today call "joint operations" makes his ideas more relevant to United States' naval strategy than the ideas of his American *alter ego*.

As we examine emerging operational concepts, we should remember Corbett's remarks concerning theory and practice,

The last thing that an explorer arrives at is a complete map that will cover the whole ground he has traveled, but for those who come after him and would profit by and extend his knowledge, his map is the first thing with which they will begin. So it is with strategy . . . It is for this reason that in

⁹ Lt. Col, John Gibson, "Sir Julian Corbett on Amphibious Operations," *Marine Corps Gazette*, March 1998, 68. Cited hereafter as Gibson.

¹⁰ Corbett, 46.

*the study of war we must get our theory clear before we can venture in search of practical conclusions.*¹¹

The Department of the Navy should heed Julian Corbett's advice and begin with a clearly articulated strategy before it begins to search for operational or, worse, tactical solutions.

¹¹ Corbett, 15.

CHAPTER 2

EMERGING OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

The *National Security Strategy*, published in September 2002, sets a national-level goal to shift the military's strategic defense planning from a threat-based approach to a capability-based model.¹² The President intended this strategic change to focus the armed forces to meet future security challenges as a joint force. The *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* first identified this new defense strategy in September 2001 - both documents accelerated literature within the Department of Defense describing new joint and service operational concepts.¹³ Within the Department of the Navy, these national documents quickened the Navy's and Marines Corps' pace to advance their own new joint operational concepts.

Figure 1 provides a simplified diagram based upon the themes of emerging concepts that relate to the Expeditionary Strike Force. The diagram begins with the strategic documents at the top and flows through the National, Department of Defense, Navy, and Marine Corps concepts. *Joint Vision 2020* compliments the National and Department of Defense documents - outlining the strategic shift towards capability-based joint forces. In *Naval Power 21*, the Department of the Navy connects the strategic and joint concepts to its primary strategic documents: *Sea Power 21* and *Marine Corps Strategy 21*. *Sea Power 21* and *Marine Corps Strategy 21* provide the Navy and Marine Corps operational concepts: *Sea Strike*, *Sea Shield*, *Sea Basing*, *Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS)*, *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM)*, and *Maritime*

¹² Office of the President, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, 29.

¹³ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, September 30, 2001, 13.

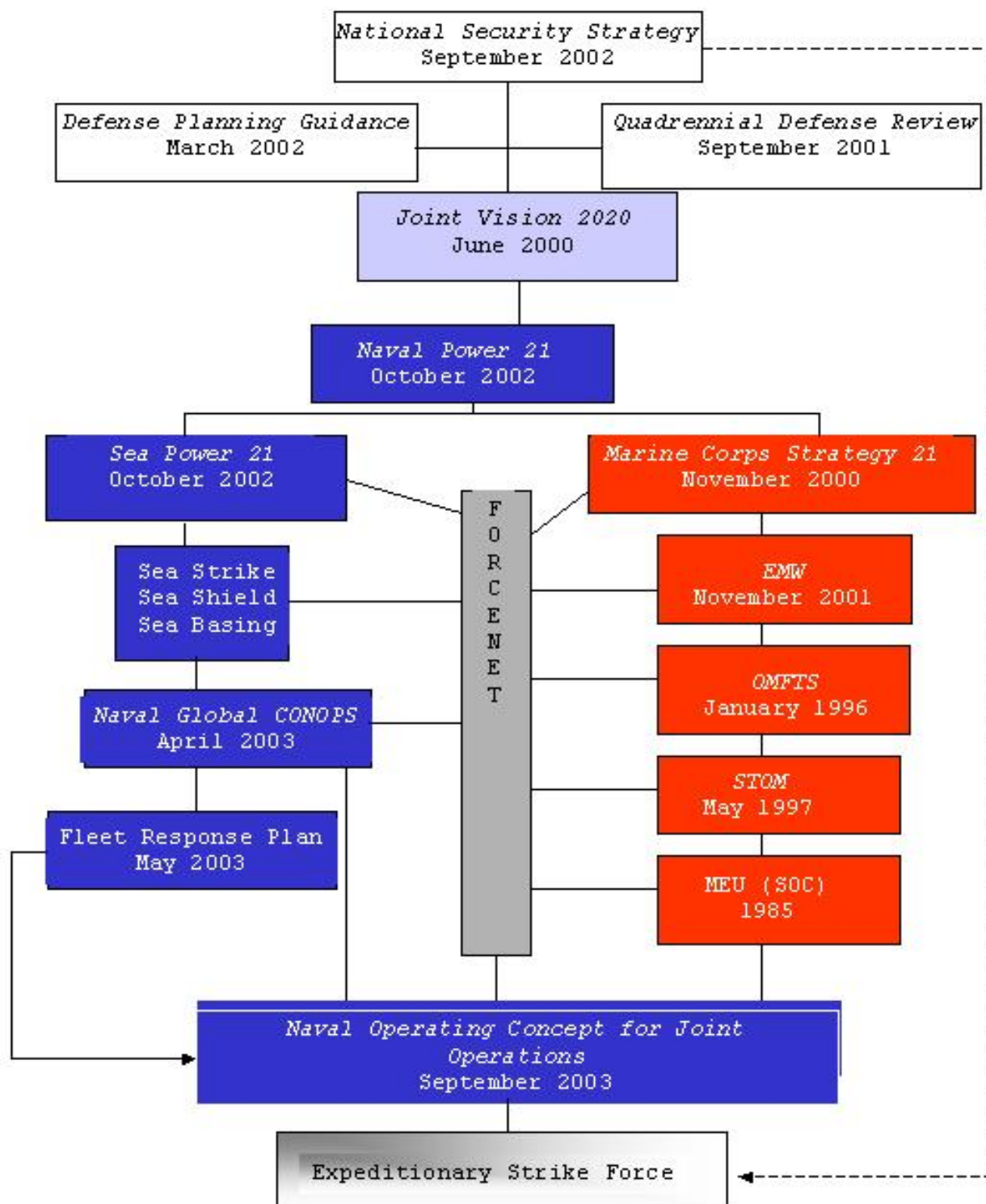


Figure 1. Emerging Operational Concepts Map

Prepositioned Force 2010 and Beyond. They also explain how ForceNet will drive these concepts. The *Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations* - a Department of the Navy document - describes how the Expeditionary Strike Force will achieve the strategic shift directed in the *National Security Strategy* and the operational vision outlined in *Sea Power 21* and *Marine Corps Strategy 21*. The dotted line represents an indirect link between the National strategic concepts and the tactical application of the operational concepts incorporated into the Expeditionary Strike Force.

These national and service documents ultimately led the Department of the Navy to conceive the Expeditionary Strike Force concept. If properly developed, these strategic and operational concepts will explain the capabilities required from an Expeditionary Strike Force. The capabilities will determine the Expeditionary Strike Force structure. Since regional requirements generally differ, the capability of each region's Expeditionary Strike Force must also vary. Ideally, the concepts serve as the strategic and operational theory while the Expeditionary Strike Force serves as a practical application of these concepts at the operational and tactical level of warfare. Ultimately, the operational concepts serve to link the strategic goals and the tactical objectives. Right now, investigating the emerging joint and naval concepts will provide some insight into how the Department of the Navy developed the current Expeditionary Strike Force concept.

Joint Vision 2020

Published in June 2000, *Joint Vision 2020* promotes the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's vision of transforming the United States military's strategic and

operational development in the decades ahead. *Joint Vision 2020* describes the operational concepts necessary for the Department of Defense to fulfill the United States' military responsibilities to support four strategic concepts: decisive force, power projection, overseas presence, and strategic agility.

Joint Vision 2020 predicts that fast-paced information technology development coupled with intelligent and informed leadership will transform military operations. According to this vision, the information revolution combined with human intellect will convert the joint force's current capabilities for maneuver, strike, logistics, and force protection into dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics, and full dimensional protection - resulting in full spectrum dominance.¹⁴

Although published in June 2000, *Joint Vision 2020*'s thesis recently gained greater significance with *National Security Strategy* and *Defense Planning Guidance* emphasis on a technology driven military transformation. *Joint Vision 2020* led the Navy and Marine Corps to publish their own visions capitalizing on information technology intended to transform these services into capability-based organizations focused on joint operations. Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld summed-up his vision in a speech delivered at the National Defense University on January 31, 2002,

We need to change not only the capabilities at our disposal, but also how we think about war. Not all the high-tech weapons in the world will transform the United States armed forces unless we also transform the way we think, the way we train, the way we exercise and the way we fight.

The Secretary of Defense's vision clearly proposes a joint and interdependent approach to future warfare similar to that proposed by Sir Julian Corbett. A joint maritime strategy centered on Corbett's ideas logically emanates from this vision. A look at Navy and

¹⁴ See Appendix A for a further explanation of these concepts.

Marine Corps practical solutions reveals some resistance to changing familiar employment alternatives in these tradition-bound organizations.

Naval Power 21

Published October 2002, *Naval Power 21* provides the vision for the Department of the Navy's operational development to continue to command the sea, project power, and to defend and influence beyond the sea as part of a joint warfighting force. Co-authored by the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, it links Navy and Marine Corps' strategic concepts to national strategic and joint concepts. *Naval Power 21* directs the naval services to focus on creating innovative organizations, concepts, technologies, and business practices for joint force employment in support of national strategy.

Naval Power 21 highlights decisiveness, sustainability, responsiveness, and agility as the naval forces' four fundamental qualities. It directs the Department of the Navy to focus operational concepts toward seven areas: people, homeland security, projecting power and influence, future naval capabilities, sea enterprise, an expanded naval force including strike groups, and the naval operational concept. As a strategic document calling for joint warfare, *Naval Power 21* notably omits any direct conceptual link to the United States Army or the United States Air Force. Instead, it identifies a purely naval strategy, implying a continued focus on a Mahanian tradition. *Naval Power 21* names *Sea Power 21* and *Marine Corps Strategy 21* as the strategic concepts to

transform the Department of the Navy into a capability-based and sea-based naval force.¹⁵

Sea Power 21

Also published in October 2002, *Sea Power 21* announces the Chief of Naval Operations' concept to develop naval forces into a sea-based organization during the first few decades of the 21st century. This vision directs the Navy to build on United States' strengths - using asymmetric advantages in information superiority, sea control, mobility, stealth, reach, precision, and firepower. *Sea Power 21* seeks to integrate sea, land, air, space, and cyberspace under a naval operational concept. It includes five components: Sea Strike, Sea Shield, Sea Basing, ForceNet, *Naval Global Concept of Operations*, employed under the Fleet Response Plan.¹⁶

Sea Power 21 states that a Navy built around Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing will provide a flexible and capability-based fleet. This fleet includes Carrier Strike Groups (CSG), Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESG), and Surface/Submarine Action Groups (SAG).¹⁷ A Carrier Strike Group can respond to the full spectrum of combat. An Expeditionary Strike Group, complete with dedicated escorts, can spread the Navy and Marine Corps' striking power and presence - covering more of the world's surface with the same number of ships. A Surface Action Group can conduct precision strike, sea control, maritime intercept, and intelligence operations. These forces can operate with Maritime Prepositioned Forces (MPF), and logistics support ships.

¹⁵ Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, and Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Naval Power 21*, October 2002, 1-5.

¹⁶ Admiral Vern Clark, Chief of Naval Operations, *Sea Power 21*, 1-2. See Appendix A for further explanation of these concepts. Cited hereafter as Clark.

¹⁷ This paper address CSG, ESG, SAG, MPG and CFL following the emerging concepts section.

The Navy will employ these strike groups independently throughout the world according to a global naval concept. This *Naval Global Concept of Operations (Naval Global CONOPS)* re-organizes the fleet into strike groups and surface action groups to increase its operational flexibility. This new fleet contains 12 Carrier Strike Groups, 12 Expeditionary Strike Groups, 9 strike/missile defense Surface Action Groups, and four converted Ohio-Class nuclear-powered submarines (SSGN) - each submarine equipped to launch 154 Tomahawk missiles. The new structure produces 37 independent strike groups. The *Naval Global CONOPS* contains four key elements: Carrier Strike Group, Expeditionary Strike Group, Surface Action Group, and Combat Logistics Forces. *Sea Power 21* outlines a new concept for fleet deployment.¹⁸

The Navy's current force structure focuses on the long-range striking power of 19 independent strike groups. These strike groups consist of 12 carrier battle groups (CVBG) and an additional seven Tomahawk missile equipped Surface Action Groups. Currently, the Navy maintains a clear distinction in striking power between these 19 strike groups and the 12 amphibious ready groups (ARG). The Navy further reduces its strike capability in its deployment plan because these same surface combatants that conduct strike missions also provide a protective screen for the aircraft carrier. This structure will not support the current 1/4/2/1 requirements outlined in the *National Military Strategy*.¹⁹

The 1/4/2/1 strategy requires the military *to concurrently defend the homeland, deter adversaries in four critical regions, swiftly defeat enemies in two of the four*

¹⁸ Vice Admiral Mike Mullen, "Sea Power 21 Series: Part IV--Global Concept of Operations," *Proceedings*, April 2003, URL: <<http://www.ocnus.net/cgi-bin/exec>> accessed January 9, 2004. Cited hereafter as Mullen.

¹⁹ Mullen.

regions, and win one of the two conflicts decisively.²⁰ The *Naval Global CONOPS* conceptually enables the Navy to meet the new 1/4/2/1 requirements. Based upon a 375-ship fleet²¹, the *Naval Global CONOPS* seeks to support *Sea Power 21*'s Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing concepts - distributing the Navy's limited assets more effectively for regional crisis response.²²

The *National Military Strategy*'s regional focus provided the Department of the Navy an opportunity to create a regionally focused global concept of operations. Instead, it developed a single, globally focused, platform-based employment alternative constructed around *Sea Power 21*'s Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing concepts. These concepts support generic strike groups constructed around large platforms like the aircraft carrier, preserving a requirement for the Mahanian battle fleet. Ultimately this left the Navy fundamentally independent and - in practice - operationally unchanged. The Department of the Navy created the Fleet Response Plan to allocate the generic strike groups outlined above to support its globally focused operational concept.

Fleet Response Plan

Published in May 2003, the Navy's Fleet Response Plan (FRP) creates a flexible deployment schedule for the amphibious and carrier fleets. Originally, the Navy created the Fleet Response Plan to develop an ability to surge its Carrier Strike Groups to support the 1/4/2/1 requirement. However, in January 2004 the Navy expanded the Fleet Response Plan to include its amphibious ships.²³ The Fleet Response Plan focuses on

²⁰ Mullen.

²¹ Clark, 7. In a February 25, 2004, *Aerospace Daily*, article Lisa Troshinsky identifies the current fleet size at 259 ships. Her article demonstrates fiscal limitations that will keep the fleet below 300 ships past the year 2020.

²² Marvin Leibstone, "Naval Power 21: United States Navy-After-Next", *Naval Forces*, 2003, 114.

²³ Lorenzo Cortes, "Navy's Pacific Surface Forces Chief Outlines Amphib Surge Metrics," *Defense Daily*, 13 January 2004, 2.

maintaining six surge-ready Carrier Strike Groups with two additional Carrier Strike Groups following within 90 days.²⁴ The Navy calls this design the 6+2 surge capability.²⁵ The additional amphibious ship-planning rubric calls for, five Amphibious Assault Ship-Multipurpose (LHD), five Landing Ship Dock (LSD) and five Amphibious Transport Dock [Ship] (LPD) to surge Marine Expeditionary Force-level organizations.²⁶ The Navy's greatest challenge in implementing the Fleet Response Plan revolves around fleet maintenance. Initially, the Navy plans to extend the interval between maintenance periods and change its training and work force processes to achieve the Fleet Response Plan's goals. Conceptually, the Fleet Response Plan produces a larger force capable of surging in response to crises instead of the traditional and smaller, forward-deployed force.

The Fleet Response Plan requires a dramatic change from the Navy's traditional deployment work-up *D-minus* mindset to focusing on readiness after returning from deployment or *R-plus* mentality.²⁷ The Fleet Response Plan eliminates the standard 6-month deployment, creating a response-oriented Navy that can deploy its forces with as little as 30-days notice. Once deployed these forces would remain until conflict resolution or relief from follow-on forces. The Fleet Response Plan provides a blueprint that keeps naval forces ready to surge amphibious and carrier forces to respond to regional crises.

As a component of *Sea Power 21*, the Fleet Response Plan conceptually influences the development of Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing concepts. Shifting from a forward-deployed presence to a surge-oriented virtual presence represents a major

²⁴ Vice Admiral Michael Malone, and others, "Naval Aviation Raises the Readiness Bar," *Proceedings*, February 2004, 40.

²⁵ Christine Brooms and Kim Deal, "What is an Expeditionary Strike Force? USMC ESF/ESG Assessment Study Task 3," (Center for Naval Analysis, CRM D0009003.A1/Final, September 2003), 29. Cited hereafter as Brooms.

²⁶ Cortes, 2. See Appendix A for further explanation of ship types.

²⁷ Brooms, 29.

shift in the way the Navy views its amphibious and carrier forces. Ending the traditional train-deploy-stand-down cycle means that naval forces will deploy to support a combatant commander depending upon an individual ship's readiness.²⁸ Multiple single-ship deployments from different numbered fleets places even more emphasis upon developing a capable joint force maritime component, able to provide effective maritime command and control to these surged forces.

Ultimately, the Fleet Response Plan perpetuates the Navy's reliance upon large fleets. Although it shifts the Navy's focus from fixed deployment schedules to a readiness to respond posture, it represents a reactive employment alternative to regional crisis response. This solution is a result of the Department of the Navy's single, globally focused, platform-based employment alternatives. Instead, (going back to Corbett) the Department of the Navy should develop regionally focused and interdependent operational concepts constructed to meet the maritime functions required in each region. This will produce a functionally organized and capability-based employment plan that meets the regional requirements outlined in the *National Military Strategy*.

Marine Corps Strategy 21

Published November 3, 2000, *Marine Corps Strategy 21* represents the Marine Corps' strategic vision for the 21st Century. It provides the vision, goals, and aims to support future combat capability development. Linked to *Joint Vision 2020*, *Naval Power 21* and *Sea Power 21*, *Marine Corps Strategy 21* directs the Marine Corps to:

²⁸ Jack Dorsey, "Smaller Battle Groups Are Bound for Persian Gulf to Aid Combat," *The Virginia Pilot*, <<http://ebird.afis.osd.mil>>, accessed January 20, 2004.

. . . improve its *strategic agility, operational reach, and tactical flexibility to enable joint, allied, and coalition operations and interagency coordination.*²⁹

Marine Corps Strategy 21 supports the Marine Corps' strategic concept of *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare*.

Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare

Published November 10, 2001, *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* serves as the Marine Corps' capstone concept. *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* identifies the relationship between the Marine Corps' integrating concepts, operational concepts, functional concepts, and core competencies. Additionally, it articulates the Marine Corps' unique contribution to future joint operations. *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* plays a critical role in the concept development process as it refines the broad axis of advance identified in *Marine Corps Strategy 21*.³⁰ This fine-tuning ensures that the Marine Corps supplies the joint force commander with forces to provide forward presence, engagement, crisis response, antiterrorism, and warfighting.

Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare also directs the continued Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) evolution with *Marine Corps Strategy 21* capability enhancements. These enhancements include joint and multinational enabling operations, strategic agility, operational reach, tactical flexibility, support and sustainment. *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* links to the Fleet Response Plan through emphasis on the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB). The Marine Expeditionary Brigade becomes the Marine Corps' preferred mid-intensity Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

²⁹ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Strategy 21*, November 3, 2000, 2.

³⁰ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare*, November 10, 2001, 1. Cited hereafter as EMW.

Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare focuses the Marine Corps supporting establishment's role in direct support of forward operations.³¹ This function involves leveraging information technologies and exploiting modern logistic concepts to anticipate and respond to Marine Air-Ground Task Force requirements. *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* also concentrates the Marine Corps' warfighting concepts to develop enhanced expeditionary capabilities. It links emerging joint concepts outlined in *Joint Vision 2020* with operational concepts outlined in *Naval Power 21*, *Sea Power 21*, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* and *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver*.

Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations

Although not dated, Marine Administrative Message 434/03 announced the *Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations* on September 22, 2003. The *Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations* describes how the Navy and Marine Corps will train, organize, deploy, employ, and sustain a more capable force through 2020 as part of the overall joint force. It describes *naval operations in the near, middle, and far terms and aligns naval concepts within a greater joint context*.³² It also links the Navy's concepts of Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing with Marine Corps concepts of *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare*, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver*, and *MPF 2010*.

Providing the operational concepts for *Sea Power 21* and *Marine Corps Strategy 21*, the *Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations* explains the capabilities that an integrated naval force contributes to joint and multi-national operations. It discusses how

³¹ EMW, 8.

³² Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations*, n.d., 1. Cited hereafter as NOC. Also see Table 1 on page 56.

the Navy and the Marine Corps will achieve Sea Strike, Sea Shield, Sea Basing and *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* using the Expeditionary Strike Force and its various components. Ultimately, the *Naval Operating Concept for Joint Operations* falls short of proclaiming the interdependence between tactical units that is necessary to create the balanced operational force called for in the emerging operational concepts. This failure leaves the Expeditionary Strike Force and its various components as a purely naval force.

The concepts examined above identify a transitional strategic period that presents some significant operational challenges to current and future military forces. They all share a common theme calling for smaller and more operationally agile joint forces that can deliver precision strike independent of host nation support. They conclude that the United States will conduct future warfare as a joint (multi-service), combined (multi-national), and regionally focused affair. In aggregate, these concepts seem to drive naval thinking toward a regionally focused, interdependent, capability-based, naval force for the joint force commander. In the Navy's mind the emerging Expeditionary Strike Force concept fills the void.

CHAPTER 3

EXPEDITIONARY STRIKE FORCE (ESF)

The Department of the Navy recently developed the Expeditionary Strike Force concept to meet Department of Defense expectations to transform the naval service into a joint force. The Expeditionary Strike Force is described as the “gold standard” of naval power. The Department of the Navy expects to use the Expeditionary Strike Force concept to provide increased striking power, enhanced flexibility, and improved responsiveness that permits operations in any threat environment.³³

The Navy foresees encountering an increasing demand for forward deployed naval forces with Carrier Strike Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups, and Surface Action Groups as outlined in the *Naval Global Concept of Operations*. If required, the combatant commander can create an Expeditionary Strike Force. A notional Expeditionary Strike Force consists of any combination of one or more Carrier Strike Group, Expeditionary Strike Group, Surface Action Group, Maritime Prepositioned Group, Combat Logistics Group and other assigned naval forces. The general plan is to assign the Expeditionary Strike Force to a numbered fleet commander or Joint Force Maritime Component Commander, allowing the combatant commander to determine the organization and command arrangements to meet specific mission objectives within the specific theater of operations.³⁴ Furthermore, the Fleet Response Plan provides an indication that the Navy will likely surge some of its assets as strike groups or individual ships as regional conflicts arise, instead of routinely deploying them to a combatant commander.

³³ Brooms, 11.

³⁴ Brooms, 11-16.

Conceptually, a combatant commander requests these strike groups and employs them independently or joins them in various combinations to form an Expeditionary Strike Force to meet the demands of a regional crisis. How the Navy expects these strike groups to combine in a practical way is not clearly articulated in its concepts. Recognizing the importance of clear command relationships, this omission presents a critical weakness in the concept that interdependence will not correct. However, once they do combine, the Expeditionary Strike Force then serves as the nucleus of a large sea-based naval force. Under this model, the Expeditionary Strike Force provides a robust, balanced, naval force operating from a maneuverable sea base. Using operational concepts like Sea Strike, Sea Shield, Sea Basing, *Ship To Objective Maneuver*, and *Operational Maneuver From The Sea*, a combatant commander employs this Expeditionary Strike Force to force an adversary to disperse and defend across a wide area. The Expeditionary Strike Force then takes advantage of the sea's maneuver space to generate an increased operational tempo, compelling a numerically larger enemy force to react, creating opportunities for exploitation.

The Expeditionary Strike Force concept briefs well from a naval perspective. Constructed strictly from naval assets, the Navy can organize its various parts with limited interference from the other services. It dovetails the naval and amphibious aspects of emerging concepts to construct a series of strike forces, designed to keep the Navy in the business of employing a platform-centric battle fleet. However, the structure does not represent a functional organization. Furthermore, the Expeditionary Strike Force concept does not provide a capability-based, interoperable, and interdependent force. Rather, it continues to perpetuate the single-service concepts used during the Cold

War. A role for either the Army or the Air Force is clearly absent from the concept and from the subordinate strike group constructs.

Carrier Strike Group (CSG)

The Carrier Strike Group concept replaces the Carrier Battle Group as the fleet's principal warfighting strength. The Carrier Strike Group provides a full range of operational capabilities for sustained maritime power projection, combat survivability, and contains the most powerful single element of Sea Strike. A notional Carrier Strike Group includes an aircraft carrier with assigned air wing, three surface combatants, one submarine, and one support ship.³⁵ The Carrier Strike Group contains fewer ships than the traditional Carrier Battle Group because it loses some of its surface combatants and submarines to build the additional Expeditionary Strike Group's and Surface Action Group's. However, the Department of the Navy expects the technological advances to Tomahawk and carrier air wing striking power and the limited at-sea threat to naval forces created by the decline of the Soviet Navy to combine to maintain the carrier's traditionally pre-eminent sustained-strike capability.³⁶

The Navy can employ a Carrier Strike Group across the full spectrum of conflict. The Carrier Strike Group can also operate independently in international waters to enforce sanctions, patrol no-fly zones, or conduct limited precision strike missions. Additionally, it can combine with an Expeditionary Strike Group, Maritime Prepositioned Group, Surface Action Group, or Expeditionary Strike Force to conduct joint, forcible entry operations or participate in full-scale war.³⁷

³⁵ Brooms, 12-13.

³⁶ NOC, 7.

³⁷ Mullen.

The Carrier Strike Group exercises command and control through the composite warfare commander (CWC) doctrine, developed by the Navy in the late 1970's to provide Navy-wide standard procedures to deal with a large and capable threat at sea.³⁸ Originally defensive in nature composite warfare commander doctrine enabled the fleet effectively to execute a multiple-threat defense for the Carrier Battle Group. Since the Cold War's end, the composite warfare commander doctrine evolved to support both offensive and defensive missions.

Naval Warfare Publication 3-56, *Composite Warfare Commander's Manual*, outlines the composite warfare commander concept. According to this concept, the officer in tactical control (OTC) retains several options regarding delegation of his command authority to subordinate commanders. Under composite warfare commander doctrine, the officer in tactical control may retain all authority and responsibility for all warfare areas; he may delegate some warfare areas and retain the remaining warfare areas; he may delegate all primary warfare areas; or he may delegate composite warfare commander to a subordinate who retains the same options as officer in tactical control. Generally, the officer in tactical control or the composite warfare commander exercises control of the battlespace through five principal warfare commanders (PWC) while retaining overall responsibility for the force. The officer in tactical control can designate functional warfare commanders (FWC) and coordinators for short-duration tasks.³⁹

Figure 2 depicts a typical Carrier Strike Group command structure. A one-star admiral commands the Carrier Strike Group. His subordinate commanders share the principal and functional composite warfare functions. In addition to controlling the

³⁸ Department of the Navy, NWP 3-56 (Rev A), *Composite Warfare Commander's Manual*, August 2001, 1-1.

³⁹ See Appendix A for a description of the composite warfare commanders.

destroyers, frigates, and submarines assigned to the Carrier Strike Group, the Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) Commander normally serves as the Surface Warfare Commander (SUWC), the Undersea Warfare Commander (USWC), the Helicopter Element Commander (HEC), and the Maritime Intercept Officer (MIO). The Carrier Air Group Commander (CAG) with his assigned air wing is normally designated

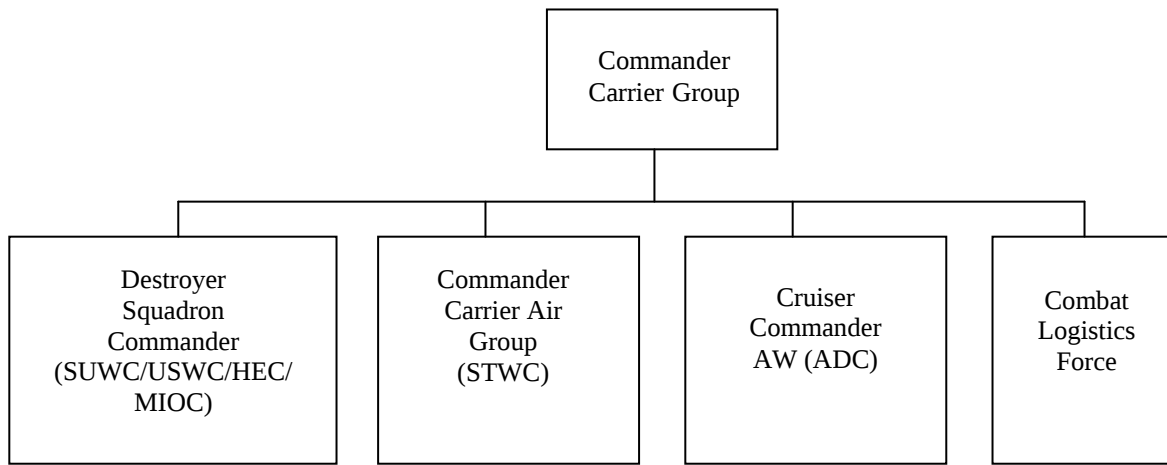


Figure 2. Carrier Strike Group Command Structure

as the Strike Warfare Commander (STWC). The Cruiser Commander known as “alpha whiskey” (AW) is normally assigned as the Air Defense Commander (ADC). A Combat Logistics Force that includes the supply ships assigned rounds out the Carrier Strike Group.

The Carrier Strike Group is not a joint force structure. Its focus on the strike group concept preserves the traditional Mahanian notion of the battle fleet constructed through pure naval concepts, neglecting to develop the operational interdependence that links it to emerging joint strategic and operational concepts. The Carrier Strike Group represents a strictly naval platform-centric concept focused on the aircraft carrier -

remnants of the Mahanian notion of naval warfare that continues to dominate the naval service at the operational and tactical level of war.

Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG)

Amphibious ships and associated assault forces constitute an Expeditionary Strike Group, providing the fleet's principal landing force. In addition to three amphibious ships (1 Amphibious Assault Ship-General Purpose [LHA], 1 Landing Ship Dock [LSD], 1 Landing Transport Dock {Ship} [LPD]) each Expeditionary Strike Group gains two AEGIS ships (Guided Missile Cruiser [CG] or Guided Missile Destroyer [DDG]), one frigate (Guided Missile Fast Frigate [FFG]) and one submarine (SSN).⁴⁰ The *Ticonderoga*-class (CG-47) guided-missile cruisers and *Arleigh Burke*-class (DDG-51) guided-missile destroyers provide the Expeditionary Strike Group's organic air defense, undersea warfare, and strike capability. These capabilities - not residing with the traditional Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) - enable an Expeditionary Strike Group to prosecute Sea Strike and Sea Shield missions in a low to medium threat environment.

The additional combatant ships provide the Expeditionary Strike Group with improved composite warfare commander capabilities in strike warfare, air defense, anti-submarine warfare, and surface warfare. The improved offensive capability enables the Expeditionary Strike Group to operate independently in international waters to conduct precision strike missions or small-scale amphibious operations with an ability to conduct small-scale forcible entry operations.⁴¹ It can also combine with a Carrier Strike Group,

⁴⁰ Kim Deal, and others, *Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) Proof of Concept Deployment Assessment Plan*. Center for Naval Analysis, CRM D0008267.A2, May 2003, 3. Cited hereafter as Deal.

⁴¹ Deep Blue. Powerpoint Presentation. *Expeditionary Strike Force Concept. Far...From the Sea. The Power of Teamwork*. 3. The

Maritime Prepositioned Group, Surface Action Group, or Expeditionary Strike Force to conduct large-scale amphibious assault or participate in full-scale war.⁴² The Navy claims that it can implement the Expeditionary Strike Group concept with current platforms and technologies.⁴³ It asserts that adding surface and submarine combatants to the typical Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit will allow this force to conduct missions in a higher threat environment.⁴⁴

Unfortunately, the Expeditionary Strike Group lacks an operational balance. Its focus on “strike group mentality” preserves the traditional Mahanian notion of the battle fleet. The Expeditionary Strike Group presents a purely naval concept, neglecting to develop the interdependent operational element that links it to emerging joint strategic and operational concepts. Like the Carrier Strike Group, this employment alternative demonstrates remnants of the Mahanian notion of naval warfare that continues to dominate Naval conceptual thinking at the operational and tactical levels of war. On the bright side, however, current ongoing experiments with command relationships within the Expeditionary Strike Group construct may provide some utility in the development of a command structure for the Joint Force Maritime Component and Expeditionary Strike Force.

Current ESG Experiments

The Department of the Navy developed three Expeditionary Strike Group concepts to evaluate employment options: an East Coast Expeditionary Strike Group,

ESG does not significantly increase the scale of amphibious operations that the MEU can conduct. The premise is that the MEU can conduct operations in a non-permissive environment with less risk under the ESG construct.

⁴² Mullen, 2.

⁴³ Deal, 5.

⁴⁴ Deal, 7.

West Coast Expeditionary Strike Group and Forward Deployed Naval Force (FDNF) Expeditionary Strike Group. Each Expeditionary Strike Group contains similar compositions but different organizational structures and command relationships.

The East Coast Expeditionary Strike Group will organize around the existing Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit Staff. It will add members to the amphibious squadron (PHIBRON) staff to support the additional warfare functions. Figure 3 depicts the command structure for the East Coast Expeditionary Strike Group. This command structure uses the traditional supported/supporting relationship between the Amphibious Squadron and the Marine Expeditionary Unit.⁴⁵

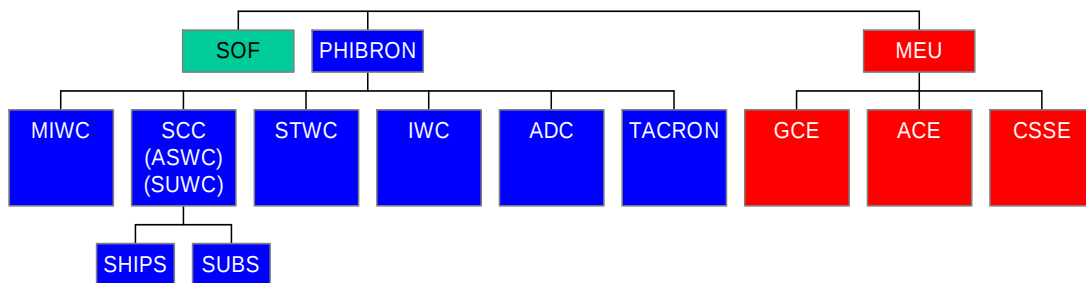


Figure 3. East Coast ESG Command Structure⁴⁶

Under this relationship, the Amphibious Squadron and Marine Expeditionary Unit commanders maintain a co-equal relationship for planning while during execution one becomes the supported commander and the other assumes the supporting role. The Amphibious Squadron commander conducts command and control using composite warfare commander doctrine, incorporating four primary commanders - Sea Combat

⁴⁵ Deal, 9-10.

Commander (SCC), Strike Warfare Commander (STWC), Information Warfare Commander (IWC), Air Defense Commander (ADC) - and two functional commanders - Mine Warfare Commander (MIWC) and TACRON. The SCC assumes the Anti-Submarine Warfare Commander (ASWC) and the Surface Warfare Commander (SUWC) functions as well as control of the additional combatant ships and submarine. The regional combatant commander attaches Special Operations Forces (SOF) after the Expeditionary Strike Group arrives in the theater of operations. The Marine Expeditionary Unit deploys under the traditional organization for a Marine Air Ground Task Force of that size, including a Command Element (CE), a Battalion Landing Team (BLT), a Composite Helicopter Squadron, and a MEU Service Support Element.

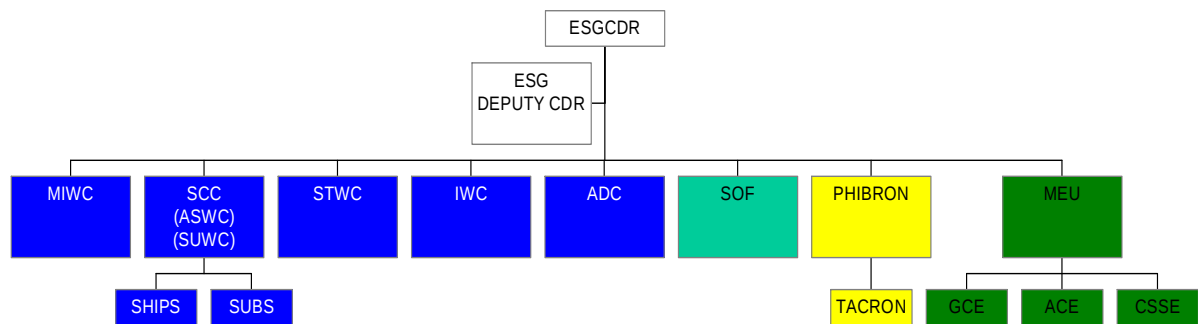


Figure 4. West Coast ESG Command Structure⁴⁷

The West Coast Expeditionary Strike Group will organize with a separate flag level staff. Notionally, a Marine general officer or Navy admiral will command this Expeditionary Strike Group. A Navy admiral headed the first deployment; a Marine general the second. This structure adds about 15 billets in addition to the commander. Figure 4 depicts the command structure for the West Coast Expeditionary Strike Group. Under this model, warfare commanders report directly to the Expeditionary Strike Group

⁴⁶ Deal, 10.

commander.⁴⁸ The supported/supporting relationship between the Amphibious Squadron and Marine Expeditionary Unit commanders remains the same as the East Coast Expeditionary Strike Group. However, both report to the Expeditionary Strike Group commander.

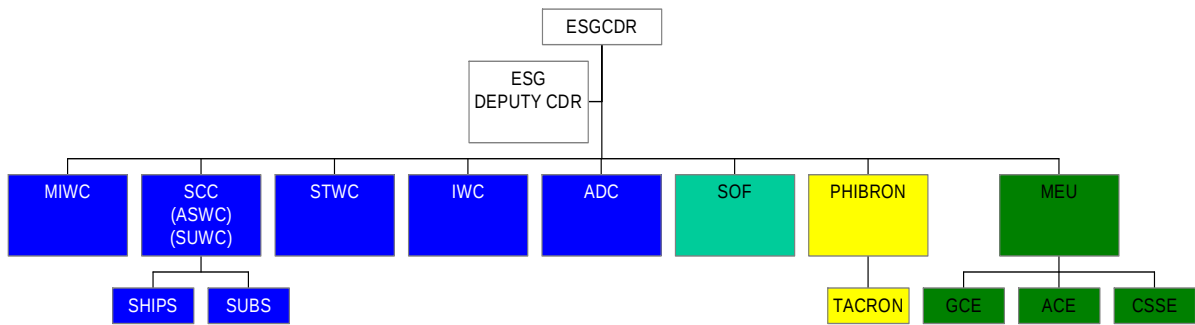


Figure 5. FDNF Command Structure

In 2003, SEVENTH Fleet organized a standing Expeditionary Strike Group within the Forward Deployed Naval Force structure. The command structure replicates the West Coast Expeditionary Strike Group's organization.⁴⁹ A flag or general officer will command this Expeditionary Strike Group as a separate command within SEVENTH Fleet. SEVENTH Fleet uses Exercise TANDEM THRUST to experiment with the composition and structure of this Expeditionary Strike Group. Figure 5 depicts the current command structure. Forward Deployed Naval Force structure uses SEVENTH Fleet's Amphibious Group Commander as the Expeditionary Strike Group's Commander. The Amphibious Group Staff forms the core of the Expeditionary Strike Group Staff. A Marine colonel from III Marine Expeditionary Force serves as the Deputy Commander.

⁴⁷ Deal, 11.

⁴⁸ See Appendix A for a description of composite warfare commanders.

⁴⁹ Major Scott A. Uecker, unclassified e-mail, *ESG Breakdown*, April 14, 2004.

The center of gravity for the Expeditionary Strike Group experiments revolves around which “interested party,” the Navy - amphibious navy or surface navy - or the Marine Corps, will control the conceptual development for any future Expeditionary Strike Groups. Furthermore, the command relationships developed during these experiments will form a critical piece in similar relationships that the Navy adopts when combining the various elements of an Expeditionary Strike Force. A closer look at each element will demonstrate that they do not naturally assimilate into the strike group food chain.

Surface Action Groups (SAG)

The Surface Action Group constitutes the fleet’s primary sea-based missile defense. Independently or as part of an Expeditionary Strike Force, the Surface Action Group forms Sea Shield’s core. The *Global Concept of Operations* reorganizes the fleet into nine independent Surface Action Groups ideally composed of three AEGIS surface combatants. A notional Surface Action Group includes two ships with missile defense weapons while a third provides defensive protection for the entire group. The Surface Action Group or a converted *Ohio*-class submarine can also respond independently to a crisis - ready to employ precision attack capability with Tomahawk missiles or special operations forces.

The Surface Action Group represents a flexible component of the Expeditionary Strike Force, but also lacks operational balance. As purely naval in concept, it neglects to develop the operational interdependence that transforms it into an employment alternative for emerging joint strategic and operational concepts. Ultimately, the Surface Action

Group represents a strictly naval approach, focused on vestiges of Mahanian notions that continue to dominate the Naval service.

Combat Logistics Force (CLF)

The Combat Logistics Force will implement *Sea Power 21*'s Sea Basing concept - supporting the widely disbursed nature of future naval expeditionary operations. This force will place an emphasis on sea basing joint capabilities to project joint operational independence. The Navy plans to commission more capable cargo and ammunition ships and fast combat support ships as well as improved replenishment systems over the next decade to support this concept.

Maritime Prepositioned Force (MPF)

As originally envisioned in the 1970's, the Maritime Prepositioned Force enables the rapid deployment and assembly of a Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) using a combination of strategic airlift and forward-deployed Maritime Prepositioning Ships. To do so, the Maritime Prepositioned Force requires a secure port and/or air facility to allow the arrival and offload of ships and aircraft and the subsequent link-up between military personnel and their material. Currently, the Maritime Prepositioned Force comprises three squadrons of ships strategically located at Guam, Diego Garcia, and the Mediterranean Sea. They conduct limited in-stream offloading and accommodate some combat loading. This limits Maritime Prepositioned Force use to secure areas where forces assemble ashore. Future capabilities require a more robust capability.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Headquarters Marine Corps, *MPF 2010 and Beyond*, December 30, 1997, v-3-v-4. Cited hereafter as MPF 2010.

Maritime Prepositioned Force 2010 and Beyond outlines required future enhancements to Maritime Prepositioned Force. A critical requirement enables at-sea arrival and assembly of maritime forces. Maritime Prepositioned Force integration into the Amphibious Task Force (ATF) provides selective off-load capabilities to integrate with the amphibious assault echelon as it executes *Operational Maneuver From The Sea*. As the sea-based conduit for logistics support, *Maritime Prepositioned Force 2010* envisions indefinite sustainment to forces ashore from the sea base. Finally, *Maritime Prepositioned Force 2010* calls for in-theater reconstitution and redeployment without extensive material maintenance or replenishment at a terrestrial strategic sustainment base.⁵¹

Summary

The Expeditionary Strike Force consists of any combination of one or more naval elements. The Navy envisions formation of these elements into various naval task forces called Carrier Strike Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups, Surface Action Groups, Combat Logistics Forces, and Maritime Prepositioned Forces, and foresees encountering an increasing strategic demand for forward deployed naval forces with some of these strike groups as outlined in the *Naval Global CONOPS*. The Expeditionary Strike Force concept breaks down right here. The Department of the Navy limits the Expeditionary Strike Force concept's operational flexibility by creating strike groups before the larger operational structure. While battle groups may remain necessary, their particular capabilities should rest with the regional strategic goals and the particular mission's requirements - not platform saving schemes. The United States needs a powerful Navy.

⁵¹ MPF 2010, v-4 - v-7.

However, a massed Navy does not equal a powerful Navy. The United States Navy needs to transform its traditional view towards employment alternatives from one of independence to interdependence. The 16th century British philosopher and political leader Sir Francis Bacon provides some insight into the importance of a powerful Navy,

This much is certain, he that commands the sea is at great liberty and may take as much or as little of the war as he will, whereas those that be strongest by land are many times nevertheless in great straits.

Julian Corbett might say something like a collection of disparate elements does not a powerful Navy make. The United States Navy needs to transform from its traditional fleet and platform focus to one that recognizes the interdependent reality of joint operations in a complex littoral environment. An examination of two historical examples, the Luzon Campaign (1944-1945) and the Falklands War (1982), will provide some perspective for employment of interdependent versus independent mission-based capabilities for naval forces in littoral combat. They also impart some validity to Corbett's warning to develop good strategy before venturing into practical applications, and demonstrate how naval forces can limit war.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

Luzon Campaign (1944-1945)

The United States World War II campaign on the Philippine island of Luzon provides an historical example of the successful employment of a large maritime force in a littoral campaign. This campaign provides a potential blueprint for a successful operational structure to use in current operational employment alternatives like the Expeditionary Strike Force. General Douglas MacArthur's large and capable force was joint and interdependent - including naval forces, land-based ground forces and land-based air forces. The Luzon Campaign's success relied upon MacArthur's ability to forge the command into an interdependent one maximizing the strengths of each of its elements. The naval arm - SEVENTH and THIRD Fleets - included two fleet carriers and the amphibious task force ships with attached escort carriers. THIRD Fleet Commander, Admiral William "Bull" Halsey, designated Task Force 38 (Commanded by Vice Admiral John S. McCain), with fleet aircraft carriers USS *Yorktown* and USS *Wasp* among other combatant ships, to support the Luzon Campaign. Ground forces included the Sixth and the Eighth Armies. Far East Air Forces and Fifth Air Force provided land-based air forces.⁵²

MacArthur identified and addressed the Luzon Campaign's operational objectives during planning that began while he continued to direct the battle on the Philippine island of Leyte.⁵³ The Luzon Campaign obligated General MacArthur to project power over long distances through a littoral area occupied by enemy naval, air, and ground forces.

⁵² Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, The Liberation of the Philippines, Luzon, Mindanao, the Visayas 1944-1945*, (New Jersey: Castle Books, 2001), 3-16. Cited hereafter as Morison.

General MacArthur's plan included multiple amphibious and airborne assaults. The plan's increased tempo made maintaining a strong, integrated, and interdependent force essential for operational success. His operations highlighted United States advantages in weapons and equipment, firepower and maneuverability, supply and logistics, and local sea and air control. For his plan to succeed, MacArthur needed a sea-based logistics train, a capability-based and functionally organized fleet, land-based ground and air forces, and robust command and control to generate the operational tempo to succeed on Luzon. His plan also required the flexibility to rotate or replace friendly forces during operations and to withhold units from current operations for future use. A combination of operational surprise and tempo precluded the Japanese from protecting their forces and allowed MacArthur to attack them.

The Luzon Campaign's operational requirements contain many similarities with those outlined in the emerging operational concepts discussed earlier in this paper. Today, maritime forces need similar capabilities. They must contain a functional and interdependent organization to implement concepts like *Operational Maneuver From The Sea (OMFTS)*, *Ship To Objective Maneuver (STOM)*, Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing. MacArthur's operational structure may provide some insight into an operational format for the Expeditionary Strike Force.

With the exception of THIRD Fleet forces, MacArthur maintained operational command over all tactical units throughout the campaign. This allowed him to pull tactical units from his principal commanders to employ them in sequential tactical operations – providing increased operational flexibility and tempo. Figure 7 demonstrates MacArthur's operational command structure. The solid lines between

commanders indicate direct control over the assigned forces; the dotted line represents indirect control over the assigned forces. Admiral Chester Nimitz ordered Admiral Halsey to provide tactical and strategic support to General MacArthur, but Halsey's forces remained under Nimitz' direct control. MacArthur sub-task organized this basic command structure for each operation conducted during the Luzon Campaign. He placed a flag officer in tactical control of assigned forces for each operation. This structure worked well for General MacArthur, giving him operational flexibility throughout the campaign.⁵⁵

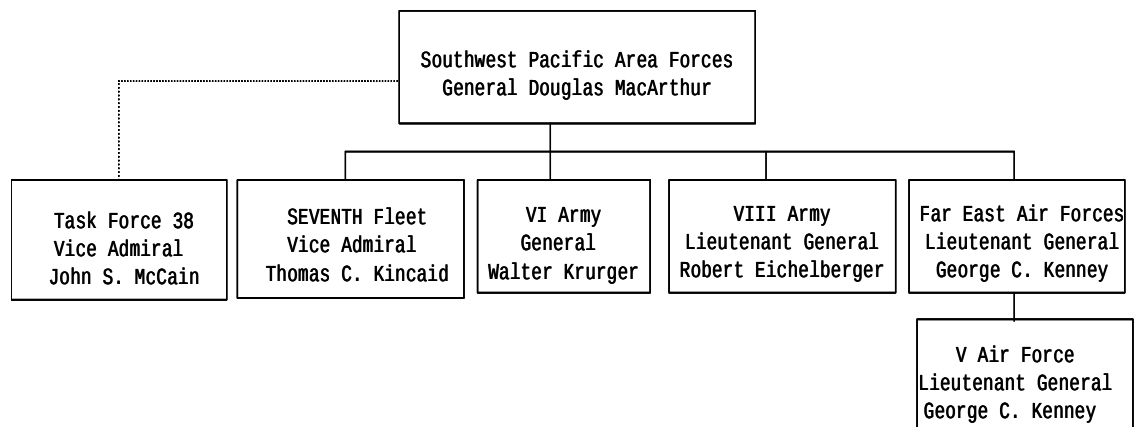


Figure 7. Luzon Campaign Operational Command Structure⁵⁶

Summary

During the Luzon Campaign, MacArthur translated theater strategy into operational results through tactical actions. This represents the goal of all activity at the operational level of war. The Luzon Campaign provided broad operational concepts designed to penetrate Japan's inner defensive ring. The campaign also enabled sea control, denying Japan access to the sea-lanes through the South China Sea leading to

⁵⁵ *Luzon Campaign* <www.army.mil/cmh-pg/brochures/Luzon/72-28.htm> accessed on December 10, 2003.

⁵⁶ Morison, 303-326.

Southeast Asia's critical raw materials. Finally, the campaign provided the United States with a strategic and moral victory. For the first time, the United States drove Japan from a strategic area that Japan had captured early in the war.

The operational force structure that General MacArthur used during the Luzon Campaign enabled him to synchronize air, land, and sea efforts toward defined strategic objectives. He employed these forces in a complex and extended maritime campaign – requiring expanded command and control, logistics, and communications systems. This approach to warfare closely resembles the way that emerging operational concepts intend to exploit current enemy vulnerabilities. MacArthur's success and his general organizational structure for Luzon provide a good reference point for functionally organizing the Expeditionary Strike Force to conduct maritime operations today. Luzon also demonstrates the importance of creating a robust operational structure like the Expeditionary Strike Force instead of building tactical units like Carrier Strike Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups, Surface Action Groups, Combat Logistics Forces, Maritime Prepositioned Forces and hoping they work well together when combined for operations.

Falklands War (1982)

The ancient Greek author Thucydides analyzed the fundamental motives that governed the relations between states as fear, honor, and self-interest. His analysis proved timeless when, on April 2, 1982, Argentina invaded the British Falkland Islands. That same day, after the United Nations Resolution 502 was ratified demanding Argentine withdrawal, the British cabinet approved sending a joint task force to the South Atlantic. Since a force did not exist, Britain threw one together and, on April 5, 1982, the

joint task force began sailing to the South Atlantic.⁵⁷ Notably, Great Britain did not publish the task force's common objective to retake the Falklands until May 12, 1982 - six weeks after the task force set sail.⁵⁸

Code-named Operation CORPORATE, the Falklands War presented the joint task force with three challenges. The first was to drive the Argentine fleet from the high seas. The second was to protect the force from 200 front line aircraft of the Argentine Air Force. The third was to put sufficient land forces ashore and support them long enough to defeat any Argentine Army garrison.⁵⁹

Initially, the task force centered on Royal Navy aircraft carriers loaded with helicopters and Sea Harrier aircraft and supported by escort ships. Once it arrived in the South Atlantic, amphibious and land forces joined the naval task force. The task force experienced significant command structure problems early in the operation. An uncertain political situation in Britain created pressure for the military to send an *ad hoc* force to sea on short notice. Britain overcame these difficulties before the actual fighting began in the South Atlantic. However, the impromptu command structure led to some confusion over who commanded the forces in the South Atlantic early in the war. Figure 8 represents the final operational command structure.

⁵⁷ Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins, *The Battle for the Falklands*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983), 343. Cited hereafter as Hastings.

⁵⁸ Admiral Sandy Woodward, *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1992), xxii. Cited hereafter as Woodward.

⁵⁹ Woodward, 72.

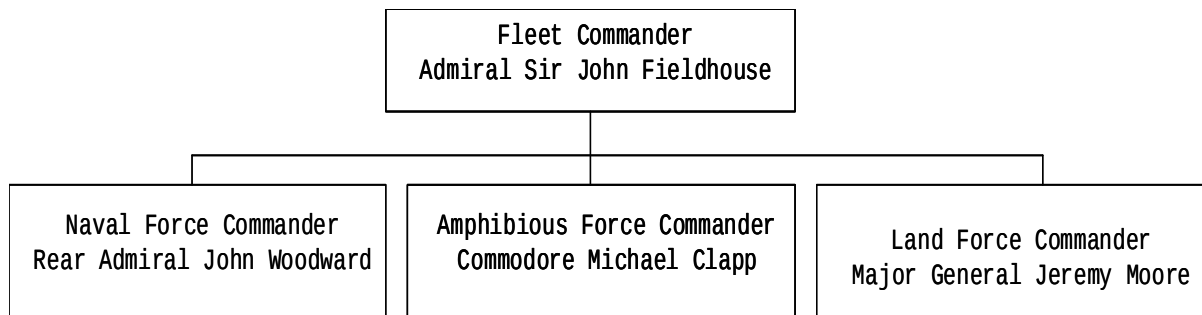


Figure 8. Falklands War Operational Command Structure⁶⁰

In its rush to get underway, the task force improperly combat loaded its transport and support ships hoping to re-stow the gear at Ascension Island. Hope, however, turned out to be a poor substitute for planning and the cargo arrived in the South Atlantic without being combat loaded. The naval task force's *ad hoc* nature also limited the composite warfare commander's operational linkage - different operational systems in the various ships in the task force could not actively communicate. Ironically, severe radar system limitations in the Sea Harrier, lack of airborne early warning platforms, and a need for long-range interceptor aircraft placed greater emphasis on the operational linkage between the combatant ships tasked with defending the task force against multiple threats.⁶¹

During the Falklands War, the Royal Navy Task Force faced simultaneous surface, submarine, and air threats from the Argentine Navy and Air Force. A Royal Navy submarine eliminated the surface threat early when, after it sunk the *General Belgrano* on May 2, 1982, the Argentine surface fleet returned to Puerto Belgrano for the

⁶⁰ Woodward, x-xxvii.

⁶¹ Woodward, xv-xxvii.

remainder of the war.⁶² However, the Argentine submarine and air threats continued to operate throughout the war, complicating amphibious operations and subsequent operations ashore. The Royal Navy Task Force dedicated two squadrons of Sea King helicopters - 20 helicopters - for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations. They continuously and unsuccessfully searched for Argentine submarines for two months.⁶³

In spite of the British Royal Navy's overall success in intimidating the Argentine fleet, it never really established sea control. The Argentine Air Force threatened to stop the operations to retake the islands. This threat stemmed as much from extraordinarily courageous Argentine pilots flying obsolete aircraft as it did from significant anti-air warfare (AAW) deficiencies within the fleet. A combination of capability shortfalls resulted in insufficient air defense for the fleet. The task force lacked an airborne early-warning capability - severely limiting advance notice of air attacks. Additionally, Royal Navy fixed-wing fighters lacked multiple missile capabilities and in-flight re-fuel capabilities - limiting combat air patrol effectiveness and engagement criteria. These factors combined to allow enemy fighters to penetrate the task force's outer defenses and attack the surface ships. Worse still, these ships lacked effective close-in ship defense systems to defend themselves. This unfortunate combination enabled the Argentine Air Force to severely damage or sink 17 Royal Navy ships between May 4, 1982 and June 14, 1982.⁶⁴ Few people realize how close the ultimate outcome of the campaign was to being a British defeat.

⁶² Hastings, 344.

⁶³ John D. Goetke, et al, *Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) Proof-of-Concept Assessment: Emerging Themes and Issues*, Center for Naval Analysis, October 2003, 11.

⁶⁴ Hastings, 344-346, 352-355.

Summary

Like the Luzon Campaign, the Falklands War presents timeless lessons that apply to emerging operational concepts and the principal components of the Expeditionary Strike Force. The first lesson tells us that it takes modern weapons to fight modern wars.⁶⁵ Weapons, however, are only one of many tools available to the joint force commander. At the top of the commander's list of responsibilities is the crucial one of organizing the force to fight. This subordinate structure should reflect the force's primary mission and anticipated operational environment. Entering a moderate to high threat operational environment may require non-organic intelligence and surveillance assets as well as additional capabilities such as aerial refueling and electronic warfare. Also as with most "old fashioned" amphibious operations the Royal Navy surrendered its tactical advantage of maneuver while it conducted the amphibious landings at San Carlos. This made its ships more vulnerable to attack and placed unrealistic demands upon active defenses. A lack of adequate active defense systems almost enabled Argentine land-based aircraft to halt the British landings on East Falkland. Amphibious transports conducting amphibious operations within sight of land will generally lose their maneuverability, and any element of force protection, unless rigorous advance force operations are conducted to eliminate enemy threats to these ships. The British did not have the luxury (nor the means) of attacking Argentine land-based air assets. This, added to the relatively antiquated weapons systems were compensated for by an effective command structure and highly trained naval task force with a robust joint flavor.

⁶⁵Wayne P. Hughes Jr., *Fleet Tactics. Theory and Practice*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1986), 6-8.

The two historical examples above provide a salient argument and a structural template to create interdependent and balanced maritime forces to address the operational level of war in the world's littoral regions. Their employment alternatives must begin at the operational level, including naval forces, amphibious forces, land-based ground forces, and land-based air forces. The maritime nature of future United States military operations mandates a solid linkage, however, between the Naval force and the Joint force commander. This fact brings the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander's role in regional strategy closer into focus. In today's Naval Services, this is largely uncharted territory.

CHAPTER 5

JFMCC AND THE ESF

A combatant commander establishes functional component commands to centralize selected functions and reduce his overall span of control within the joint force. To accomplish this he generally places forces with similar capabilities under a single commander. Joint Publication 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, explains this relationship to service component commanders,

The role of the component commanders in a joint force merits special attention. Component commanders are first expected to orchestrate the activity of their own forces, branches, and warfare communities [and] understand how their own pieces fit into the overall design and best support the joint force commander's plans and goals.

The services, however, retain service specific administrative and logistic support as well as meet the needs of the joint force commander while maintaining the tactical and operational integrity of their service organizations.

Thus, the challenge for the combatant commander becomes one of generating functional efficiency while preserving the unique capabilities and core competencies that the individual services provide from their tactical and operational integrity. Functional components normally include the Joint Force Land Component Commander (JFLCC), the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC), the Joint Force Special Operations Component (JFSOC), and the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC). Since the functional components of a combatant commander's joint force do not typically constitute a separate joint force, the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander should develop the Expeditionary Strike Force as a balanced maritime capability-based, functionally organized, interdependent operational force, prepared to meet the challenges

presented in the regional littoral environment. The Expeditionary Strike Force should function as a joint task force for littoral (maritime) operations.

Joint Publication 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, separates the littoral area into two parts. The first part includes the seaward area from the open ocean to the shore that the joint force commander must control to support military operations ashore. The second part includes the landward area inland from the shore that the joint force commander can support and defend directly from the sea. Dimensional superiority often rests with control of the littoral area because maritime operations can seize ports, naval bases, or air bases, to allow entry for other joint force elements. These functions make naval forces essential to combatant commanders addressing regional military requirements because littoral operations provide the joint force commander an excellent opportunity to gain advantage over threats through emerging operational concepts like *OMFTS*. Ultimately, regional combatant commanders continue to view naval expeditionary forces as vital to regional stability because of their ability to prevent a crisis from escalating to full-scale war. The Joint Force Maritime Component Commander with a capability-based, functionally organized, operationally balanced and interdependent Expeditionary Strike Force will find itself better prepared to meet the challenges presented in the regional littoral environment. Using the Expeditionary Strike Force in this way, the Joint Force Maritime Component can act independently in an operation or serve as an enabling force for another component's follow-on forces. The challenge of organizing joint forces in a littoral environment to facilitate effective command and control now becomes a critical problem to solve.

Coordinated and integrated command and control helps commanders make effective and efficient decisions. According to current joint doctrine, command and control functions include planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and their associated activities. These functions become especially critical in the interdependent (joint/coalition/interagency) operational environment envisioned in emerging operational concepts. Joint command structures and processes should support integrating interagency, multinational, and service core competencies to create an effective and efficient military organization. This integration presents a critical challenge as military operations adopt an increasingly complex mixture of forces, accompanying technologies, and systems.

Emerging operational concepts maintain command and control as the primary integrating and coordinating function for operational capabilities and service components. They also identify the need to continually evaluate command structures and processes,

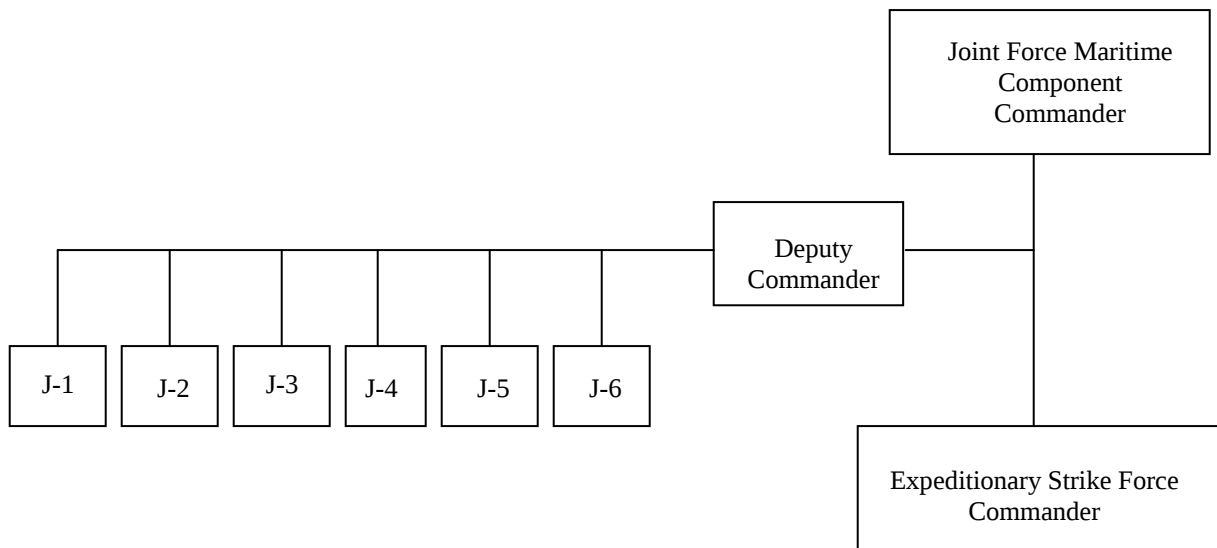


Figure 9. Proposed JFMCC Organizational Structure

command and control information systems and supporting technologies. Figure 9 presents a proposed organizational command structure for the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander. This structure includes the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander, a Deputy Commander, a joint staff, and the Expeditionary Strike Force. Since Naval forces will normally form the core of this maritime structure, the Naval Component Commander (NAVFOR) or the Marine Component Commander (MARFOR) should serve as the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander. The Deputy Commander should come from one of the other services on a rotational basis - remembering that the Navy and Marine Corps represent the same service component. The staff and the Expeditionary Strike Force represent a mix of all services.

This structure represents an interdependent maritime component because it cannot succeed without an interactive relationship between each service. The structure will, in fact, fail without considerable interaction between the various services. This structure's interdependence provides a basis to form the Expeditionary Strike Force as a balanced operational Joint Task Force. The Joint Force Maritime Component's primary focus is on future operations and planning. This focus will enable the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander in each region to develop the combatant commander's regionally focused maritime strategy that supports the National strategic goals in their respective regions. Once plans become current operations the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander hands them to the Expeditionary Strike Force Commander for further development and, if directed by the combatant commander, execution.

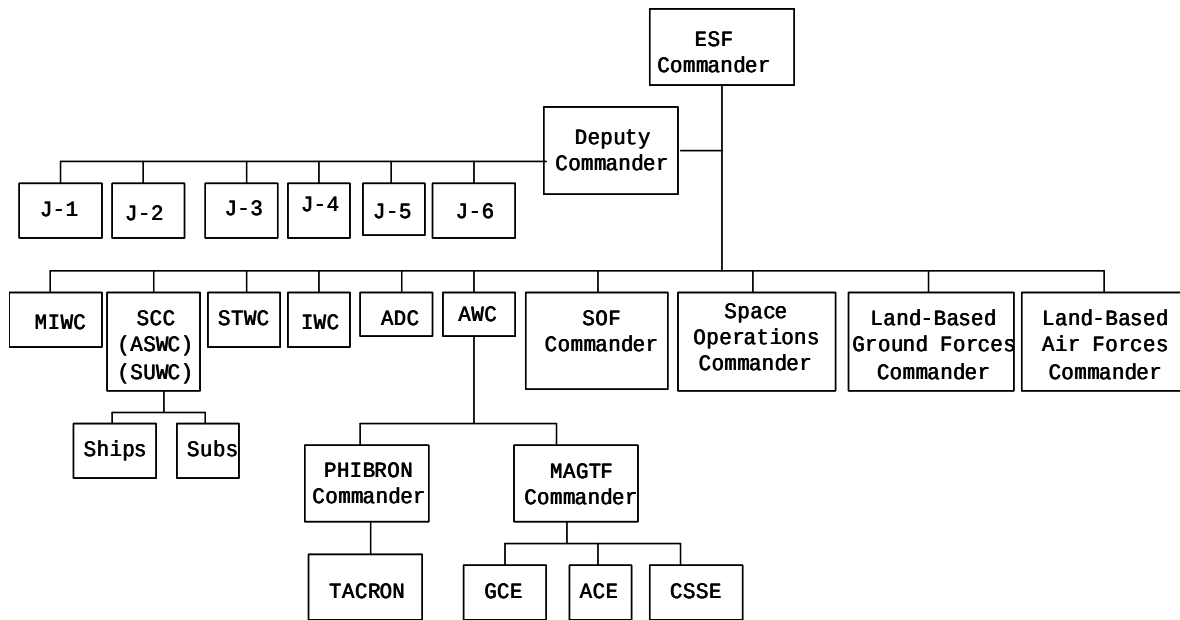


Figure 10. Proposed ESF Organizational Structure

Figure 10 presents a proposed organizational command structure for an Expeditionary Strike Force. This structure includes the Expeditionary Strike Force Commander, a Deputy Commander, joint staff, functionally organized composite warfare commanders with assigned forces, and functionally organized force commanders. Since Naval forces will also normally form the core of this maritime joint task force, a senior Navy or Marine flag officer should serve as the Expeditionary Strike Force Commander. One of the other services should provide a senior officer to serve as Deputy Commander on a rotational basis.

The joint staff and multi-service force commanders ensure the Expeditionary Strike Force's operational interdependence. The land-based ground force commander represents selected light ground forces. A larger, heavy ground force would logically fall under the Joint Force Land Component Commander. The land-based air force

commander represents air assets not normally included with Naval aviation. This is also true for the space-based force commander. As we move toward the future it is likely that more assets will become space-based. In a littoral area, the Expeditionary Strike Force should serve as the enabling force if the operation requires heavy ground forces. Once the Expeditionary Strike Force completes enabling operations the Joint Force Land Component Commander can assume control of the operation. This structure can also expand to include interagency and coalition forces to accomplish assigned missions.

Introducing the composite warfare commander structure organizes the Expeditionary Strike Force around Naval functions. These functions provide links to critical capabilities in a littoral environment. This organization enables the Expeditionary Strike Force to create additional joint task forces that can operate throughout the littoral areas and support a regionally focused maritime strategy. The creation of the Amphibious Warfare Commander (AWC) and establishing it as an additional composite warfare commander enables the Amphibious Squadron Commander and Marine Air Ground Task Force Commander to maintain a supported/supporting relationship during amphibious operations; maintaining the integrity of that effective and efficient process. Ultimately, the proposed Expeditionary Strike Force structure links to emerging operational concepts. It provides the fundamental qualities of decisiveness, sustainability, responsiveness, and agility identified in *Naval Power 21*. It also enables the interdependent and joint force envisioned in *Joint Vision 2020*, *Sea Power 21*, and *Marine Corps Strategy 21* able to execute at the operational level of war across the full spectrum of military conflict in the world's littoral areas.

An interdependent and functionally organized Joint Force Maritime Component Commander and Expeditionary Strike Force provide a robust joint force to serve as the operational link between regional strategies and practical maritime employment alternatives. The proposed structures outlined offer the combatant commander a maritime component with the capability to plan and execute at the operational level of war. These solutions present the interdependent and capability-based employment options outlined in the emerging operational concepts examined earlier in this research paper. Change is difficult, but also very important. As we look at some conclusions, Giulio Douhet's comment on this topic provides a salient perspective,

Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after they occur.

CONCLUSIONS

A Maritime Strategy

Today the United States is engaged in a protracted war against terrorism. Sir Julian Corbett reminds us that in war we must get our theory and the corresponding strategy correct before we look for practical conclusions for operational or tactical employment. He proposes a maritime strategy as an appropriate approach to warfare. Since most conflicts represent limited warfare, a maritime strategy makes this type of warfare feasible in many of the world's regions. Although there were times when purely Naval action on a grand scale would equate to total victory, these times have appeared rarely throughout history. Thus, a Mahanian naval strategy will not normally succeed in a maritime or littoral environment.

Corbett's maritime strategy provides a more relevant and timely alternative to the traditional and purely naval strategic perspective of Mahan. The essence of this maritime strategy encompasses Corbett's belief that command of the sea by itself would never fully carry the day. For Corbett, command of the sea only became decisive when it facilitated land operations. Ultimately, a nation could only gain truly efficient strategic success through the mutually supporting and combined efforts of sea power, land power, and diplomacy. Since Corbett wrote before the advent of the airplane and the employment of space-based assets, we must add air power and space-based operations to this as well. Thus, we identify five interdependent elements to an effective maritime strategy: sea power, land power, air power, space power, and diplomacy.

A maritime strategy is more relevant today because it forms an effective military methodology in the world's littoral regions. This region of the world historically presents

military planners with a paradox. These areas form a relatively small portion of the world's surface. However, they contain over 75 percent of the world's population, 80 percent of the world's capital cities, and virtually all of the world's commerce.⁶⁶ Thus they compose the part of the world where future conflicts have a higher propensity to occur. This paradox creates a requirement to regionally maintain operational level naval expeditionary forces with the ability to project maritime joint task forces to protect the United States' strategic interests. Combatant commanders should organize these regional forces to support the 1/4/2/1 National Military Strategy.

Conceptual Relationships

The concepts discussed in this paper fall into two categories: those that outline the strategic goals and those that outline capabilities necessary to attain those goals. Taken together, these categories should serve to forge national and service strategic goals into operational capabilities. The Expeditionary Strike Force should deliver the means to accomplish the Nation's strategic goals.

Navy and Marine Corps strategic concepts of decisiveness, sustainability, responsiveness, and agility clearly align with national strategic objectives of decisive force, power projection, overseas presence, and strategic agility. They also align with the joint concepts of dominant maneuver, precision engagement, focused logistics, and full dimensional protection - resulting in full spectrum dominance. Whatever the authors intended these words to mean, they convey a break with a Mahanian notion of battle fleets decisively sailing into harms way to engage the enemy fleet.

⁶⁶ Gibson, 69.

Table 1 illustrates the link between joint, Navy, and Marine Corps concepts. Joint and service documents call for greater joint command and control capability. Joint, Navy, and Marine Corps concepts envision the future battlefield as a joint operating area. A common thread throughout each document is the requirement for future capability-based forces to integrate intelligence, communications, operations, and fire support systems. The prevailing assumption is that such command and control improvements will leverage emerging technologies to provide a common picture that enables a commander to dominate the battlespace with smaller, more lethal forces.

JOINT	NAVAL AND MARINE CORPS
Precision Engagement, Dominant Maneuver	Sea Strike
Precision Engagement, Full Dimensional Protection	Sea Shield
Dominant Maneuver, Focused Logistics	Sea Basing
Full Dimensional Protection, Precision Engagement	ForceNet
Precision Engagement, Dominant Maneuver	Operational Maneuver from the Sea
Dominant Maneuver, Precision Engagement, Focused Logistics	Ship-to-Objective Maneuver
Dominant Maneuver, Focused Logistics	MPF 2010

Table 1. Operating Concept Relationships

Another common theme in these documents identifies greater joint, allied, interagency, and coalition interaction. This is easier said than done and will require increased training in service schools and greater cooperation between services to develop leaders who will foster a level of trust that leads to interdependence between these diverse groups.

Service documents address the challenge of reducing the frequency and duration of deployments while providing adequate forces for an increasing number of military

operations. This challenge underscores the validity of such ideas as that espoused in the Fleet Response Plan. The Fleet Response Plan shifts the emphasis from rapidly employed forward-deployed military forces to a system of tiered readiness that can quickly deploy tailored forces from the United States. With a drastic reduction in foreign bases, the capability to surge becomes critically important because United States military forces must remain regionally responsive. Likewise, the increasing emphasis on surging naval forces in response to a regional combatant commander's request places greater importance upon a robust Joint Force Maritime Component Commander with a regionally focused maritime strategy.

ESF as an Operational Force

The Expeditionary Strike Force concept should reflect the national strategic shift from a threat-based approach to a capability-based approach. It should align Navy and Marine Corps capabilities with Department of Defense strategic objectives of decisive force, power projection, overseas presence, and agility. It should consider the joint operational concepts outlined in *Joint Vision 2020* and the naval operational concepts in *Sea Power 21* and *Marine Corps Strategy 21*. Instead, Naval strategists seem content to create more strike groups in an effort to address the new National Military Strategy's 1/4/2/1 requirements. This effort falls far short of its goal and exposes a desire to keep the aircraft carrier and other "big deck" ships at the center of naval operations.

Perhaps we should think of the Expeditionary Strike Force as a "force provider," and use it to serve as the regional combatant commander's pool for forming maritime, capability-based, joint task forces, as recommended by the Joint Force Maritime

Component Commander. It must contain a balanced and interdependent force composed of naval forces, amphibious forces, selected land-based ground forces, and selected land-based air forces with the ability to conduct business at the operational level of war. This structure gives the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander the ability to task-organize the force to suit the assigned mission. If a regional crisis requires a less capable force, then the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander can form smaller naval task forces from the Expeditionary Strike Force. The assigned mission determines the capability required to accomplish it. Reverting to Corbett, the task force commander is the naval or ground force commander, depending upon whether the source of greatest threat was land-based or sea-based. The capability required then determines the number and type of ships, and the composition of land-based ground forces and land-based air forces assigned to the naval task force. This type of arrangement becomes more critical within the Navy's surge concept proffered in the Fleet Response Plan. It allows the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander to create command relationships that form a maritime focus at the operational level of war. This focus provides the critical link between the strategic objectives and the tactical applications - not just an *ad hoc* Navy or Marine Corps focus on tactical problems in a maritime environment.

The Department of the Navy must develop the Expeditionary Strike Force as a joint capability-based force resident within each of the five regional combatant commander's areas of responsibility. The Expeditionary Strike Force must fall under the operational control of the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander - providing the capability to plan and execute maritime operations at the operational level of war. The Expeditionary Strike Force should contain the capability to employ individually surged

naval forces and a surged Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) into a multiple threat environment. The Expeditionary Strike Force must serve as the basis for capability-based joint maritime operations that can participate in any sustained effort ashore.

The Navy's plan to surge instead of forward-deploying forces makes employment alternatives much more critical. An operationally relevant Expeditionary Strike Force with a functionally organized and interdependent command element under the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander would compensate for the low situational awareness of these surged forces. The Expeditionary Strike Force concept does not identify itself as a joint force in practice. Carrier Strike Groups, Expeditionary Strike Groups, Surface Action Groups, Maritime Prepositioned Forces, and Combat Logistics Forces are uniquely naval organizations without air force or army forces. This presents a significant operational weakness to the current concept.

The examination of the Luzon Campaign and the Falklands War demonstrated the value of an operationally balanced force. The presence of naval force, land-based ground force, and land-based air forces, provided significant operational flexibility and operational tempo to MacArthur's forces on Luzon. The Luzon and Falklands amphibious landings demonstrate the strength of a land-sea interface.

Technological advances present a growing potential for land and sea-based forces to act against each other. Success in the littoral areas mandates that one must be able to fight both. On a smaller scale, MacArthur's Luzon structure would benefit the Expeditionary Strike Force much more than forming multiple, independent, single service strike groups. In addition, an effective and efficient operational chain of command greatly increased the fortune of Great Britain's Naval task force during the Falklands War. Great Britain's

ability to project a small land force covered by a powerful naval force enabled them to defeat a much larger Argentinean force in a relatively short period. The British military based the operation entirely upon principles outlined by Corbett.

Ultimately, the Department of the Navy's operational development of the Expeditionary Strike Force concept lacks an operational balance. Its focus on the smaller, purely Naval, strike group concepts preserves the traditional Mahanian notion of the battle fleet and neglects to develop the operational element that links it to emerging joint strategic and operational concepts. The strike groups are strictly Naval concepts focused around the aircraft carrier battle group and amphibious ready group - remnants of the Mahanian notion of Naval warfare that continues to dominate the Department of the Navy.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Dominant Maneuver: Means that joint forces possess the speed and agility to position and reposition task-organized forces from widely dispersed locations quickly and decisively to achieving operational objectives. Transforming maneuver into dominant maneuver requires information superiority.

Precision Engagement: Means that joint forces can locate, conduct surveillance, identify, and track objectives or targets. Transforming strike into precision engagement requires developing linked sensory, delivery, and effects systems through a common operational picture that crosses Service, multinational, and interagency boundaries.

Focused Logistics: Means providing the joint force with the right personnel, equipment, and supplies in the right place, at the right time, and in the right quantity. Transforming logistics into focused logistics requires a real-time, web-based information system that links operational and logistics forces.

Full Dimensional Protection: Means that the joint force can protect its personnel and assets - enabling mission accomplishment with an acceptable level of risk. Transforming force protection into full dimensional protection requires transcending individual Service boundaries to integrate operational and informational procedures, doctrines, and systems.

Sea Strike: Projects United States offensive power from the sea. Capitalizing on the joint concepts *precision engagement* and *dominant maneuver*, Sea Strike will integrate Air Force, Army, and Special Operations Force equivalent strike capabilities into naval operations. For success, Sea Strike requires acute situational awareness and rapid, secure, shared knowledge. This capability requires integrating and networking operational forces with joint and national intelligence and operations systems. It applies persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), time-sensitive strike, *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM)*, and information operations (IO) to deliver accurate and devastating combat power.

Sea Shield: Provides defensive power projection. It enables a global defense capability for Sea Basing. Sea Shield projects defense overland - gaining time and space to detect and track threats to United States security. For success, Sea Shield requires enhanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems providing detection and warning. This links Sea Shield to *Network Centric Warfare* - combining platforms, sensors, and weapons to provide the foundation for battlespace dominance. It is based on our sustained forward presence, and on our abilities to dominate the seas and to provide distributed and networked intelligence to enhance homeland defense, assure access to the contested littorals, and project defensive power deep inland.

Sea Basing: Projects United States sovereignty and maintains joint operational independence. It is the core of *Sea Power 21*. Water covers seventy percent of the

earth's surface. Sea Basing uses this area as maneuver space - capitalizing on naval independence in international waters. Sea Basing facilitates Sea Strike and Sea Shield - providing its operational and logistical foundation. It allows naval forces to conduct combat operations anywhere, anytime without violating other nation's sovereignty or needing to request another sovereign nation's permission to use their land or airspace. Sea Basing permits year-round forward deployment. While deployed, naval forces can engage friends, shape security, enhance deterrence, and position themselves for immediate employment - reducing build-up ashore. Sea Basing also uses multiple platforms with networked systems. Linked to dominant maneuver and focused logistics, Sea Basing provides Joint Force Commanders command and control, fire support, and logistics from the sea reducing the need to place these vulnerable assets ashore.

ForceNet: Seeks to bind together and enable Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing through network-based warfare. It wants to integrate cyberspace with our soldiers, sailors, aviators, and Marines - linking sensors, command and control systems, platforms, and weapons systems into a common network. A critical element to enable *Sea Power 21*, ForceNet looks to combine different intelligence, targeting, and operational databases to produce a common operational picture of the battlespace to widely disbursed joint operating forces. ForceNet will enable improved strike capabilities - fusing national, joint, multinational, and naval information. It will allow sea-based forces to communicate and operate as an integrated joint naval force.

Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS): Published January 1996, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS)* represents the Marine Corps' concept for integrating maneuver warfare and naval warfare at the operational level of war. *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* focuses on using sea as maneuver space to project power and combat forces directly to an objective. Uses sea-based logistics, sea-based fire support. As network of platforms providing full spectrum of power projection and maneuver. Six basic principles:

1. Focus on operational objective
2. Use sea as Maneuver space
3. Generate overwhelming tempo and momentum
4. Match strength against weakness
5. Emphasis on intelligence, deception, and flexibility
6. Integrates organic, joint, and combined assets.

Operational improvements: integrate naval force in joint environment; improved ability to move ship to objective; ability to operate in full spectrum of military operations. Requires significant capability improvements in mobility, intelligence, fires, aviation, mine countermeasures, command and control, and combat service support. Doctrine replaced especially in fire support, logistics, command and control, and *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver*. Predecessor of *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver*. Expeditionary Strike Force-Sea Power 21 link - sea strike sea basing. *Joint Vision 2020*- dominant maneuver.

Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM): Published July 1997 and focused at the tactical level of war, *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM)* directly links maneuver at sea to maneuver on land - enabling naval forces to apply maneuver warfare principles to

support *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*. *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver* involves conducting combined arms maneuver through and across the littoral battlespace directly to inland objectives. Linked to joint concepts of dominant maneuver and precision strike and naval concepts of Sea Strike and Sea Shield, *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver* uses sea control to gain access and to provide freedom of action in littoral areas - offering the joint force commander forcible entry capability. As a key implementing concept of *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver* desires to leverage technology to develop greater amphibious operational capability - skipping beach seizure, moving cohesive combat forces ashore against a decisive objective, and sustaining them from the sea to ensure mission accomplishment. *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver* also provides the joint force commander the opportunity to gain tactical as well as operational surprise. Operations begin from over the horizon, projecting power deeper inland than in the past, progressing with speed and flexible maneuver, denying enemy early warning and reaction time. The underlying theme requires the enemy to defend a large area against sea-based force - thinning the overall defense. Then attacking enemy critical vulnerabilities while striking enemy reserve forces with long-range fires. The improved tactical mobility provides the combatant commander and the joint force commander a greater range of warfighting options. Five basic principles support *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver*: control tempo to overwhelm adversary; conduct combined arms maneuver from over the horizon; enlarge operational area to dilute enemy capability; fight outside vital area to control it; maneuver to cause an exploitable reaction. *Ship-to-Objective Maneuver* places increased emphasis on improved and networked intelligence, sea-based command and control, sea-based fire support, and sea based logistics.

Maritime Prepositioned Force 2010 And Beyond: Headquarters Marine Corps published *MPF 2010 and Beyond* on 30 December 1997. Maritime prepositioned forces (MPF) combine sealift's bulk transportation and endurance with airlift's rapid deployment of Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTF) to objective areas. Current MPF operations require secure ports and airfields to off-load MPF ships and military airlift as well as secure areas to link material and personnel. Naval forces need a more robust capability than what current MPF Squadrons can provide to conduct *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*. *MPF 2010 and Beyond* describes the logistics capability to perform *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* missions. The concept for future MPF operations contains four pillars: *force closure; amphibious task force integration; indefinite sustainment; reconstitution and redeployment*. Force closure and sustainment eliminate the requirement for secure ports and airfields - enabling at-sea arrival and assembly. Forces will deploy through various surface means - linking-up with MPF shipping already underway and enroute to objective areas. This enhanced capability enables the MPF MAGTF to arrive in the objective area prepared to conduct operations. These forces avoid the intermediate build-up ashore as envisioned in *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*. Amphibious task force integration means multi-purpose MPF shipping. Future MPF capabilities will enable *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* through various means. A selective off-load ability can reinforce the amphibious assault with critical combat power. Facilities to enable employing additional tactical air or surface assault support can increase the amphibious task forces (ATF) operational maneuver space. Tactical command and control compatibility between the MPF and the

ATF will ensure tactically integrated delivery of naval striking power. Indefinite sustainment means the MPF provides the platform for sea-based logistics. This logistical support flows from United States or overseas sources to the MPF sea-base and then on to tactical forces ashore or at sea. *MPF 2010 and Beyond* could combine with a larger logistical effort including aviation logistics support ships, hospital ships, and offshore petroleum distribution systems. It could also integrate a joint sea-based logistics effort or facilitate transitioning to a shore-based logistics system. *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will reconstitute itself without leaving its assigned theater for extensive material maintenance or replenishment. This ability allows the MPF MAGTF immediately to re-deploy for subsequent missions. *MPF 2010 and Beyond's* four pillars provide three capabilities: *fast deployment, reinforcement, and sustained sea-basing.*

LHD: Large deck multipurpose amphibious assault ship

LHA: Large deck general purpose amphibious assault ship

LSD: Landing ship dock.

LPH: Helicopter amphibious assault ship.

Composite Warfare Commander Doctrine:

Officer in Tactical Control (OTC)

Composite Warfare Commander (CWC)

Principal Warfare Commander (PWC)

1-Air Defense Commander (ADC)

2-Information Warfare Commander (IWC)

3-Strike Warfare Commander (STWC)

Sea Combat Commander (SCC)[ASWC,SUWC may combine as (SCC)]

4-Anti-Submarine Warfare Commander (ASWC)

5-Surface Warfare Commander (SUWC)

Functional Warfare Commander (FWC)

Mine Warfare Commander (MIWC)

Maritime Intercept Operations Commander (MIOC)

Operational Deception Group Commander

Screen Commander (SC)

Underway Replenishment Group (URG) Commander

Coordinator

Air Resource Element Commander (AREC)

Airspace Control Authority (ACA)

Cryptologic Resources Coordinator (CRC)

Force Over-the-horizon Track Coordinator (FOTC)

Force Track Coordinator (FTC)

Helicopter Element Coordinator (HEC)

Launch Area Recovery Coordinator (LAC)

Submarine Operations Coordinating Authority (SOCA)

TLAM Strike Coordinator (TSC)

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