



# **EXPEDITIONARY FORCE 21**



***FORWARD and READY:  
Now and in the Future***



# **Expeditionary Force 21 Attributes**



## **Expeditionary Force In “Readiness”**

- 1/3 of operating forces deployed forward for deterrence and proximity to crises
- Self-sustaining under austere conditions



## **Middleweight Force**

- Light enough for rapid response
- Heavy enough to prevail in the littorals



## **Modern Force**

- Preserves quantitative edge over opponents
- Exploits innovative concepts and approaches



## **Integrated Combined Arms Force**

- Applies all aspects of joint combat power
- Extends power of naval forces



## **Integrated Naval Force**

- Command and control exploits the sea as maneuver space
- Leverages traditional and innovative operating concepts



## **Force Biased for Action**

- Poised for rapid crisis response – no tiered readiness
- Readily Deployable-Employable-Sustainable forces



## **Leading Edge of Joint Force**

- Regionally oriented MEFs and MEBs
- Small fly-in command element capable of transitioning to a joint warfighting headquarters



## **Forcible Entry In Depth**

- Scalable to crisis, contingency or forcible entry
- Capable of projecting two MEBs from the sea
- Seizes and holds for follow-on joint forces

## FOREWORD

The past decade makes clear that responsiveness and versatility – the institutional trademarks of the Marine Corps – are always in demand. Even as we took the fight to the enemy in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. Marines were the “first responders” to tsunamis in the Indian Ocean and Japan, earthquakes in Pakistan and Haiti, emergency action in South Sudan, and the typhoon in the Philippines. As the Nation’s Expeditionary Force in Readiness, we are and will continue to be heavily engaged around the world.



While meeting current commitments and preserving readiness, the Marine Corps must reconfigure and refit to meet coming challenges. The future evolving and complex security environment will only increase the demands on the Marine Corps. The law requires and our heritage demands that we maintain a force that is naval in character and capable of conducting amphibious operations. The Geographic Combatant Commanders need us to give them the three-fold advantages of forward presence: the recurring dividends of “soft power” applied with a richer military dimension; the deterrent effect of immediate, credible and effective actions to thwart potential adversaries; and the expanded operational reach and tactical flexibility to defeat foes throughout the littorals. The American people will surely continue to expect – and the world will count on – Marines to be the leading edge of humanitarian relief and disaster recovery operations.

Expeditionary Force 21 is our vision for designing and developing the force that will continue to fulfill these responsibilities. But it is more than a vision – it is also an actionable plan and a disciplined process to shape and guide our capability and capacity decisions while respecting our country’s very real need to maintain budgetary discipline. True to our expeditionary ethos, we will work with a clear-eyed view of what will be asked of us and seek only what we believe is necessary. Nimble by organizational design and adaptive by culture, we will rely on open-mindedness and creativity and make the best of what we have. Through Expeditionary Force 21 we will chart a course over the next 10 years to field a Marine Corps that will be: ***the right force in the right place at the right time.***

Semper Fidelis,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "James F. Amos". The signature is written over a large, light-colored circular scribble or watermark.

James F. Amos  
General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

## Expeditionary Force 21: Shaping the Future Marine Corps

**This Marine Corps Capstone Concept** is our vision for the next 10 years and our plan for developing the force to meet the threats and challenges posed by the changing operational environment. Expeditionary Force 21 builds on the conceptual and doctrinal foundation of Operational Maneuver From The Sea, Ship-To-Objective Maneuver, Seabasing and Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-0 Operations. The purpose is to combine the value we provide today with the promise of what we can achieve tomorrow. The goal is a Marine Corps that is:



### Optimized to be expeditionary...

- ✓ Ready to deploy immediately and reinforce quickly
- ✓ Comfortable in the chaos and uncertainty of crisis
- ✓ Able to adapt rapidly to changing conditions
- ✓ Operates effectively in any clime and place
- ✓ Exploits the advantages of being fast, austere and lethal

*... to respond to crises*

Expeditionary Force 21 codifies the essence of our expeditionary ethos: fast, austere, and lethal. It envisions a force that can achieve success in those missions where action delayed is action denied. It recognizes the need for living, operating, sustaining and maintaining people and equipment in spartan conditions where large support bases are unacceptable or infeasible. It promotes the economical employment of forces of almost any size and configuration with capabilities appropriately matched to the mission. It acknowledges the value of respecting and protecting people caught in the middle of a disaster or conflict, stepping lightly in all areas of support to minimize potential adverse cultural and political impact.

To Marines, “being expeditionary” is a long-standing commitment to speed of action. Adaptability on the go has been deliberately cultivated by Marine leaders for generations and will be the linchpin of our efforts to meet the coming challenges. Our expeditionary mindset will influence every aspect of our capability development and capacity decisions.



**Expeditionary Force 21 is not a plan in search of a blank check** to “reinvent” the Marine Corps. It is a vision to meet the increasing demand for the responsiveness and versatility that are our operational trademarks. Expeditionary Force 21 exploits the Marine Corps’ signature ability to move rapidly, operate immediately, adapt to changing conditions and succeed in austere environments. This expeditionary mindset will influence every aspect of our capability development and capacity decisions. Expeditionary Force 21 will not change what Marines do; **but how we do it.**



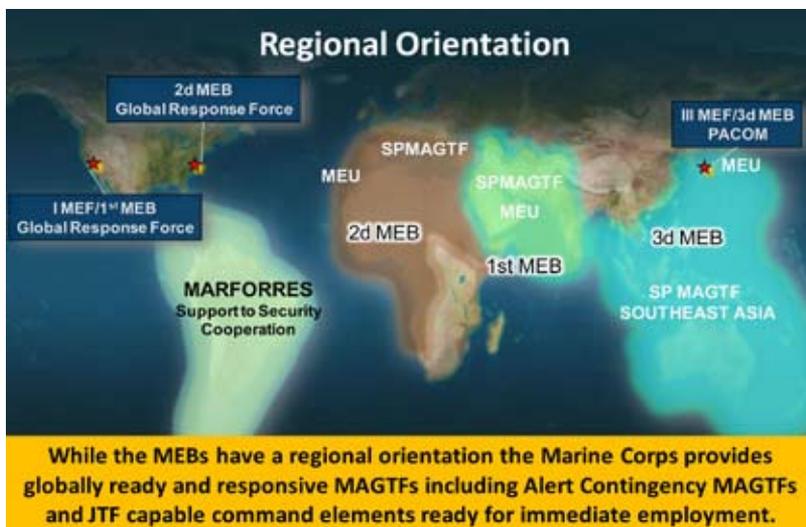
## **Expeditionary Force 21**

**will produce a Marine Corps that ...**

- ✓ Sustains an increased and enduring presence around the globe
- ✓ Establishes MEBs with a specific geographic orientation
- ✓ Employs tailored regionally oriented forces that can rapidly respond to emergencies and escalating crises
- ✓ Rapidly deploy tailored command and control packages – fully joint capable
- ✓ Operates as part of a more integrated naval force to better fight and win complex conflicts throughout the littorals

**Expeditionary Force 21 is an aspirational, yet measured, vision** of naval expeditionary capabilities that we are exploiting today and enhancing for tomorrow. We can bring about needed change by being open-minded to new ideas and carrying them out by simple force of decision and diligence in execution. Other changes pose more complex challenges that can only be overcome through advances in science and technology. In those cases, our capability developers will be exacting in their comparisons of alternatives to identify and pursue the most cost-effective combination of solutions. We are currently working across four lines of effort:

**1. Refining Our Organization.** We organize into Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) for employment. Each MAGTF includes command, aviation, ground and logistics elements. The largest MAGTF is the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEFs). We have two MEFs able to exercise command and control of a joint task force. They remain our focal point for sustained warfighting operations. Expeditionary Force 21 focuses on three Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs) capable across a range of operations from security cooperation to disaster response to forcible entry. The MEBs will also be able to command or integrate with joint task forces. We also deploy Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) into key regions for security cooperation and crisis response. Additionally, we employ special purpose or crisis response MAGTFs to meet specific needs such as persistent partner building or embassy reinforcement.



**2. Adjusting Our Posture.** We will maintain one-third of our operating forces forward and flexibly distribute them over a wider area to deter adversaries and effectively respond to emergencies and crises. We are orienting our forces to specific regions and positioning them to conduct sustained security cooperation activities. We will continue to sustain alert contingency forces that allow us to rapidly scale for action.

**3. Increased Naval Integration.** We are exercising the concept of forward “compositing” – forming up our reinforcing forces at or near the scene of a crisis. We remain dedicated to exploring holistic concepts of operation for launching assaults from a combination of amphibious ships reinforced by seabase platforms. We will strengthen our partnership with the Navy by integrating our operational staffs and institutionalizing our maturing concepts of employment.



**4. Enhancing Littoral Maneuver.** Expeditionary Force 21 envisions an assault mobility portfolio that permits us to execute future amphibious operations at the times and places of our choosing. To complement the operational reach of our vertical connectors (helicopters and tilt-rotors), we are exploring a new generation of surface connectors (boats, self-propelled amphibious vehicles, and landing craft) that enables us to maneuver through the littorals to positions of advantage in contested environments, employ dispersed forces, and exploit entry points of opportunity to project on-shore the full combined arms power of the MAGTF.



As stated in the Joint Operational Access Concept, the U.S., as a global power with global interests, has an enduring requirement to project power and influence. The joint force will meet this requirement and its associated challenges through increased cross-domain synergy. The Marine Corps intends to contribute to this synergy as a forward and responsive naval force. The next 10 years promise to be a new and challenging venture into the uncertain as we Marines reorganize, refit, redefine our operational capabilities, and strengthen our naval roots. Some goals within Expeditionary Force 21 will be easily met; others we must strive hard to achieve. Given the fiscal climate, we need to review capability development to minimize duplication and uncoordinated efforts. It is essential that we fully integrate naval capabilities and scrutinize everything from concept and doctrine to material requirements and solutions.

The objective is to ensure a forward and ready force postured for immediate crisis response and offers the ability to composite with forward forces to provide additional capability as needed to satisfy Geographic Combatant Commander requirements. It is critical that we have the ability to prosecute combat operations throughout the littorals (land-sea-air) as an integrated naval force. By leveraging naval capabilities, developing the techniques for rapidly deploying and integrating forces and staffs, and developing required future capabilities, the Navy/ Marine Corps team will be well positioned to provide the Geographic Combatant Commanders with ready forces in readiness to respond to crises.



## Expeditionary Force 21 in Summary

Expeditionary Force 21 expands on our legacy of crisis response and expeditionary readiness to meet tomorrow's uncertain challenges. Our goals are designed to build the right force in the right place at the right time, today and in the next 10 years. While some capabilities may require new equipment to achieve our goals; we must remain committed to working within fiscal and force structure limits. Each adjustment to capability must have an eye toward improving our ability to **deploy, employ, and sustain** as an expeditionary force. Through Expeditionary Force 21 we will focus on crisis response; increase our emphasis on missions ranging from theater security cooperation through forcible entry; enhance our ability to operate from the sea and take advantage of all platforms and means; and as a result, provide the **right force in the right place at the right time**.

### Tailored to meet the needs of the Geographic Combatant Commander:

- ✓ Persistent forward presence for deterrence and action
- ✓ Regionally focused units that are integral parts of OPLANS and CONPLANS
- ✓ Forward-deployed forces that know the ground, the people, and the problems
- ✓ Provide joint force enablers to include a joint capable headquarters
- ✓ A cohesive Navy-Marine Corps team prepared to seize the initiative



## Integrated Naval Capabilities

### T-AKE

Offers selective access and off-load of unitized supplies for prepositioning MEB and other MAGTFs operating in the seabase or ashore.

### LMSR

Military Sealift Command's (MSC) Large, Medium Speed, Roll-On/Roll-Off ship (LMSR) program significantly expands the nation's sealift capability as a prime mover of military equipment. The ships carry vehicles and equipment to support humanitarian missions, as well as combat missions.

### Mobile Landing Platform

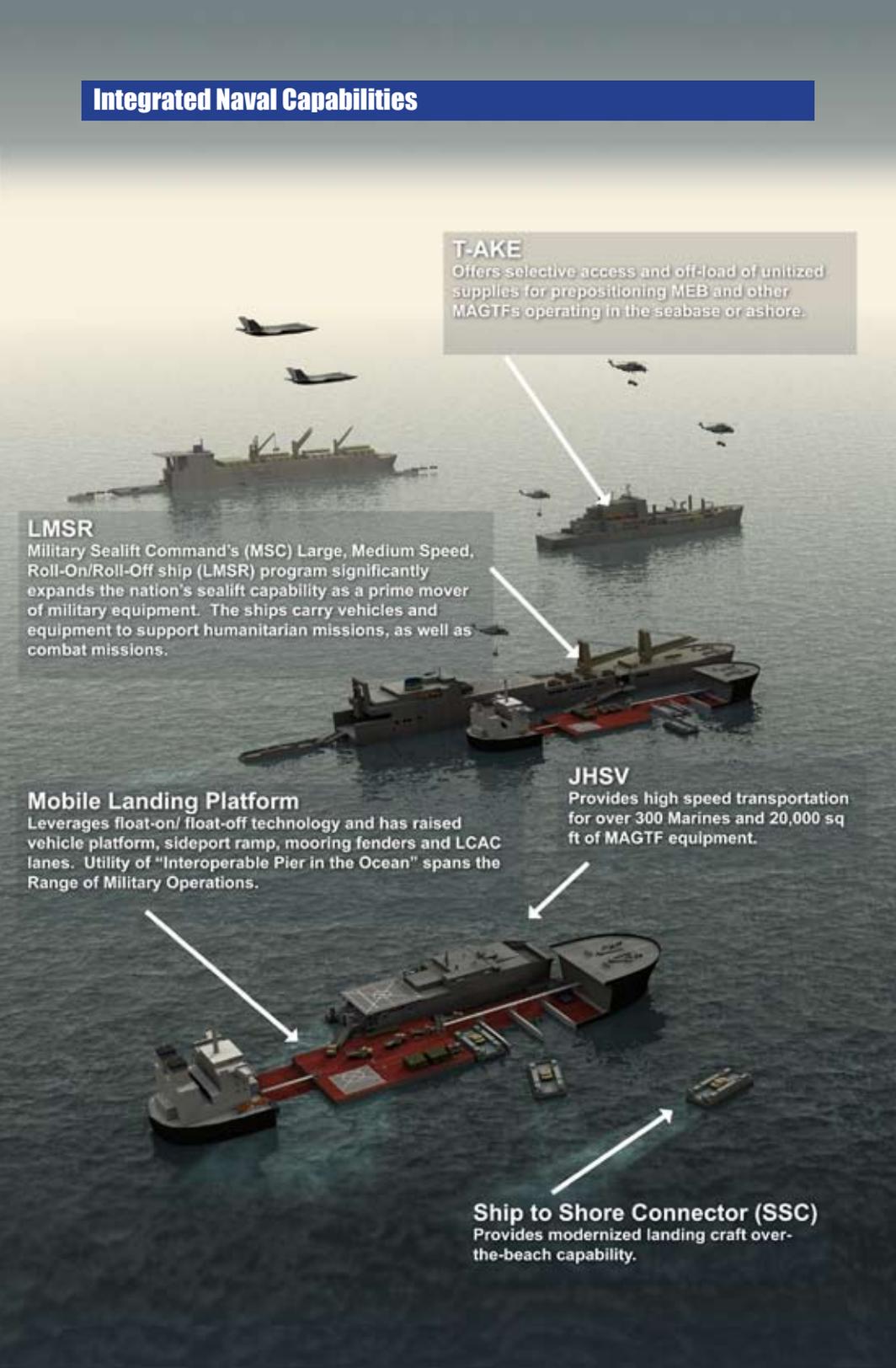
Leverages float-on/ float-off technology and has raised vehicle platform, sideport ramp, mooring fenders and LCAC lanes. Utility of "Interoperable Pier in the Ocean" spans the Range of Military Operations.

### JHSV

Provides high speed transportation for over 300 Marines and 20,000 sq ft of MAGTF equipment.

### Ship to Shore Connector (SSC)

Provides modernized landing craft over-the-beach capability.



### LSD

Provides largest capacity to operate landing craft in support of MAGTF operations.



### LHA-8

Lifts and supports over 1300 Marines and the MAGTF command & control nodes- is main base to fixed (JSF), rotary wing / tilt rotor, and unmanned aircraft systems. Well deck supports simultaneous landing craft operations. Level II medical capability.



### LPD-17

Capable of basing over 700 Marines, their equipment and supplies and projecting capabilities ashore with LCACs, conventional landing craft, amphibious connectors and rotary lift craft.



*The flexibility that comes from compositing forces from forward-based and forward-deploying amphibious and prepositioning platforms is the key to rapid, effective crisis response.*

*“We are, by our nature, ‘expeditionary.’ This means several things. It means a high state of readiness; we can go at a moment’s notice. It means our organization, our equipment, our structure are designed to allow us to deploy very efficiently...It’s a mind-set, too, about being ready to go, about being ready to be deployed, and about flexibility. We can easily and quickly move from fighting to humanitarian operations.”*

**- General Tony Zinni, USMC**  
*Battle Ready, 2004*

