

Role of Forward and Ready Naval Forces

The Marine Corps and Navy provide a credible and capable forward presence that gives national authorities immediate response options while buying time for distant elements of the Joint force to mobilize and deploy. There is a strategic relationship between forward presence and access, and the extent to which we maintain and enhance the former improves our options and ability to ensure the latter. Operating with partners forward builds and develops access to protect and promote our national interests. The naval force's investment in forward presence lessens the challenges we will face if we have to create access in crisis and force access in hostilities. To preserve the credibility and capability of our forward presence, we must:

- Structure exercises to provide actionable feedback on the effectiveness of our integrated command relationships, including under realistic conditions where our use of space, cyberspace and communications is degraded or denied.
- Fully leverage increased capabilities of modern amphibious platforms to deploy as an Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU).
- Explore alternative approaches to power projection given the limited capacity of the naval force to deploy Marines in a standard ARG/MEU formation, which results from the fixed inventory of L-class amphibious warfare ships.
- Integrate MAGTFs operating from amphibious warfare ships, expeditionary land bases and auxiliary ships with other forward-postured Navy and SOF elements.
- Ensure the capabilities of the ARG/MEU and its ability and authority to operate as a cohesive unit of naval force are retained when it is operating in a distributed manner to optimize strategic effects across Combatant Command (CCMD) boundaries.
- Consider a new deployment model that combines the use of expeditionary sites or bases, created or in some ways anticipated as a part of routine shaping operations, with ships at sea to provide persistent presence, prepositioning, and sustainment options.