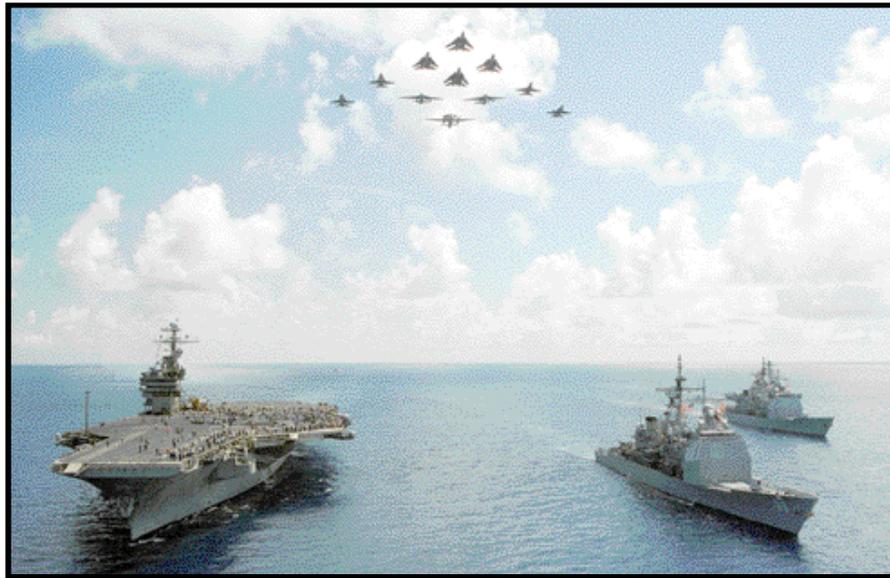


Global Concept of Operations

By Vice Admiral Mike Mullen, U.S. Navy

The Navy's Global Concept of Operations meets the new National Military Strategy's requirements and implements "Sea Power 21" by more effectively distributing the assets we have. Aegis surface action groups, for example, can provide independent, immediate crisis response, preemptive strike, or be a force multiplier when joining expeditionary strike groups.



CARRIER AIR WING 7 WITH THE JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67), HUE CITY (CG-68), VICKSBURG (CG-69), AND THE SULLIVANS (DDG-68)/U.S. NAVY (DOMINICK HAEN)

The 21st century presents our nation with varied and deadly new threats, including regional adversaries armed with growing antiaccess capabilities and international terrorist and criminal organizations. Countering such enemies requires naval forces that are widely dispersed, fully netted, and seamlessly integrated with joint forces. Such distributed sea-based forces must be capable of simultaneously generating combat power in disparate areas of the globe, thereby strengthening international security and, in time of crises, seizing and sustaining the initiative. Such an enhanced capabilities-based force is central to "Sea Power 21," the Navy's vision. It also is key to fulfilling the National Military Strategy's requirement to concurrently defend the homeland, deter adversaries in four critical regions, swiftly defeat enemies in two of the four regions, and win one of the two conflicts decisively. This strategic prescription is referred to as 1/4/2/1.

Currently, our force structure is centered on 12 carrier battle groups and 12 amphibious ready groups. Yet, only the 12 carrier battle groups and 7 Tomahawk missile-equipped surface action groups that rotate through the Arabian Gulf are equipped to generate long-range striking power—giving us 19 independent strike groups. While our current amphibious ready groups are tremendously versatile and operationally valuable, they lack the long-range striking power and area control capabilities needed to operate independently against many of the enemies we will face in the decades ahead. Thus we must add to their capabilities, to produce expeditionary strike groups equipped to meet the demands of future naval operations.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Naval Institute published Admiral Vern Clark's "Sea Power 21" in the October 2002 Proceedings. In this ongoing series, Proceedings published coverage on Sea Shield (November 2002), Sea Strike (December 2002), Sea Basing (January 2003), and ForceNet (February 2003).*

The U.S. Navy’s Global Concept of Operations (ConOps) is centered on creating additional, innovative force packages to enhance deterrence and improve our ability to operate in more areas around the world. This expansion of operational power is critical because deterring adversaries in four theaters requires on-scene forces poised to project offensive and defensive power when required. In addition, swiftly defeating enemies in multiple theaters requires distributed combat-credible forces that are ready to fight and win, without gapping our presence elsewhere.

As currently configured, today’s fleet is hard-pressed to meet these requirements, especially when taking into account required maintenance, crew training, and personnel tempo goals. To increase our operational agility, Global ConOps envisions a fleet comprised of 12 carrier strike groups, 12 expeditionary strike groups, 9 strike/missile defense surface action groups, and 4 converted *Ohio* (SSBN-726)-class nuclear-powered submarines equipped to launch as many as 154 Tomahawk missiles each. This reorganization will produce 37 independent strike groups, providing a continuous combat-intensive presence over a greater percentage of the globe than is currently possible. Key elements of this transformation include:

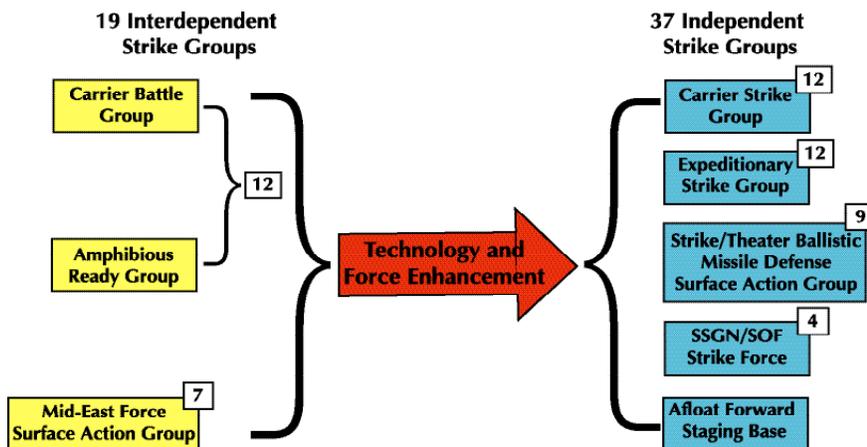
► *Carrier Strike Groups*—Carrier strike groups will remain the core of our Navy’s warfighting strength and the most powerful force packages in the world. Advanced technologies will sustain this operational impact, even as carrier groups become lighter. The present carrier battle group consists of an aircraft carrier, six surface combatants, two nuclear attack submarines, and one replenishment ship. Tomorrow’s carrier strike group will have fewer surface combatants and submarines, an acceptable risk when operating against transnational enemies that pose a limited at-sea threat to our operating forces. Dramatic increases in carrier air wing striking power offset the transfer of surface and submarine striking power to expeditionary striking groups. Thanks to the advent of precision ordnance, today’s carrier-based air wings can hit hundreds of aimpoints per day for extended periods, generating unprecedented combat power.

► *Expeditionary Strike Groups*—Today’s amphibious ready groups are composed of 2,300 Marines with associated armor, artillery, aircraft, and vehicles embarked on amphibious assault ships, amphibious transport docks, and dock landing ships. The expeditionary strike group of tomorrow will include these forces plus an appropriate number of surface combatants and a submarine. The addition of *Ticonderoga* (CG-47)-class guided-missile cruisers and *Arleigh Burke* (DDG-51)-class guided-missile destroyers, for example, will arm expeditionary strike groups with the organic air defense, undersea warfare, and strike capability required for operating independently in low-to-medium threat environments, thereby increasing the fleet’s responsiveness and strategic impact.

“Our security will require transforming the military . . . (to) be ready to strike at a moment’s notice in any dark corner of the world.”

George W. Bush

Figure 1: Maximizing Combat Flexibility for 1/4/2/1



The Power of Ideas

By Vice Admiral Mike Mullen, U.S. Navy

As the officer responsible for resourcing the Navy, I am interested in more than just the monetary capital required to maintain and transform our service. Achieving the goals of “Sea Power 21” and the full potential of the Global Concept of Operations (ConOps) will require prudent use of the Navy’s most precious resource—people. Not only do our sailors man the ships, they also generate the ideas that are indispensable to our Navy’s future. Equipment by itself can only enable transformation. If our people do not have both the vision to see future possibilities that new technologies have enabled and the courage to embrace the resulting change, true transformation will not occur.



U.S. NAVY (CHRIS DESMOND)

History is replete with examples of forces that were inferior in either size or technical quality to their adversaries carrying the day. In almost all cases the key ingredients to the winners’ successes were their people’s quality and training and their superior operating concepts using the technology at hand. Sea Warrior is our path to developing that human capital. Through targeted recruitment, focused training, and thoughtful assignment of our people, we will develop the technical expertise to operate future technologies and the mastery of the operational art to achieve a true transformation.

The Navy’s Global ConOps is the brainchild of one relatively junior staff officer, Commander Steve Richter, who had the vision to see the possibilities and the courage to translate talk into deeds despite his critics. Navy leaders must create a vibrant intellectual environment where new ideas, both technical and operational, are rewarded. We must create an environment where we can find and develop the next Wayne Meyer (the father of Aegis), Arleigh Burke, or Alfred Thayer Mahan. Only then will we reach our full potential.

► *Surface Action Groups*—Sea-based missile defense will be critical to deterring and winning future conflicts. Global ConOps addresses this growing mission by envisioning nine surface action groups. At least two units of each group will be Aegis ships loaded with missile defense weapons. A third ship, also preferably an Aegis combatant, will provide additional striking power and defensive protection to the group. These surface action groups also may serve as independent crisis-response forces that emphasize the precision-attack capability of their Tomahawk missiles.

► *Combat Logistics Force*—The widely dispersed nature of future operations and the growing emphasis on sea basing of joint capabilities will be supported by the newer, more capable combat logistics force ships to be commissioned over the next decade. These cargo and ammunition (T-AKE) and fast combat support (T-AOE) ships will be crewed by Military Sealift Command civilian mariners and will have upgraded material-handling and transfer systems and multipurpose convertible cargo holds for dry stores or ammunition. A heavy underway replenishment system will double both delivery load weight and throughput rates of transfer and an innovative electric-drive propulsion system will provide increased electric power for auxiliary power needs.

These components of the future fleet will disperse and operate independently when facing transnational enemies, and they will combine to form expeditionary strike forces that maximize offensive power and defensive protection when facing powerful regional actors that manifest serious antiaccess capabilities. However deployed, our dispersed, netted, and operationally agile fleet of tomorrow will provide highly responsive power in support of joint force objectives around the world.

Future Investments for the Global ConOps

The Navy’s Global ConOps is vital to answering the challenge of 1/4/2/1. It is central to achieving the vision of “Sea Power 21” by providing the framework for future growth. As we populate the Global ConOps architecture and link it with ForceNet, we must ensure new ships and systems pass three tests: First, they must integrate smoothly and effectively with joint force packages. Second, they must enhance the strategic impact of the Navy and Marine Corps team. Last, they must be highly adaptable, because naval systems last a very long time. For example, 60% of today’s ships still will be on watch around the world 20 years from now.

As new platforms and systems enter the fleet, Global ConOps will provide the foundation for a sea-based force of unparalleled effectiveness. Major new components of our Navy will include:

► *DD(X)*—The Navy’s new destroyer will provide distributed, precision offensive and defensive firepower at long range in support of forces ashore. DD(X) will be a multimission surface combatant tailored for land attack and maritime dominance, providing forward presence and

deterrence while operating as an integral part of joint and combined expeditionary forces. It also will be used as the baseline for spiral development of technology to support a wide range of future surface ships, including CG(X).

► *LCS*—The littoral combat ship will be optimized for war fighting in the littoral environment. It will be a theater-based asset designed to counter enemy access denial weapons such as diesel-electric-powered submarines, mines, and fast patrol boats. LCS will include modular mission payloads that provide operational flexibility to match the threat. LCS units also will be attached to carrier and expeditionary strike groups as required, to give them enhanced protection when operating near shore.

► *LHA(R)*—The next class of amphibious assault ships will have increased survivability and amphibious lift capabilities, while providing forward basing for special operating forces. These ships will be designed to take full advantage of the impressive capabilities of the short take-off/vertical landing variant of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and tilt-rotor V-22 aircraft. This increase in embarked air power, when combined with persistent sensing from unmanned aerial vehicles and long-range striking capabilities provided by missile-equipped surface and subsurface units, will generate the increased combat power that lies at the heart of future expeditionary strike groups.

ployment and employment time lines while increasing strategic agility.

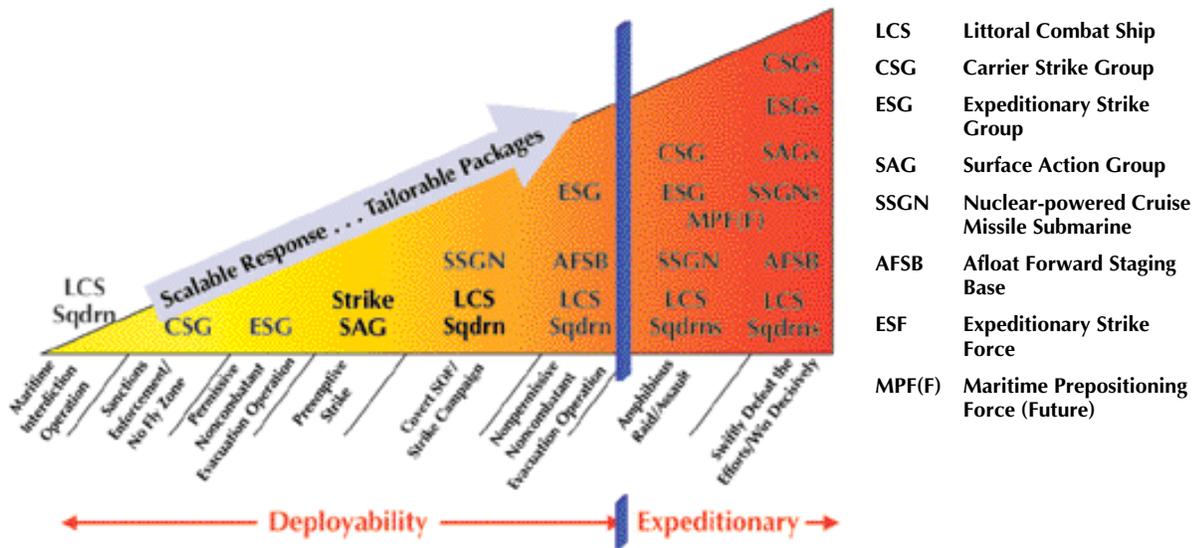
► *AFSB*—Afloat forward staging bases are being considered as part of the sea-basing concept to further exploit the flexibility of support ships for expeditionary purposes. Such platforms could host highly capable afloat command-and-control centers, special operations forces, or civil-military disaster relief teams for example, thereby expanding tactical and operational opportunities. MPF(F) variant ships may be built with modular adaptability to be employed in such capacities.

► *SSGN/SOF*—Four nuclear-powered missile-firing submarines will be converted to carry as many as 154 Tomahawk missiles each, and to embark special operations forces. These ships also will be upgraded to possess enhanced command-and-control connectivity. The unparalleled degree of conventional firepower and covert strike capacity delivered by these ships will add a new and exciting dimension to undersea warfare.

Joint Maritime Force Packages

The wide range of combat capabilities provided by 37 independent strike groups will add enhanced flexibility to the fleet, generating force packages that are swiftly tailored to the task and scaled to meet operational require-

Figure 2: Joint Maritime Force Packages to Respond to a Broad Range of Requirements and Missions



► *MPF(F)*—Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) concepts envision platforms that greatly increase the sea basing of joint forces. MPF(F) will mitigate antiaccess strategies by assembling and projecting power from far offshore, reducing our dependence on vulnerable ports and airfields. At-sea onload and offload compatibilities with inter- and intratheater assets will enable MPF(F), as part of maritime prepositioning groups, to more effectively support forces ashore in joint operations areas, decreasing de-

ments. From deterrence enhancement to winning in combat, the 21st-century capabilities brought forward by way of Global ConOps will provide joint force commanders with maneuver, fire, and sustainment options critical to mission accomplishment—projecting decisive power . . . from the sea.

Vice Admiral Mullen is Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Resources, Requirements, and Assessments. He coauthored “Sea Shield: Projecting Global Defensive Assurance” (*Proceedings*, November 2002).