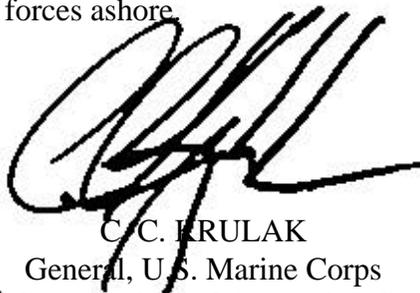


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***MPF 2010 AND BEYOND***

The capstone Marine Corps Concept Paper *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* describes a marriage of maneuver warfare and naval warfare. It began the process of proposal, debate, and experimentation through which the Naval Services will address the challenges and opportunities of future maritime operations. As part of this process, *MPF 2010 And Beyond* is intended to promote discussion and ultimately lead to an entirely new method of supporting littoral power projection. It describes capabilities required to enhance MPF operations so that they will fully support *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* and allow naval forces to project maritime prepositioned combat power and provide long-term sustainment of forces ashore.



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# Maritime Prepositioning Force 2010 and Beyond

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE ENVIRONMENT

The collapse of the post-World War II bipolar international system left the United States the world's only superpower, increasingly drawn into conflicts around the globe. In this environment, humanitarian concerns or calls for U.S. leadership frequently result in employment of military forces, even when no vital economic or political interest is directly threatened. Thus, while the end of the Cold War has resulted in reduced defense budgets and structure, U.S. forces are now more likely than ever before to deploy for combat or military operations other than war.

The U.S. has never been able to rely exclusively on forward basing or overseas access as means of positioning forces to meet potential regional crises, and this is likely to be even more a concern in the post-Cold War world. On the one hand, reductions in defense resources demand concomitant reductions in the infrastructure costs associated with overseas bases. At the same time, an increasingly chaotic international political environment has dramatically increased the number of potential crisis spots in the world where the National Command Authorities might commit military forces. Under these circumstances, naval forces provide a robust capability for long-term forward presence and power projection in littoral regions.

In the future, as today, Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) will provide joint force commanders a highly flexible capability to respond to the widely varied crises characteristic of the "new international order." Applying the principles outlined in the capstone concept *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* (OMFTS), MAGTFs deployed on board amphibious ships will use the sea as maneuver space to conduct forcible entry operations in littoral regions. Maritime prepositioning forces (MPFs) will combine the capacity and endurance of sealift with the

speed of airlift to rapidly deploy MAGTFs to objective areas with the capability for indefinite sea-based sustainment.

## **MARITIME PREPOSITIONING FORCES TODAY**

Today's MPF rapidly deploys and assembles a MAGTF using a combination of strategic airlift and forward-deployed Maritime Prepositioning Ships. The essential requirement for an MPF operation is a secure area that allows for arrival and offload of ships and aircraft, and the joining of personnel and material. Proof of the merit of the MPF concept was provided during Operation Desert Shield when two MPF Marine Expeditionary Brigades were deployed to Saudi Arabia within a matter of days. Later, in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, Maritime Prepositioning Ships provided sustainment for U.S. and combined forces, as well as support for humanitarian assistance operations. The MPF Enhancement program will improve today's capability by adding an Expeditionary Airfield, a Naval Mobile Construction Battalion, a Fleet Hospital and additional equipment and sustainment to each of our three Maritime Prepositioning Squadrons.

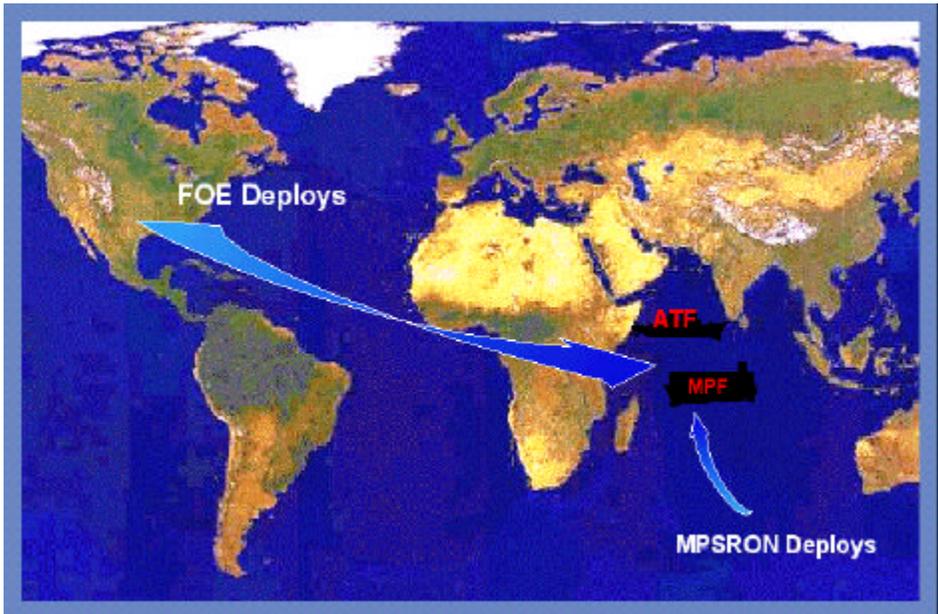
Today's MPF can conduct in-stream offloading and accommodate some combat loading. However, OMFTS will require a more robust capability. Thus, MPF must evolve in order to fully support OMFTS. New technologies must be pursued and existing technologies exploited to permit the next generation of MPF to contribute to operational employment of MAGTFs across the full range of operations, to include the rapid reinforcement of forward-deployed amphibious forces.

## **FUTURE CAPABILITIES: MPF 2010 AND BEYOND**

### **THE PILLARS OF MPF 2010 AND BEYOND**

*Maritime Prepositioning Force 2010 and Beyond* is the concept by which next-generation MPFs will contribute to forward presence and power projection: capabilities which will remain central to U.S. deterrence and conflict resolution strategies well into the future. The enhancements envisioned in *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will expand the functionality of the future MPF across an increased range of contingencies. The concept for *MPF 2010 and Beyond* is best illustrated through an examination of the pillars of future MPF operations: *force closure*, *amphibious task force integration*, *indefinite sustainment*, and *reconstitution and redeployment*.

*MPF 2010 and Beyond* **force closure sustainment** (See *Figure 1*) will provide for the at-sea arrival and assembly of the maritime prepositioning force, eliminating the requirement for access to secure ports and airfields. Marines will deploy via a combination of surface mobility means and strategic, theater, and tactical airlift—including the MV-22—to meet maritime prepositioning platforms while they are underway and enroute



*Figure 1. Force Closure*

to objective areas. Units will be billeted while completing the process of making their equipment combat ready. Platform design will facilitate this preparation process by providing for easy access to all equipment for inspection, maintenance, testing, and selective reconfiguration of tactical loads. This enhanced force closure characteristic will permit elements of the MPF MAGTF to arrive in the objective area already prepared for operations.

Through **amphibious task force (ATF) integration** MPF 2010 and Beyond will participate in operational maneuver from the sea by using selective offload capabilities to reinforce the assault echelon of an amphibious task force. (Figure 2 compares current and future force delivery using MPF.) Maritime prepositioning ships will be multi-purpose in nature and provide facilities for tactical employment of assault support aircraft, surface assault craft, advanced amphibious assault vehicles, and the ships' own organic lighterage in conditions of at least sea state three. Further, the ships' communications systems will be fully compatible with the tactical command and control architecture of the ATF, allowing access to the advanced capabilities and shared situational awareness which will be available in the future. While future maritime prepositioning ships will not have a true forcible entry capability, they will possess the versatility to reinforce the striking power of an ATF.

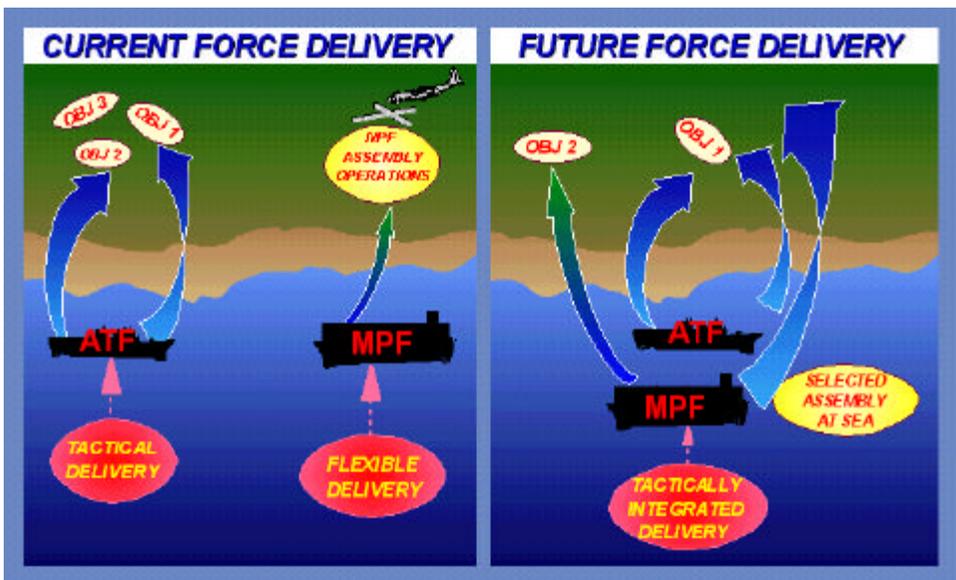


Figure 2. Tactical Integration

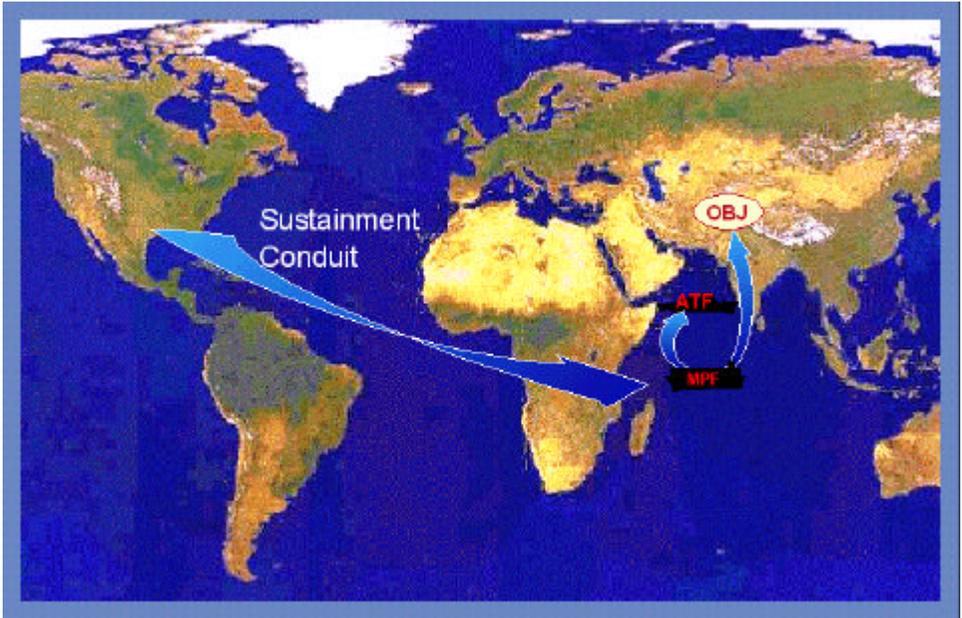


Figure 3. Indefinite Sustainment

*MPF 2010 and Beyond* will provide **indefinite sustainment** (See Figure 3), by serving as a sea-based conduit for logistics support. This support will flow from bases located in the U.S. or overseas, via the sea base provided by *MPF 2010 and Beyond*, then on to Marine units conducting operations ashore or at sea. This might be accomplished as part of a larger sea-based logistics effort which would include not only maritime prepositioning ships, but also aviation logistics support ships, hospital ships, and offshore petroleum distribution systems. *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will also be able to integrate operations with joint in-theater logistics agencies and transition from a sea-based logistics support system to a shore-based system.

Upon mission accomplishment, *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will conduct in-theater **reconstitution and redeployment** (See Figure 4), without a requirement for extensive materiel maintenance or replenishment at a strategic sustainment base. This ability to rapidly reconstitute the MPF MAGTF will allow immediate employment in follow-on missions.

While the previously described pillars enable naval power projection by providing offensive capabilities, *MPF 2010 and Beyond* is more than a force employment concept. *MPF 2010 and Beyond* provides unparal-

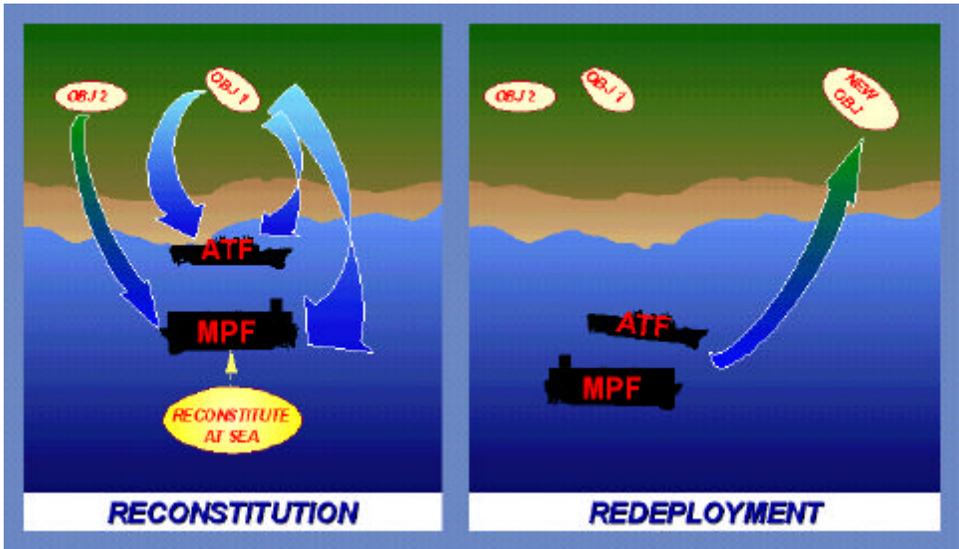


Figure 4. Reconstitution and Redeployment

leled **force protection**. Acknowledging the increasing threats presented by advanced anti-ship missiles and weapons of mass destruction, *MPF 2010 and Beyond* envisions conducting operations from over the horizon. Exploiting the sea as maneuver space, the dispersed, mobile MPF complicates the enemy's targeting process and takes advantage of the extended stand-off range as combatants more effectively acquire and defeat incoming threats. A medium for movement for the MPF, the sea also serves as a barrier to terrorists or special operation forces whose mission would be to strike at facilities established in the landing force rear. Whether major theater war or operations in support of smaller scale contingencies, the ability to reduce the landing force's footprint ashore by basing it at sea reduces exposure to threats from hostile forces, individuals, or the physical environment itself.

Beyond the physical protection afforded to what, in the past, would have been vulnerable rear areas ashore, the absence of those facilities eliminates the need for Marines to defend from attack either them or their lines of communications.

## **A TRIAD OF CAPABILITIES**

The centerpiece of *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will be a triad of new capabilities: *fast deployment*, *reinforcement*, and *sustained sea basing*. To perform the full range of MPF evolutions, all three of these capabilities will be required. In some contingencies, however, a joint task force may need only one or two legs of the MPF triad; *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will have the flexibility to constitute forces specifically tailored for each mission—

- The **fast deployment** capability will deploy the combat essential equipment for a Marine Expeditionary Unit or similarly-sized Special-Purpose MAGTF, along with a limited amount of palletized cargo.
- The **reinforcement** capability will deploy the equipment and 30-days' sustainment for a Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward).
- The **sustained sea basing** capability will furnish a full range of logistics support, as well as the conduit to strategic bases through which *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will provide indefinite sustainment for a Marine Expeditionary Force.

## **MPF 2010 AND BEYOND: OPERATIONS**

*MPF 2010 and Beyond* will integrate the four pillars of the future MPF and triad of future MPF capabilities to enhance sea-based operations throughout the range of littoral power projection and forward presence functions. *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will—

- support **operational maneuver from the sea** through sea-based sustainment, participation in the assault follow-on echelon of amphibious assaults,
- provide a highly flexible sea base for **sustained operations ashore**,

- sustain MAGTFs in a wide range of **military operations other than war**, while providing significantly enhanced protection to the landing force.

Marines conducting operational maneuver from the sea will strike from U.S. Navy amphibious ships. These ships provide operating platforms for landing craft and aircraft, command and control systems, berthing, staff accommodations, weapons suites, and damage control. Such characteristics allow for the transportation, projection ashore, support, recovery, and redeployment of MAGTFs. In operational maneuver from the sea, *MPF 2010 and Beyond* **fast deployment** and **reinforcement** capabilities will integrate with the ATF to augment the landing force, facilitating the rapid introduction of combat power. The **sustained sea basing** capability will provide full-spectrum logistics support for maneuver forces, reducing the “footprint” ashore and freeing the landing force from the burden of defending bases and lines of communications. Following the operation, the MPF will conduct in-theater reconstitution and redeployment to prepare for follow-on missions.

Littoral power projection might require sustained operations ashore, in which naval forces carry out long-term evolutions on the land. *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will support these evolutions through the employment of the **reinforcement** capability to introduce additional forces to the area of operations. Most important, the **sustained sea basing** capability will provide enduring logistics support for forces conducting sustained operations ashore. Just as in operational maneuver from the sea, sea-based logistics support for sustained operations ashore will reduce the need for vulnerable, shore-based infrastructure.

*MPF 2010 and Beyond* has particular relevance in the context of military operations other than war. These operations typically involve limited numbers of Marines or soldiers in austere, but not necessarily hostile, environments. *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will offer the means to conduct such evolutions with a minimal footprint ashore. Initial operations might be performed by amphibious task forces, with MPF **reinforcement** capabilities providing follow-on forces. However, *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will also be capable of independent operations in such situations, using a combination of **fast deployment** and **reinforcement** capabilities. In many forms of military operations other than war, **sustained sea basing**

will provide a critical advantage. Sea-based medical support and billeting may be especially important in environments where contagious diseases are a threat to friendly forces or when the host nation does not desire a large U.S. presence. Additionally, the prepositioned stocks of supplies and equipment carried on board the ships could be made useful in a wide range of military operations other than war. Rations, medical supplies, tents, earth-moving equipment, communications equipment, vehicles, and water purification devices will be useful in many humanitarian assistance or disaster relief scenarios.

## **SUMMARY**

Marine Corps warfighting concepts reflect the strategic direction contained in the White Papers... *From the Sea* and *Forward... From the Sea*. While the current MPF has proven itself time and again since its inception, the capstone *Operational Maneuver From the Sea* concept requires new capabilities. OMFTS demands seamless integration of maritime prepositioning and amphibious task forces; *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will achieve it. Improvements in ship design, and exploitation of emerging material handling technologies will permit the MPF to reinforce the ATF as part of the AFOE, or conduct limited independent operations. Parallel enhancements in sea-based storage and maintenance will facilitate reconstitution.

*MPF 2010 and Beyond* is a major step forward. It will establish a true U.S. sea-basing capability, all the while enhancing force protection for forward deployed soldiers, sailors and Marines. Free from dependence on shore-based facilities and overflight considerations, *MPF 2010 and Beyond* will offer unmatched operational flexibility to our civilian and military leaders as they execute the National Security Strategy in the 21st century.

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