

# **Reshaping America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness**

## **Report of the 2010 Marine Corps Force Structure Review Group**

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**Foreword**

In the fall of 2010 the Marine Corps conducted a Force Structure Review (FSR) to evaluate and refine the organization, posture and capabilities required of America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness in a post-OEF security environment. The FSR was conducted by senior field grade officers and civilian Marines under the direct cognizance of an executive steering group comprised of the Deputy Commandants, the Commanders of Marine Corps Forces Command and Marine Corps Forces Pacific, and the Commanding Generals of our Marine Expeditionary Forces. The participants of the FSR brought extensive operational experience across the range of military operations, along with a deep breadth of knowledge regarding capabilities, force organization, training and education, equipment, deployment, employment and sustainment to inform the process. Additionally, numerous subject matter experts from within and outside the Marine Corps contributed their knowledge and insights to the FSR. The work was routinely reviewed and guided by me and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

This report is promulgated to promote understanding and to start implementation of FSR recommendations. Additional analysis through established capability development constructs will determine the how and timeline of the execution and implementation of FSR decisions.



JAMES F. AMOS  
General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

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*“The Marine Corps is America’s Expeditionary Force in Readiness—a balanced air-ground-logistics team. We are forward-deployed and forward-engaged: shaping, training, deterring, and responding to all manner of crises and contingencies. We create options and decision space for our Nation’s leaders. Alert and ready, we respond to today’s crisis, with today’s force ... TODAY. Responsive and scalable, we team with other services, allies and interagency partners. We enable and participate in joint and combined operations of any magnitude. A middleweight force, we are light enough to get there quickly, but heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival, and capable of operating independent of local infrastructure. We operate throughout the spectrum of threats—irregular, hybrid, conventional—or the shady areas where they overlap. Marines are ready to respond whenever the Nation calls ... wherever the President may direct.”*

—General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps

Purpose

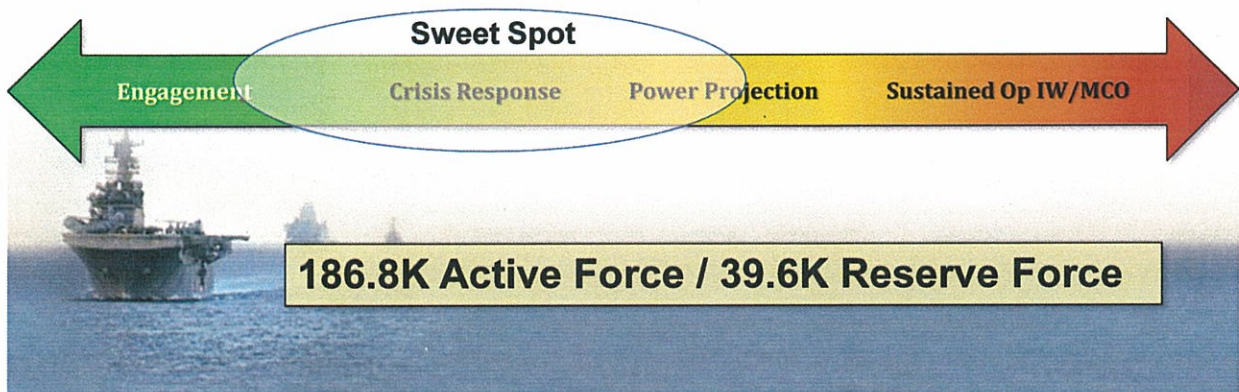
The 2010 Marine Corps Force Structure Review convened to develop the organization, posture and capabilities of America’s Expeditionary Force in Readiness and affirm its role within the joint force in a complex and uncertain post-OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM-Afghanistan security environment that is going to be further challenged by fiscal constraints.

Geostrategic Challenge

The geostrategic environment has changed dramatically in the last two decades, shifting from a competition between superpowers to a world of increasing instability and conflict, characterized by poverty, competition for resources, urbanization, overpopulation and extremism. Failed states or those that cannot adequately govern their territory can become safe havens for terrorist, insurgent and criminal groups that threaten the U.S. and our allies. Characterized by inherently unpredictable hybrid threats that combine irregular and conventional capabilities in a highly lethal manner, this environment demands a flexible, adaptable, and versatile military force that is ready and capable of being forward-deployed and forward-engaged, building partnerships, and immediately responding to crises or contingencies. Responding to a wide range of crises in a timely manner will require regionally-focused headquarters and forces that are both forward-postured and immediately deployable with a minimum of strategic lift. Sea-based forces, in particular, will be invaluable for discreet engagement activities, rapid crisis response, and sustainable power projection.

## The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Marine Corps

Addressing these challenges, the 21<sup>st</sup> century Marine Corps builds on our historic role as the Nation's crisis response force and provides "best value" in terms of capability, cost, and readiness relative to the operational requirements of our Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC). The Marine Corps' force structure must provide a strategically mobile, *middleweight force* optimized for rapid crisis response and forward-presence. It must be light enough to leverage the flexibility and capacity of amphibious shipping, yet heavy enough to accomplish the mission. Larger than special operations forces, but lighter and more expeditionary than conventional Army units, we must be able to engage and respond quickly – often from the sea – with enough force to carry the day upon arrival.



The dual demands of sustained forward presence and sufficient lift for the assault echelons of two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) result in a requirement for 38 amphibious ships. Given fiscal constraints, however, the Navy and Marine Corps have agreed to accept risk with 33 ships, increasing the imperative to design a lean and effective force structure. We will also explore options for employing Marines from a wider variety of Navy ships, seeking innovative naval solutions to GCC requirements.

Furthermore, our force structure must be able to exploit the carrying capacity of maritime prepositioning ships and the speed of strategic airlift. As necessary, we must be able to aggregate Marine Corps capabilities, often provided by our reserve component, as well as integrate with capabilities provided by Joint Force, Coalition or interagency partners for sustained operations ashore. The ability of Marines to rapidly aggregate from widely dispersed locations to form cohesive Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) is the foundation of our organization. MAGTFs enable coordinated action throughout the range of military operations.

### Re-Shaping Marine Corps Capabilities and Capacities

The imperative for the Marine Corps is to preserve capabilities developed since 9/11, expand our engagement efforts, respond to crisis, and still be able to project power for the most dangerous threat scenarios. To that end we will accept a degree of risk by reducing our active component capacity for conducting multiple, major sustained operations ashore, relying on an

“operationalized” reserve component to mitigate that risk. Of necessity, our force structure represents many judiciously considered factors and makes pragmatic trade-offs in capabilities and capacities to achieve a posture that creates opportunity and provides an operational stance that enables flexibility and rapid response. The resulting force structure described in this report:

- reduces the end strength of the active component of the Marine Corps from 202,000 to approximately 186,800 following the completion of Marine Corps operations in Afghanistan;
- provides a force optimized for forward-presence, which facilitates both ongoing engagement activities and rapid crisis response;
- provides readiness for immediate deployment and employment;
- re-shapes organizations, capabilities, and capacities to increase aggregate utility and flexibility across the range of military operations;
- properly balances critical capabilities and enablers;
- creates an operationalized reserve component without any reductions in reserve force structure; and
- creates opportunity for more closely integrated operations with our Navy, Special Operations, and inter-agency partners.

This plan positions the Marine Corps to respond to the most likely missions while preserving the capability to project punishing combat power when required. The cornerstone of the future Marine Corps rests on the quality and flexibility of our Marines, which allow us to support the joint force commanders’ diverse requirements. This is enabled by:

- revising our manpower assignment policies and training tracks to increase the skills and maturity of our junior leaders, particularly within our infantry squads and fire support teams;
- increasing unit readiness within the operating forces by ensuring 99 percent manning of enlisted billets and 95 percent manning of officer billets; and
- resourcing five regionally-focused MEB command elements, with habitually aligned subordinate elements, to improve effectiveness and speed of response.

Other key actions include:

- tailoring Marine divisions, aircraft wings, and logistics groups to ensure sufficient type, quantity of force and resiliency to meet GCC presence, engagement and response requirements;

- maintaining the capacity and capabilities to conduct amphibious operations across the range of military operations;
- increasing the depth, availability and responsiveness of our combat service support capabilities by reorganizing Marine logistics groups to establish standing combat logistics battalions habitually aligned to specific Marine expeditionary units and infantry regiments;
- capitalizing on the ISR, C2 and future strike capabilities of unmanned aircraft systems via a 25% increase in capacity;
- reorganizing our intelligence collection and exploitation capabilities to enhance readiness by directly linking deployed forces, garrison support and the intelligence community;
- increasing capacity for cyber network defense, exploitation and attack operations by augmenting our communication and radio battalions, and by increasing the structure of Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command;
- enhancing capabilities to conduct and manage battlefield biometric, forensic, and law enforcement operations by creating a law enforcement support battalion within each Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF);
- retaining and better integrating the training, advising, and assistance organizations designed to enable and enhance irregular warfare capabilities, partner-nation engagement, and cultural understanding;
- strengthening the capabilities of Marine Special Operations Command through a 44% increase in critical combat support and combat service support Marines;
- increasing support to U.S. Army and partner-nation forces by adding another air and naval gunfire liaison company; and
- reducing overhead in the supporting establishment where parallel or duplicative functions could be efficiently combined or eliminated, including conversion of certain military billets to civilian positions while achieving an overall reduction in civilian personnel.

#### Risk Mitigation

Reshaping the Marine Corps from a wartime footing of 202,000 Marines to a force of approximately 186,800 imposes some risk. All proposed force structure changes were wargamed against approved Department of Defense scenarios and selected operation plans. The resulting force will be capable of operating across the range of military operations but will assume some risk in the capacity to conduct simultaneous major combat operations and campaigns. This risk is created by combining a MARFOR with a MEF headquarters, preserving the core warfighting

capabilities of this MEF while expanding the responsibilities of its leadership and staff. Additionally, select air and ground units will be eliminated from the active component. To mitigate this reduced capacity in the active component, we will more completely operationalize our reserve forces. We will work with our civilian leadership and elected representatives to revise public law to allow more responsive access to reserve forces.

### Efficiency for Operational Effectiveness

Tomorrow's Marine Corps, though smaller than the force conducting current overseas contingency operations, is not simply a reduced version of today's Marine Corps nor is it a reversion to the pre-9/11 posture. We believe these force structure changes are significant and compelling. The most significant force structure changes include:

- the consolidation of a MARFOR with a MEF headquarters to eliminate higher headquarters overhead;
- a 13% reduction in ground combat forces, to include an 11% reduction in infantry, a 20% reduction in cannon artillery, and a 20% reduction in armor;
- a 16% reduction in fixed-wing tactical aviation squadrons;
- a 9% reduction in logistics, with a significant organizational restructuring to enhance responsiveness;
- a 7% reduction in Marines assigned to non-operational billets;
- a 13% reduction in the civilian work force; and
- placing the reserve division, wing and logistics group headquarters in cadre status and eliminating the Mobilization Command headquarters by assimilating associated functions into Marine Forces Reserve headquarters.



## Major Initiatives

### *Operating Forces*

- Reduced infantry battalions (27 to 24)
- Reduced artillery battalions (11 to 9)
- Reduced flying squadrons (70 to 61)
- Reduced wing supt group HQs (3 to 0)
- Increased unmanned aircraft system squadrons (4 to 5)
- Reorganized Marine logistics groups
- Consolidated military police to support law enforcement requirements
- Built five joint task force capable MEB HQs for GCCs
- Increased regional component capacity
- Preserved 60% of the irregular warfare enablers from the 202K force
- Increased Cyber structure >250
- Increased Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command by >1000

### *Reserve Component*

- Cadre division, wing, logistics group, and Mobilization Command headquarters
- Increased civil affairs groups (3 to 5)
- Doubled counter-intelligence/human intelligence
- Increased air and naval gunfire liaison companies (2 to 3)

### *Supporting Establishment*

- Reorganized installations commands
- Training Command HQ consolidated into Training and Education Command HQ
- No changes to HMX-1, nuclear weapon security, joint billets, Chemical-Biological Incident Response Force, or State Department support
- Reduced civilian structure >2900

## Conclusion

Our number one priority remains operations in Afghanistan. Some force structure changes do not impact those operations and are already underway, especially with respect to the command, aviation, and logistics combat elements and the reserve component. Many of these adjustments will actually enhance our capabilities in Afghanistan. We will conduct more detailed planning with respect to implementing further changes, many of which will be conditions-based. This will include wargaming, experimentation, allied, inter-Service, and inter-agency collaboration designed to test the force structure, improve interoperability and increase responsiveness to the GCCs.

We believe the aggregate utility of our proposed force structure will meet Title 10 responsibilities, broaden capabilities, enhance speed and response options, and foster the partnerships necessary to execute the range of military operations, while providing “best value” to the Nation.