

ARMY LOGISTICS WHITE PAPER  
Delivering Materiel Readiness to the Army



# Improve Force Reception

- FOCUS AREAS -

Connect Army Logisticians  
Modernize Theater Distribution  
Improve Force Reception  
Integrate the Supply Chain

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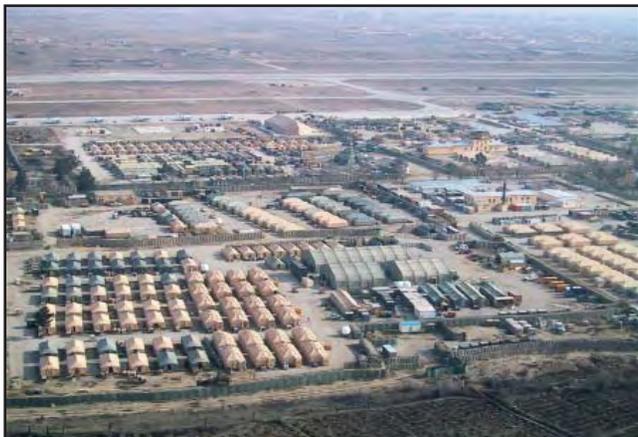
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## Improve Force Reception

In the December 2003 “Army Logistics White Paper: Delivering Materiel Readiness to the Army,” the Army G-4 identified four key focus areas to address the logistics problems encountered during Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, many of which were similar to those experienced during Operations Desert Shield and Storm. **Connect Army Logisticians, Modernize Theater Distribution, Improve Force Reception, and Integrate the Supply Chain** were identified as the areas needing a singular focus to develop solutions for the joint and expeditionary Army. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the initiative *Improve Force Reception*, the most critical operational task needed to open a theater.

When Army forces deployed to Iraq, a variety of units were task organized on short notice to execute force reception operations for which they were neither trained nor equipped. The Army did not have an organization designed, trained or equipped to integrate these force reception functions. As a result, critical force reception capabilities were often missing, and combat units were tasked to receive forces, provide life support, and move elements into the tactical assembly areas. For example, during



the force buildup in Kuwait, the Third Infantry Division performed many functions in support of force reception operations. Infantry Soldiers tracked flights, linked up Soldiers with their

baggage, and coordinated buses to move Soldiers from the aerial port of debarkation to the tactical assembly area. Although absolutely necessary, performing these tasks degraded the division's ability to effectively train and prepare for combat operations. An expeditionary force cannot afford to improvise the force reception segment of theater opening.



To effectively open a theater, the Army must have a force reception organization that can perform the following critical tasks:

- **Plug into a satellite-based logistics information network**
- **Maintain real-time visibility of personnel, equipment, and sustainment en route to a theater**
- **Execute theater-level operational sustainment command and control**
- **Provide strategic reach-back to enable the sustainment/distribution networks**
- **Execute joint reception, staging, and onward movement operations, to include life support (care and feeding of the force) and force protection (security)**
- **Establish initial theater-level sustainment operations as needed**
- **Serve as a joint theater logistics headquarters, when properly augmented**

The *Improve Force Reception* integrated process team identified the major tasks critical to opening a theater and then developed an organization capable of performing those functions. This conceptual theater-opening brigade has the capability to rapidly move into an area of responsibility to receive joint and coalition forces deploying into a theater. No longer will combat units have to receive their own forces and equipment and spend valuable time and energy performing tasks that are not part of their core competencies. In the future, combat units can concentrate on quickly getting into the fight.

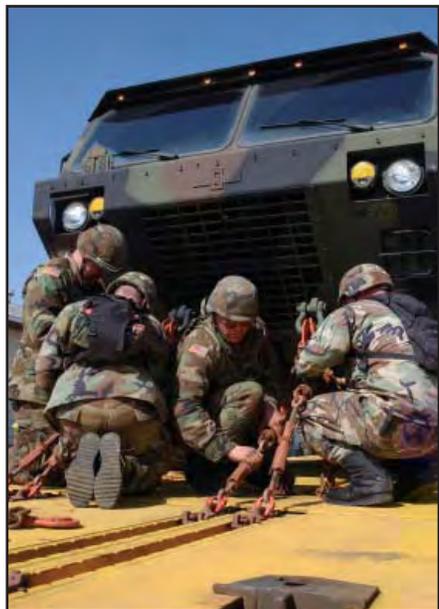


initial sustainment operations; and provide life support and force protection to forces deploying to the tactical assembly areas.

The *Improve Force Reception* integrated process team addressed several strategic and operational initiatives to facilitate rapid theater opening and the initial sustainment of forces deploying into theater. Central to these initiatives is the shift in mindset of planners who formerly believed that logisticians could arrive in theater after combatant forces; now, war planners understand that logisticians are necessary in the early stages of an operation to efficiently receive forces and integrate them with their equipment.



The Army is also reconfiguring its Army Prepositioned Set - Afloat into Army Regional Flotillas (ARFs) which can serve as a service component of a joint seabase. The ARFs will provide



Within the next year, it is our intent to transform one of the Army's corps support groups to perform the theater opening mission. This support group will trade its support logistics missions of supply, maintenance, and transportation for a force reception/theater opening mission. It will become the first unit in the U.S. Army dedicated to force reception with the capability to open and operate both sea and aerial ports of debarkation; execute reception, staging, and onward movement operations; establish



a new flexibility to quickly move a combat capability with its required logistical support to hot spots around the world. The ARF program greatly reduces our reliance on both large theater stocks and long

supply lines from the continental U.S. for initial sustainment support. Therefore, forces can get into the fight within days instead of weeks or months.

An initiative under development is joint seabasing, the operational concept for projecting and sustaining joint forces through



and from the sea. The U.S. Army is participating with the joint community in the development of this transformational concept. Critical to the success of joint seabasing

is the development of advanced inter/intra-theater lift platforms (vessels and aircraft). Both the Army's Theater Support Vessel (TSV) and the

U. S. Navy/ U. S. Marine Corps' High Speed Connector (HSC) programs consist of shallow-draft, high-speed, intra-theater watercraft that



support joint seabasing. These advanced surface platforms will support the joint commanders with a flexible capability to move personnel, equipment, and sustainment within a theater of operations.

## Summary

The *Improve Force Reception* initiative has identified the functions required to rapidly open a theater and to provide initial sustainment to the expeditionary Army. As the Army transforms one of its support groups to a unit with integrated theater opening and initial sustainment capability, Army force developers will be incorporating lessons learned from actual operations. This new capability will provide the joint force with exceptional unity of effort at the point of executing force reception/theater opening operations. This organization will be equipped, trained, and manned to receive forces at a pace equal to our ability to project those forces.

