

## Global CONOPS

In the past, naval forces deployed in two major configurations – aircraft carrier battle groups (CVBGs) and Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs) with Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) embarked. Surface combatants and submarines typically did not deploy with ARGs, so operations in other than benign tactical conditions had to await in-theater augmentation from a CVBG. In effect, the CVBG embodied the primary striking capability of the fleet.

The Department of Navy (DoN) has developed a new Global Concept of Operations (CONOPS). This CONOPS is designed to meet the demands of the global war on terrorism. It also allows the United States to maintain credible deterrent forces in key theaters of operation and provides combatant commanders with a responsive warfighting capability to swiftly prevail in major regional conflicts. DoN now envisions many task groups, not just carrier battle groups, that are able to operate independently in order to deter and, if necessary,

to conduct strikes and raids. Larger-scale attacks or major regional conflicts will still require the formation of more capable naval expeditionary forces.

The new CONOPS organizes the fleet into Carrier Strike Groups (CSG), Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESGs), Surface Action Groups (SAGs), and independently operating guided-missile submarines (SSGNs). MEUs are embarked in the ESGs, which consist of the three amphibious ships of the ARG plus several surface combatants and submarines. The surface combatants and submarines give the ESG greater at-sea defensive capabilities and increased striking power in the form of cruise missiles and naval gunfire.

This change involves more than just the in-theater reassignment of forces from CVBGs to ARGs. The new groups will train together and deploy as a cohesive unit. The ESG provides an opportunity to explore new ways of taking advantage of an entire range of naval assets.

## GLOBAL CONOPS FORCE STRUCTURE

