

CRS Report for Congress

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Navy Role in Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) — Background and Issues for Congress

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Summary

The Navy is taking several actions to expand its capabilities for participating in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). The Navy's role in the GWOT raises several potential oversight issues for Congress, including the need for an increased Navy role, and amount of Navy personnel and funding associated with GWOT-related activities. This report will be updated as events warrant.

Introduction and Issue for Congress

The Navy, which has participated for several years in what the Administration refers to as the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), is taking actions to expand its capabilities for GWOT-related activities.¹ The issue for Congress is: How should the Navy's role in the GWOT be taken into account in assessing the Navy's budget and Navy programs?

Background

Longstanding Navy GWOT-Related Activities. The Navy has carried out certain GWOT-related activities for several years, including the following:

- on-the-ground medical and construction support for Marines in Iraq;
- surveillance by Navy ships and aircraft of suspected terrorists overseas;
- maritime intercept operations (MIO) aimed at identifying and intercepting terrorists or weapons of mass destruction at sea, or potentially threatening ships or aircraft that are in or approaching U.S.

¹ For an overview of the role of U.S. military forces in the GWOT, see CRS Report RL32758, *U.S. Military Operations in the Global War on Terrorism: Afghanistan, Africa, the Philippines, and Colombia*, by Andrew Feickert.

- territorial waters — an activity that includes Navy participation in the multilateral Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI);²
- operations by Navy special operations forces, known as SEALs, that are directed against terrorists;³
 - Tomahawk cruise missile attacks on suspected terrorist training camps and facilities, such as those conducted in response to the 1998 terrorist bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa;
 - working with the Coast Guard to build maritime domain awareness (MDA) — a real-time understanding of activities on the world’s oceans;⁴
 - assisting the Coast Guard in port-security operations;⁵
 - protection of forward-deployed Navy ships, an activity that was intensified following the terrorist attack on the Navy Aegis destroyer Cole (DDG-67) in October 2000 in the port of Aden, Yemen; and
 - protection of domestic and overseas Navy bases and facilities.

The Navy states that

Winning the Global War on Terrorism is our number one priority. We continue to support the GWOT through naval combat forces that are capable and relevant to the missions assigned. The Department of the Navy has deployed various forces into the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) to support in-theater deployment of Marine Corps combat units (and attached Navy medical personnel and construction battalion) and provide other sustainment support (such as port and cargo handling and supply support, medical support, mail and transportation, [and] explosive ordnance [support].... Because more than 95 percent of the world’s commerce moves by sea, it is likely that terrorist networks utilize merchant shipping to move cargo and passengers. The United States naval forces are well trained to carry out the mission of deterring, delaying, and disrupting the movement of terrorists and terrorist-related material at sea.⁶

The Navy states that since March 2006, more Navy sailors have been on the ground than on ships in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations (AOR),

² For more on the PSI, see CRS Report RS21881, *Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)*, by Sharon Squassoni.

³ SEAL is an acronym that stands for Sea, Air, and Land. For further discussion of the SEALs and of the role of special operations forces in the GWOT, see CRS Report RS21048, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert, and CRS Report RS22017, *Special Operations Forces (SOF) and CIA Paramilitary Operations: Issues for Congress*, by Richard A. Best, Jr. and Andrew Feickert.

⁴ For further discussion of MDA and the Coast Guard, see CRS Report RS21125, *Homeland Security: Coast Guard Operations — Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O’Rourke, and David W. Munis, “Vital Links,” *Seapower*, May 2005.

⁵ For more on the Coast Guard and port security, see CRS Report RS21125, *op. cit.*, and CRS Report RL31733, *Port and Maritime Security: Background and Issues for Congress*, by John F. Frittelli.

⁶ U.S. Department of the Navy, *Highlights of the Department of the Navy FY 2007 Budget*. Washington, 2006.

which includes Iraq. As of late-October 2006, the Navy states, there were about 12,000 sailors ashore in the CENTCOM AOR, including about 4,300 in Iraq.⁷

Recent Initiatives To Expand Navy Role in GWOT. Since July 2005, the Navy has announced a number of initiatives intended to increase its capabilities for participating in the GWOT, including the following:

- establishing a **“1,000 ship Navy”** — a multilateral maritime partnership for ensuring global maritime security;
- establishing sea bases called **Global Fleet Stations (GFSs)** in various regions around the world;
- establishing the **Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC)**;
- reestablishing the Navy’s **riverine force**;
- establishing a reserve civil affairs battalion, an MIO intelligence exploitation pilot program, an intelligence data-mining capability at the National Maritime Intelligence Center (NMIC), and a Navy Foreign Area Officer (FAO) community consisting of officers with specialized knowledge of foreign countries and regions;
- assuming command of a GWOT-related joint task force in the Horn of Africa, the detainee operation at Guantanamo, Cuba, and Fort Suse, a high-security prison in Iraq, and assuming the lead in defending the Haditha Dam in Iraq;
- procuring Automatic Identification Systems (AISs) for surface ships;⁸
- developing a GWOT mission module for the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS);⁹
- announcing a plan to take back five Cyclone (PC-1) class patrol craft that the Navy had loaned to the Coast Guard to help support Coast Guard port security operations;
- developing adaptive force packages and flexible deployment concepts to include SEALs, U.S. Coast Guard, and coalition partners in support of operations in blue, green, and brown water environments;
- developing concepts for green and brown water operations — including certain types of visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) operations and expanded MIO;
- developing expeditionary training team concepts, enhanced combat and force protection capabilities, civil affairs, and Theater Security Cooperation influence activities;
- making better use of existing language, area studies, and technology curricula to enhance and expand FAO officer development, intelligence,

⁷ “All Hands On Land,” *Defense Daily*, Oct. 23, 2006.

⁸ The AIS is a transponder-like device that transmits a ship’s identification, position, course, speed, and other data to other ships and relevant authorities. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires AIS to be installed on ships with a gross tonnage of more than 300 tons.

⁹ For more on the LCS, see CRS Report RS21305, *Navy Littoral Combat Ship (LCS): Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O’Rourke, and CRS Report RL32109, *Navy DDG-1000 (DD(X)), CG(X), and LCS Ship Acquisition Programs: Oversight Issues and Options for Congress*, by Ronald O’Rourke.

- information warfare, and cryptologic expertise, and to develop practical cross-cultural skills needed to further relations with emerging partners;
- developing Global Maritime Intelligence Integration (GMII) as part of Joint Force Maritime Component Command (JFMCC) and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA); and
 - engaging with the U.S. Coast Guard to use the National Strategy for Maritime Security to more rapidly develop capabilities for Homeland Security, particularly in the area of MDA.

1,000-Ship Navy/Global Maritime Partnership. The 1,000-ship Navy concept, also known as the Global Maritime Partnership, is a U.S. Navy initiative to achieve an enhanced degree of cooperation between the U.S. Navy and foreign navies, coast guards, and maritime police forces, for the purpose of ensuring global maritime security against common threats. Since the U.S. Navy is planning to maintain in coming years a fleet of about 313 ships, the concept implies a notional combined contribution from other participating countries of something like 700 ships.¹⁰

Global Fleet Stations (GFSs). The Navy envisages establishing as many as five GFSs around the world, each of which might be built around a single amphibious ship or high-speed sealift ship. Under Navy plans, GFSs could host or support Marines, Navy LCSs or patrol craft, Coast Guard small boats, and Army and Air Force personnel. GFSs under Navy plans would be capable of conducting or supporting various operations, including some that could be considered GWOT-related.¹¹

NECC. The Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC), headquartered at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, VA, was established informally in October 2005 and formally on January 13, 2006. NECC will

consolidate the current missions and functions of the 1st Naval Construction Division, Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Force and Maritime Force Protection Command. NECC will also serve as functional commander in control of manning, training, equipping and organizing forces that will execute AFTP [anti-terrorism force protection], shore-based logistical support and construction missions across the joint operational spectrum.... Between 40,000 and 50,000 Sailors will join the command in phases over the next two years to ensure current operations are not disrupted. The command will oversee units ranging from bomb-disposal crews, expeditionary logistics specialists, the naval coastal warfare groups and the master-at-arms forces. The NECC will also provide the 5,000 to 7,000 Sailors supporting the Army and Marine Corps in the Middle East with proper training for these non-traditional jobs.¹²

¹⁰ For more on the 1,000-ship Navy/Global Maritime Partnership, see Geoff Fein, “‘Global Maritime Partnership’ Gaining Steam At Home And With International Navies,” *Defense Daily*, October 25, 2006 and Christopher P. Cavas, “Will ‘Thousand-Ship Navy’ Become GMPI?” *DefenseNews.com*, Sept. 25, 2006.

¹¹ For more on GFSs, see CRS Report RL32513, *Corps Amphibious and Maritime Prepositioning Ship Programs: Background and Oversight Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O’Rourke.

¹² Katrina Scampini, “Navy Expeditionary Combat Command Stands Up,” *Navy News Service*, Jan. 14, 2006.

Riverine Force. The riverine force, to be overseen by NECC, is intended to supplement the riverine capabilities of the SEALs and relieve Marines who have been conducting maritime security operations in ports and waterways in Iraq. The force is to consist of three squadrons of 12 boats each, and include a total of about 900 sailors. The Navy established Riverine Group 1 at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, VA, on May 25, 2006. The first squadron is to be established in FY2006, and could be deployed to Iraq in March 2007. The second and third squadrons are to be established in FY2007, and could be deployed to Iraq in November 2007 and July 2008. The first squadron will initially use 10 boats now being used by the Marines in Iraq. The Navy is proposing to implement the riverine force as a non-acquisition program with no research and development, no milestones, and no Joint Capability and Development System (JCIDS) documentation. The Navy's request for \$69.1 million in FY2006 supplemental procurement funding for the riverine force was almost entirely denied by Congress, and the Navy is now requesting to reprogram \$54.3 million in existing FY2006 funding for the riverine force (see **Legislative Activity** below).

Potential Oversight Issues For Congress

Potential oversight issues for Congress relating to the Navy's role in the GWOT include the following:

- Is an increased Navy role in the GWOT needed? To what degree can or should increased Navy GWOT-related activities be used to reduce the burden on other services for conducting GWOT-related activities? Are the Navy's actions partly motivated by concerns about its perceived relevance to current threats, or by a desire to secure a portion of GWOT-related funding?
- How many Navy personnel globally are involved in GWOT-related activities, and where are they located? How much funding is the Navy expending each year on GWOT-related activities? How much will the personnel and funding figures grow as the Navy implements its initiatives to expand its capabilities for participating in the GWOT?
- Is the Navy striking an appropriate balance between GWOT-related activities and other Navy concerns, such as preparing for a potential future challenge from improved Chinese maritime military forces?¹³
- Aside from the establishment of the riverine force and a reserve civil affairs battalion, what implications might an expanded Navy role in the GWOT have for Navy force-structure requirements (i.e., the required size and composition of the Navy)?
- Is the Navy adequately coordinating its GWOT-related activities and initiatives with other organizations, such as the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and the Coast Guard?
- Are the Navy's recent GWOT-related organizational changes, such as the establishment of NECC, appropriate? Does NECC include the right collection of Navy organizations? What other Navy organizational changes might be needed?

¹³ See CRS Report RL33153, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities — Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

Legislative Activity

FY2006 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations (H.R. 4939/P.L. 109-234). The **House Appropriations Committee**, in its report (**H.Rept. 109-388** of March 13, 2006) on H.R. 4939, stated:

The Committee recommendation defers the \$69,901,000 [sic: \$69,091,000] requested in Navy procurement accounts for establishment of a new riverine capability. This program is under the administrative control of the Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC). Planning efforts for the program were only initiated last summer, and the NECC was only established in January 2006. The Committee understands that funds for the first riverine squadron will be the subject of a fiscal year 2006 above threshold reprogramming.... Funds requested in this supplemental would finance the second and third squadrons. The Committee intends to review this new capability carefully over the coming months. While endorsed by the recent Quadrennial Defense Review, the concept of operations is still under development, and equipment requirements, including force protection equipment, have not been specified or validated. The Committee defers these funds without prejudice, and will work with the Navy and the Congressional authorization committees in the coming months to validate the mission and funding requirements for the program.

The **Senate Appropriations Committee**, in its report (**S.Rept. 109-230** of April 5, 2006) on H.R. 4939, recommended reducing the Navy's request for FY2006 supplemental procurement funding for the riverine force by at least \$27.825 million. The **conference report (H.Rept. 109-494** of June 8, 2006, page 88) on H.R. 4939 (P.L. 109-234 of June 15, 2006) reduced the Navy's request for FY2006 supplemental funding for NECC, including the riverine force by 99.8%, to \$140,000.

DOD Request To Reprogram FY2006 Funds. On June 30, 2006, about two weeks after the enactment of P.L. 109-234 (see above), the Department of Defense (DOD) submitted to Congress a request to reprogram FY2006 funds that includes, among other things, a request to reprogram \$54.3 million to the proposed riverine force, and \$150.0 million to Navy Construction Battalions (i.e., CBs or Seabees) operating in Iraq.

FY2007 Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5122/P.L. 109-364). Section 361(e) of H.R. 5122/P.L. 109-364 requires the Navy to submit a detailed report on its planned riverine squadrons, and limits the obligation of Navy operation and maintenance (O&M) funds until the report is submitted. As discussed on pages 696-697 of the conference report on H.R. 5122 (H.Rept. 109-702 of September 29, 2006), the earlier House-passed version of H.R. 5122 contained a provision (Section 361) that would prohibit expenditures for the NECC until the Navy ensured 100% funding for ship steaming days per quarter and for depot maintenance work. The earlier House-passed version of H.R. 5122 also contained a provision (Section 1015) that would require the Secretary of the Navy to enter into an agreement with the Commandant of the Coast Guard for the transfer of operational control of not less than five PC-1 class patrol boats for a period extending at least through September 30, 2012. The provision was not included in the conference version of the bill; the conference instead acknowledged the value of the PC-1s to both the Navy and Coast Guard and directed the Navy, in consultation with the Coast Guard, to submit a detailed report on Navy and Coast Guard patrol boat requirements and plans (see pages 821-822).