

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
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FOREWORD

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 3, *Expeditionary Operations*, establishes doctrine for the conduct of military operations by the U.S. Marine Corps. It describes the Marine Corps as an expeditionary force-in-readiness that is manned, trained, and equipped specifically to respond quickly to a broad variety of crises and conflicts across the full range of military operations anywhere in the world. It emphasizes the naval character of Marine Corps forces. This naval expeditionary character provides capabilities both to forward-deploy forces near the scene of potential crises as well as to deploy sustainable, combined arms teams rapidly by sea and air. With reduced overseas presence in terms of force levels and bases, these capabilities have become essential elements of our national military strategy. This publication also underscores the value of Marine Corps forces as a highly cost-effective option in a wide range of situations, including crises requiring forcible entry. Importantly, this publication establishes versatility and adaptability as critical capabilities in a broad range of circumstances for expeditionary forces in an uncertain world. Finally,

this publication describes the Marine Corps' key expeditionary concepts.

This publication is compatible with the Marine Corps' capstone doctrinal publication, MCDP 1, *Warfighting*. *Warfighting* provides the broad institutional and operating philosophy that underlies all Marine Corps expeditionary operations, regardless of echelon of command or operating setting. This publication applies that philosophy more specifically to the operations of Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs) and to the types of expeditionary settings in which these forces will likely be required to operate. Where MCDP 1 describes the Marine Corps' philosophy of warfighting, this publication describes the types of operations of which Marine Corps forces must be capable.

Chapter 1 describes the complex and uncertain geopolitical environment near the turn of the 21st century—the environment in which Marine Corps forces will be required to operate. Based on chapter 1, chapter 2 establishes the need for a flexible, naval expeditionary force-in-readiness, describes the requirements of expeditionary operations, and identifies the characteristics and capabilities of Marine Corps forces that satisfy those requirements. Chapter 3 describes the particular expeditionary organizations and forces that the Marine Corps contributes in support of national interests overseas. Chapter 4 describes the operating concepts that underlie the Marine Corps' conduct of expeditionary operations. Key among these is the naval concept, operational maneuver from the sea.

This publication is designed for Marine Corps leaders who must conduct expeditionary operations or advise others on the effective employment of Marine Corps forces and for those outside the Marine Corps who must understand Marine Corps capabilities and operating concepts. Because this publication describes concepts that are fundamental to Marine Corps operations, it is required reading for all Marines.

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Commandant of the Marine Corps

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Throughout this publication, masculine nouns and pronouns are used for the sake of simplicity. Except where otherwise noted, these nouns and pronouns apply to either gender.

