

Chapter 3

Reception

Even as the commander begins entry operations, his main focus shifts to building up his capabilities in preparation for operations.

FM 100-5, Operations

As the initial step in introducing combat power, reception can determine success or failure of an entire operation. It must be thoroughly planned and carefully executed. Reception from strategic lift is implemented at or near designated air and seaports of debarkation (under some circumstances, for example, Operation Joint Endeavor, it can also occur at rail facilities), under control of the JTF commander. While the reception plan for each theater may vary, reception capacity should, at a minimum, equal planned strategic lift delivery capability.

Reception is the process of unloading personnel and materiel from strategic transport, marshaling the deploying units, transporting them to staging areas if required, and providing life support to deploying personnel.

GENERAL

3-1. The IPB and analysis of theater reception capability provide an understanding of impacts the host nation, other Services, other nations' forces, and governmental and non-governmental agencies have when competing for reception at airfields and seaports. For example, in Desert Storm at the Port of Dammam, 33 total berths were available, yet no more than 17 were used because the remaining berths were dedicated to domestic Saudi commerce. It is also possible a USMC MEF may arrive in the theater simultaneously with APS-3 afloat. In some geographic areas, both could be going through the same port.

3-2. For the first three weeks of strategic deployment the aerial port is the lifeline to the front-line. All that is not prepositioned or available from the host nation comes through the aerial port. After three weeks, the first surge sealift ships arrive to begin a dramatic increase of forces. Airlift remains a critical element, but most combat power of the multiple heavy divisions arrives through seaports.

The early deployment of combat power accomplished the desired effect on the Former Warring Factions. The cost was the limited early ability to arm, fix, fuel, and move forces. The majority of the Task Force arrived in the Area of Responsibility without its organic Main Support Battalion, division Class IX Authorized Stockage List, and Forward Support Battalions. Without these capabilities, the Task Force was severely limited to logistically support itself. Had the Task Force been required to transition to combat operations, the absence of these key capabilities would have severely reduced its combat effectiveness.

Operation Joint Endeavor
Draft After Action Report

FORCE FLOW

3-3. Combat operations generally have three distinctive phases. Initial forces are deployed to the theater to conduct a halt operation. They secure an area to conduct buildup operations in preparation for a counterattack. As depicted in Figure 3-1, reception occurs during the halt, buildup and counterattack phases of a force flow. The force flow is initially light in the halt phase and dramatically increases to a peak during the buildup phase.

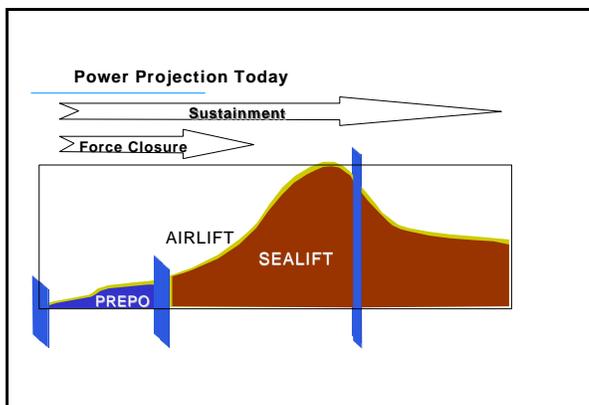


Figure 3-1. Halt, Buildup, and Counterattack

HALT

3-4. During the halt phase the lodgment is secured and expanded in preparation for the increase of the force flow. At this time, reception assets required for meeting crucial increases in force flow for the buildup phase must arrive in-theater. The first ship arriving from the US begins closing the heavy force in-theater. This event is called

“Sea LOC closure,” and it starts a dramatic increase in the amount of tonnage flowing into the theater. Although airlift continues to be a critical element of the force flow, the volume of tonnage is shifted to sealift. While the reception of sustainment stocks begins during the halt phase and continues throughout the deployment, the peak for the sustainment flow normally occurs after force closure is achieved.

SECURE THE LODGMENT

3-5. If the tactical situation dictates, airborne or light forces arrive and secure an aerial port so that the brigade drawing the land prepositioned equipment can arrive into the theater. Prior to the arrival of this brigade the selected theater opening force module arrives and becomes operational. This module includes elements of the composite transportation group and the supporting headquarters. Force projection timeline requirements call for the initial brigade to be in-theater at C+4, draw the prepositioned equipment, and be operational within 96 hours. (See Figure 3-2, page 3-4.)

EXPAND THE LODGMENT

3-6. By C+8, Army Prepositioned Stocks-3 vessels arrive. Concurrently, troops fly in, draw the equipment, become operational, and move to the TAA by C+15.

3-7. During this time, they expand the lodgment to ensure sufficient capability to receive the massive flow of equipment and personnel. These flows generate a requirement for multiple seaports. Arriving personnel depart the airfield for the theater staging base rather than the seaport to marry-up with their equipment because of insufficient physical space in the seaport to accommodate them.

3-8. The first heavy division must be operational by C+24. To meet this timeline, equipment or personnel must clear the aerial port in 2 hours after arrival, while ships must be discharged in 2 or 3 days. (See Figure 3-2, page 3-4.)

The weakest segment is in the theater of operations. Specifically, the hand-off of personnel, equipment and materiel from USTRANSCOM to the CINC at the ports of debarkation appears to be the “critical seam” where disruption of the deployment flow is most likely to occur.

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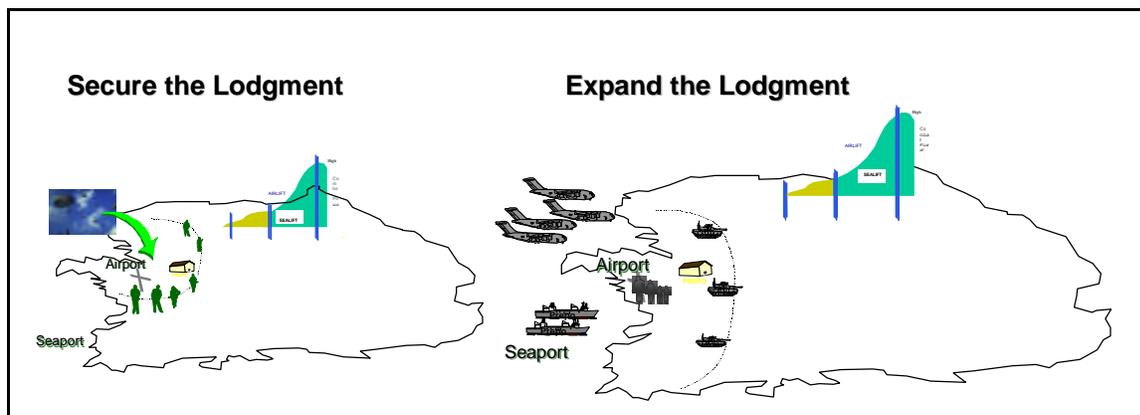


Figure 3-2. Secure and Expand the Lodgment

BUILDUP

3-9. Experience in Operation Desert Storm and lesser contingency operations has shown the need to rapidly expand and improve port reception capability, regardless of the nature of ports being used.

3-10. As the buildup of combat forces begins, capability for rapid expansion depends on well-synchronized arrival of personnel and equipment. The JFC must, therefore, control the deployment flow. Communication between supported and supporting commanders is key to adjusting priorities so that reception capabilities are not overwhelmed.

3-11. APOD and SPODs should, in most cases, be considered integral parts of a single reception complex, unless the distance separating them precludes mutual support. Reception capacity depends on:

- Harbor, port, and airfield characteristics.
- Availability of labor and port services.
- Off-loading and holding space.
- Condition and capacity of exit routes.
- Efficiency of movement control systems.

PORT CLEARANCE

3-12. Two factors determine reception throughput: reception capacity and clearance capability. All ports have finite processing and storage space, and unless personnel and equipment are cleared quickly, the port will become congested and unable to receive forces at the required rate of delivery. Three factors contributing to efficient port clearance are documentation, movement control, and adequate container handling equipment and personnel. Port

operators need timely and accurate documentation including information on forces and equipment arriving in-theater. Efficient movement control assures smooth flow of those forces and equipment according to operational priorities.

AIRPORTS AND SEAPORTS OF DEBARKATION

3-13. The three operations: APOD, MOG, and SPOD are discussed below. Also discussed are the types of seaports and the port selection. A detailed description of units and functions performed at the Airports and Seaports is found in Appendix K.

AERIAL PORT OF DEBARKATION

3-14. The primary airlift challenge is lack of airports not the lack of aircraft. Consequently, maximum throughput at limited airports is paramount. The APOD is by its very nature a joint facility and will likely also be a multinational facility. It is a port of debarkation for deploying forces, and a port of embarkation for forces moving to other theaters and noncombatant evacuation. The host nation may limit the APOD to military use or the military may be sharing the facility with commercial activities. The military will most likely be competing for use of the APOD with other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

3-15. The APOD serves as the primary port of entry for all deploying personnel, as well as for early entry forces normally airlifted into theater together with their equipment. Responsibility for APOD operations is divided between the Army and USAF, with the Air Force responsible for airfield including air terminal control, loading, unloading, and servicing of aircraft (see Figure 3-3, page 3-6). The Army is responsible for clearing personnel and cargo and for life support as required. Air Force/Army interface occurs between the Air Force TALCE and the Army A/DACG and Port Movement Control Detachments. Their respective functions are described below:

- **TALCE**— USTRANSCOM TALCE operates the airfield. It is responsible for ramp operations, aircraft parking, and supervising off-load operations. The TALCE releases planeloads to the A/DACG for airfield clearance.
- **A/DACG**— The Army Cargo Transfer Company is assigned the A/DACG mission. The A/DACG conducts airfield clearance operations by receiving and processing planeloads for release and onward movement.
- **Port Movement Control Detachment**— It is an Army movement control team assigned to an air terminal to coordinate onward movement of personnel, unit equipment, and cargo.

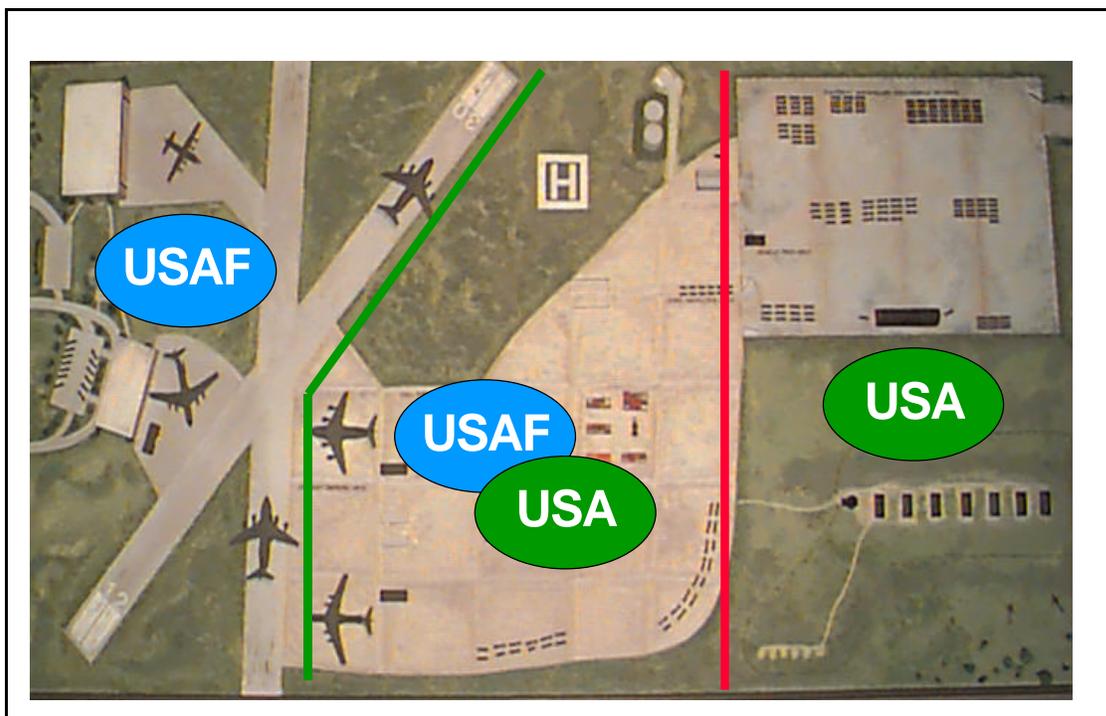


Figure 3-3. Division of Responsibilities in the APOD

3-16. Necessary communication, personnel, and cargo handling equipment must be in place to facilitate rapid movement out of the airport. Both the TALCE and the A/DACG should be included in the lead elements of the deploying force. The TALCE controls all activities at the off-load ramp area and supervises aircraft off-loading. An element of the senior logistics command, the A/DACG escorts loads and personnel to holding areas, that is, it clears the airfield and ensures airfield operations and strategic airflow are not limited because of the accumulation of cargo.

3-17. With responsibility divided between the Army and the Air Force, two chains of command exist within the aerial port, which can result in confusion and a variety of other problems. Given this command relationship, potential for conflicting priorities necessitates careful planning and coordination during the reception process. For example, something straightforward as security responsibilities becomes complicated when there are two chains of commands at the same site. Special attention must be paid to ensure that airfield security, the Air Force responsibility, and area security, an Army responsibility is well coordinated.

MAXIMUM ON GROUND

3-18. There are two constraining factors for airfields. The first is the parking MOG, the number of aircraft that can fit on the ground. The second constraining factor is the working MOG, how many of the parked aircraft can be worked simultaneously. Optimally, working MOG should equal parking MOG. In Dhahran there were 114 acres of 463L pallets on the ground when the ground war kicked off. The inability to clear the pallets reduced the working MOG and, therefore, reduced the throughput capability of the airfield.

In Operation Joint Endeavor, the Army established a heliport to reassemble helicopters that were shipped via air. The heliport occupied a portion of an airfield, which affected the number of aircraft that could be parked on the field (MOG). This reduced the throughput of the airfield and consequently slowed the deployment. An Army decision that impacted the strategic flow.

Operation Joint Endeavor
Draft Lessons Learned

SEAPORT OF DEBARKATION

3-19. Activities at seaports are normally joint, multinational, and commercial operations. Seaports serve as ports of debarkation for arriving forces and simultaneously as ports of embarkation for forces deploying to other theaters of operations. Supported combatant commanders have several options for management of seaport operations in their theater. These options include the use of deployable active component transportation groups, reserve component transportation terminal groups, or MTMC under a CAA to operate some or all of the theater water terminals USTRANSCOM through MTMC is the DOD-designated Single Port Manager for all common user ports worldwide. The SPM performs those functions necessary to support the strategic flow of the deploying forces' equipment and sustainment supply in the SPOE and hand-off to the theater JFC in the SPOD. The SPM is responsible for providing strategic deployment status information to the JFC and to workload the SPOD port operator based on the JFC's priorities and guidance. The SPM is responsible through all phases of theater port operational continuum from bare beach deployments (LOTS operations) to a totally commercial contract supported deployment. (Respective functions of port operation are discussed in Chapter 2.)

TYPES OF SEAPORTS

3-20. There are three categories of ports that commanders must plan for: improved, world class ports; unimproved or degraded ports; and bare beach or no port environment, LOTS operations are necessary (see Figure 3-4). World class ports are like those found in Dammam, Saudi Arabia and Pusan, Korea. Unimproved ports are like the ones in Somalia and Haiti or an improved port that was purposely degraded like the Port of Kuwait during Desert Storm.

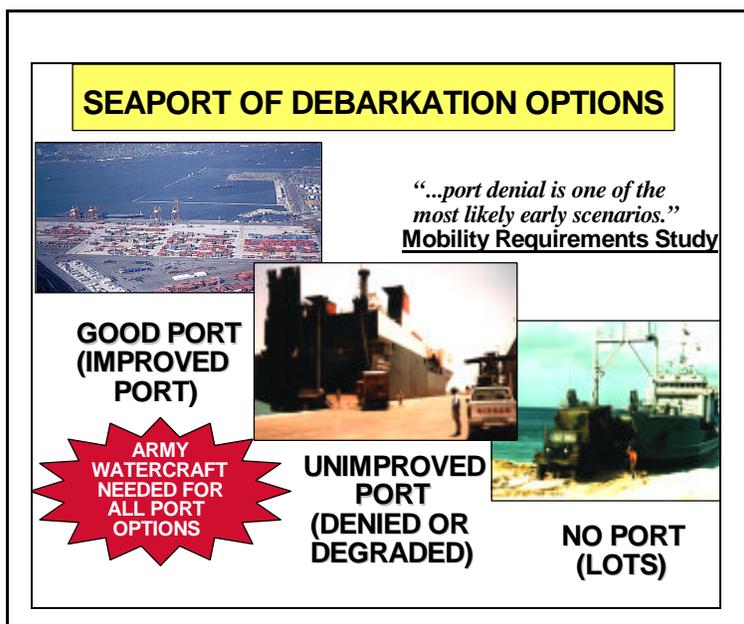


Figure 3-4. Seaport of Debarkation Options

3-21. The Mobility Requirement Study found that port denial is one of the most likely early scenarios in deployment. An enemy studying past US military operations would quickly deduce that the place to stop the Army is at the port. The least desirable option is bare beach because of the time required to move cargo across the beach. Army watercraft are required for operations in most ports. The volume of shipping will require an in-stream off-loading capability in most scenarios.

3-22. Vulnerability of the force during discharge operations is a significant concern. The volume of cargo arriving in the theater in a small window of time can drive the need for multiple seaports to meet deployment timelines. The physical size of the LMSR and the draft requirement to bring the vessel pier side may also present a challenge. If world class port facilities are available, off-loading can be rapidly accomplished. If facilities are less than world class or limited, then multiple ports and slower in-stream operations may be required.

3-23. The ability to project forces into an AOR despite ports that have been rendered unusable or are inaccessible to deep draft vessels is essential to the Army's force projection strategy. Army watercraft provides this capability through in-stream discharge. They allow the ship awaiting berthing space because of congestion or port denial to be off-loaded in-stream. In situations where world class ports are not available, Army watercraft can discharge the LMSRs in-stream and transship the cargo on smaller Army ships to either smaller ports or directly over the shore. Appendix L gives the characteristics of some of the Army's watercraft.

3-24. The ability of a port to receive, process, and clear personnel and equipment, or its throughput capability, is a critical planning factor. The planner must check that the port is capable of receiving the planned strategic flow, considering not only the port's capability, state of repair, and congestion, but its throughput capability. Ability to conduct in-stream (that is, offshore) unloading operations expands a port's reception capability. A smaller port without capability to receive large vessels can use in-stream unloading to increase the overall theater throughput. However, ability to perform in-stream off-loading is largely contingent on availability of Army watercraft and other assets required to move cargo from ship to shore. In-stream off-load operations are sensitive to weather and sea conditions, and generally require a protected anchorage or artificial breakwater.

3-25. Research and developmental work are underway to increase the range of sea states (sea states define the water conditions from calm to hurricane) in which in-stream off-loading is feasible. Presently, in-stream off-loads at sea state 3 and above are extremely limited. New technologies such as the RIB system, ICLF, modular causeway upgrade, and vessel discharge enabler will extend the operational possibilities of in-stream off-loading in higher sea states.

3-26. Seaport operations are similar to airport operations— vessels are off-loaded, cargo moved to a holding area, and then the port cleared. Unit cargo clearing the port moves to TSB or directly to the TAA. Movement out of the port is controlled by movement control elements and must be integrated into the theater movement plan. Port clearance operations can involve one or more of the following transportation modes: highway, rail, and coastal/inland waterways.

PORT SELECTION

3-27. Seaport and airfield throughput capacities significantly influence the speed, order, and, to a large extent the types of units that can deploy through them. Consequently, before thought is given to actual deployment of forces, planners must evaluate capacity of available airfields and ports within the area of operations, as well as the transportation networks linking them

with each other and the interior. Moreover, diplomatic and military contacts should be made at the earliest possible opportunity with the host nations controlling key facilities and rights of way.

3-28. METT-TC considerations and the theater transportation infrastructure must guide the sequence, type, size of forces and materiel arriving at ports of debarkation. These decisions impact speed of combat buildup and development of the theater. For example, when opposed entry is likely, commanders may have to seize and secure airfields and seaports to permit insertion of follow-on forces. Afterwards, it will be necessary to repair damaged facilities in order to process arriving units at the required rate. Even in the event of unopposed entry, ports of debarkation will undoubtedly still require improvement and repair to accommodate high throughput rates required for force closure. Thus, the early entry of units such as cargo transfer companies, composite transportation groups, and Army watercraft is critical to off-loading materiel, clearing ports and consequently speeding deployment.

RECEPTION FUNCTIONS

3-29. Reception functions are activities facilitating throughput at the ports of debarkation. They include C2, movement control, and port operations.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

3-30. Like any other in-theater activity, reception is under command and control of the JFC. Reception planning and execution, however, is the responsibility of the commander assigned the overall RSO&I mission. This designation can require an augmentation of functional units capable of conducting RSO&I and an early presence on the TPFDD.

3-31. The TSC is organized to conduct RSO&I for large deployments while the TOFM are designed specifically to perform RSO&I for smaller deployments. If the JFC determines a TSC or TOFM is needed, it should be positioned early in the TPFDD flow. TOFMs are configured according to the size of the deploying force.

3-32. The arrival of strategic air and sealift will be controlled by the JFC through the USTRANSCOM element attached to his staff. Strategic lift assets remain under command of USTRANSCOM and cannot be retained or diverted by the JFC without concurrence of USTRANSCOM. The APOD and SPOD will normally be managed by AMC and MTMC respectively, and operated by the designated logistics command under C2 of the JFC. Movement control in-theater is the responsibility of the JFC, and should not be delegated below that level.

3-33. It should be noted that reception activities continue after force closure is achieved, in order to facilitate arrival and processing of sustainment stocks and unit replacements. These sustainment activities do not have as strong operational emphasis (hands-on participation of the operational commander) as do RSO&I.

MOVEMENT CONTROL

3-34. Movement control is a subset of command and control. Efficient movement control allows commanders to redirect forces and rapidly compensate for disruptions in the LOC. A movement control element must be positioned at each reception node, and remain in constant communication with USTRANSCOM elements on-site, and with other movement control elements in-theater. A well-disciplined and centralized system must be implemented to control movements along all LOCS. The movement control system is responsible for establishing protocols with host/allied nations concerning use of available transportation nodes and links.

PORT OPERATIONS

3-35. As outlined in the Unified Command Plan, USTRANSCOM has the mission to provide worldwide common-user air and seaport terminal services. To ensure consistency in common user ports worldwide, USTRANSCOM, through its components AMC and MTMC, will normally manage common-user air and sea POEs and PODs and workload the port operator based on the JFC's priorities and intent. The port management function remains a military responsibility through all phases of a theater port operation continuum. Conversely, the port operator can be military, host nation, contractor, or a combination thereof.

PORT SECURITY

3-36. Seaports represent lucrative targets and must be secured. Efficiency of operations can reduce the threat to forces and equipment being processed through the port but the port's physical facilities remain vulnerable. Security for the port complex is normally provided pier side and waterside. The naval component is normally responsible for the waterside of the port, with the USCG providing that security. Pier side security is provided through port security units and their linkage to the rear area protection organization and the base cluster defense plan.

NODE RELATIONSHIPS

3-37. An effective and efficient reception process requires synchronization, communication, and transportation among reception nodes. It permits reassembly of units and equipment at Theater Staging Bases as required by the JFC.

3-38. Appropriate throughput capabilities must be available at each node so that unit personnel and their equipment do not become unduly vulnerable because of prolonged waiting for reassembly. Personnel must arrive at the APOD to coincide with equipment draw. This degree of coordination is best accomplished through the agency of a single commander responsible for RSO&I.