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For Immediate Release

September 22, 2008

Navy, Marine Corps to Test Seabasing Concept

By Lieutenant John Fage, Expeditionary Strike Group 2 Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. – Exercise Sea-Based Dragon, an exercise designed to test the Navy-Marine Corps sea-basing capabilities, will take place in the vicinity of Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Va., this week.

Exercise Sea-Based Dragon is aimed at showcasing the critical role that sea-basing plays in the nation's ability to project power and to influence the future security environment, both of which are key tenets in the execution of the Chief of Naval Operations' (CNO) national Maritime Strategy.

The exercise will feature a variety of Navy and Marine Corps units and vessels, including the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) and Military Sealift Command's USNS Sisler, a large, medium-speed roll-on/roll-off ship.

Sea-basing involves an interconnected system of vessels that includes combatant ships, inshore patrol craft, surface and aerial connectors, cargo-handling gear, command suites and medical centers.

Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has called the sea base "a city at sea." Mullen has cited a number of recent, real-world operations to illustrate the current utility and promise of sea-basing, including tsunami-relief efforts in Indonesia in 2004 and hurricane-relief efforts in the U.S. Gulf Coast in 2005.

This week's exercise will culminate on Wednesday with a demonstration of the capabilities of the improved Navy lighterage system (INLS), an amphibious cargo delivery system.

Also on display will be the tilt-rotor MV-22 Osprey, the newest aircraft in the U.S. Marine Corps' arsenal.

Media interested in covering the exercise Wednesday must contact Lieutenant John Fage at 757-412-5805 by 3 p.m. Tuesday.

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For further questions, please contact Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 2 Public Affairs Office at 757-412-5805 or fage@navy.