

Marine Panel: Existing Platforms Need Better Employment to Address Global Logistics Challenges



A CH-53K King Stallion helicopter, left, flies over the Chesapeake Bay after successfully connecting with a funnel-shaped drogue towed behind a KC-130J tanker aircraft during aerial refueling wake testing. Lt. Gen. Edward Banta, Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics, noted the Marines would need to improve their use of C-130J transports; CH-53K helicopters; and developing unmanned aerial, surface and subsurface systems to address logistics challenges as the threat of a conflict in the Indo-Pacific grows. *U.S. NAVY / Erik Hildebrandt*

WASHINGTON – The emerging difficult security environment, particularly with the growing threat from China in the Indo-Pacific theater, has placed greater importance on global logistics and created new challenges on how to sustain the deployed forces, a panel of senior Marine officers said May 10.

Improving global logistics in this new operating situation will require better knowledge of “what we have, where we have it and how best to support the Marines” operating across the vast distances of the Pacific, said Lt. Gen. Edward Banta, deputy commandant for Installations and Logistics. Meeting the requirements to sustain the deployed forces also will require reducing their demands for support, including the need for energy and information bandwidth, Banta said at the Modern Day Marine exposition at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

Meeting the need to sustain Marine forces in a potentially

contested environment will require better employment of existing support platforms, such as the C-130J transports and CH-53K helicopters as well as developing unmanned aerial, surface and subsurface systems, he said.

Maj. Gen. Joseph Shrader, commanding general, Marine Corps Logistics Command, said the new challenges will require "extending the reach" of the U.S. based logistics installations, such as the depots at Barstow, California, and Albany, Georgia. That could include moving some of the depot capabilities to the operational levels, while modernizing the depots by "deciding what we need and getting rid of the rest."

Schrader and other officer on the panel also stressed the demand to create greater security for the energy and communications requirements for all the Marine installation. To do that, the Corps has experimented with moving some of its installations off the commercial energy grid and will do more of that in the future, they said. They also are making concerted efforts to improve cybersecurity at the domestic installations and overseas bases.

The panel members echoed the statement by Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger that better and more secure logistics was essential to the existence of the "stand-in forces," which could be relatively small and mobile units operating on islands or isolated land positions within the enemy's fire engagement zone. Those operations on what are called Expeditionary Advanced Bases, are among the concepts being developed under Berger's Force 2030 reorganization drive

Brig. Gen. Adam Chalkly, assistant deputy commandant for Installations and Logistics also pointed out that 30 years of uncontested lines of global support is ending and the security of the forward-deployed operational and logistical support installations is no longer ensure, which puts new demands on the entire sustainment system.