Marines, Tripoli and Kharg: why the US landing capability in the Gulf has grown - VIDEO

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The central point is not so much the political hypothesis of an already decided landing, but the fact that the United States has concretely increased its **amphibious intervention capability** in the Gulf. The transfer of the **USS Tripoli** with a Marine Expeditionary Unit indeed adds a platform designed to rapidly project troops, aircraft, and combat capabilities towards the coast. English sources agree that the deployment strengthens the possibility of conducting ground operations, if ordered, at a time when Washington is increasing military pressure on Tehran.

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What really changes: more vertical assault and rapid projection options

The **USS Tripoli** is an amphibious assault ship of the **America** class, designed to transport and land Marine forces by combining aviation and expeditionary capabilities (conceptually similar to Nave Trieste). According to the US Navy, these units are conceived to quickly bring military power ashore even in the presence of opposition, and the America class is optimized for the use of **F-35B**, **MV-22 Osprey**, attack and transport helicopters, with a carrying capacity of about **1,687 troops** plus surge capacity. This means that today's increase mainly concerns the **speed of insertion**, helicopter assault, and the ability to strike or occupy coastal targets in short times.

However, an important technical point must be clarified: the **Tripoli** in the **Flight 0** configuration has sacrificed the **well deck** to increase air-naval capabilities. In practice, this does not make it the ideal platform for a classic “beach landing” with internal landing craft as in later versions, but it makes it very strong in a **vertical assault** model, with insertion of Marines via tiltrotors and helicopters, close air support, and rapid pressure on sensitive points along the coast or on strategic islands. Therefore, the landing capability has increased, but mainly in the form of an **amphibious-air projection** rather than a traditional amphibious invasion.

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Why Kharg Island matters: more than an imminent invasion, a credible military leverage

In this context, **Kharg Island** remains the most evident strategic reference. Axios reports that the ship and the MEU are being sent as the United States seeks to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and after raids on Kharg; the same source emphasizes that the Marine unit would be able to conduct ground operations if ordered. This does not prove that a landing is imminent, but it indicates that Washington is building a **credible military option**: not only striking from the air, but also being able to put men on the ground, temporarily occupy a key node, conduct raids, recoveries, coastal interdiction, or demonstrations of force.

The real strategic message, therefore, is that in the Gulf there is not only an increase in ships and bombings: there is a strengthening of the **ability to enter the ground quickly**, especially against insular or coastal targets. In other words, the United States is not just flexing its muscles; it is expanding the range of operational options available. And in a crisis like the one with Iran, it is precisely this increase in amphibious capabilities — more than political statements — that represents the most significant signal.

https://youtu.be/tt0PD0rLgCE