Conceptualizing Maritime & Naval Strategy

Festschrift for Captain Peter M. Swartz, United States Navy (ret.)
ISPK Seapower Series

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Volume 3
Conceptualizing Maritime & Naval Strategy

Festschrift for Captain Peter M. Swartz, United States Navy (ret.)
For the cohort of naval strategists and maritime history scholars worldwide who have learned to collaborate from this volume's honoree.
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Foreword

A *Festschrift* as a collection of essays in honor of an individual is a distinct mark of respect among academics. Sometimes collections use the Latin equivalent of Festschrift, *Liber Amicorum*, or have subtitles in modern languages such as “*Mélanges en l’Honneur de*” or “*Essays in honour of*” a particular individual. Friends and colleagues typically present such works to another scholar or savant to mark the attainment of a certain age, a stage of life, a notable achievement, anniversary, or on retirement from a career.¹ The practice of presenting a volume of essays as *Festschriften* to honor individuals began in the 1870s in Germany and Austria. With no equivalent word in the English language, the German word has prevailed in modern English usage. As *Libri Amicorum* in manuscript form as books or albums of keepsakes and mementos of friends, they date back even further to the Middle Ages.

At the time this volume was in production, Worldcat, the worldwide network of library catalogues, recorded that one most commonly finds *Festschriften* among practitioners in the academic fields of Language and Linguistics, followed by History, Philosophy and Religion. That catalogue records that there are six or seven thousand different *Festschriften* in libraries around the world for each of those three broad fields. Much further down the list of topics, one may find them among books on Political Science with just over one thousand one hundred titles listed.² A *Festschrift* for a career naval officer is highly unusual.

This volume honors Peter M. Swartz, who served as an officer in the United States Navy and retired as a captain in 1993. An unusual education for a naval officer combined with unusual experiences mark Peter Swartz’s career and brought him into working contact with some of the leading naval officers of his time in the political-military world. A graduate of the Naval Reserve Officers Training program at Brown University, he served as an unrestricted line officer with two tours of duty as an adviser to the South Vietnamese Navy, where his talents were recognized by rising naval

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officers such as Vice Admiral Elmo Zumwalt and Captain, later Vice Admiral Emmett Tidd. While on active service, Swartz earned a Master of Arts degree from The Johns Hopkins University’s Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies and had a further three years at Columbia University, where he earned a Master of Philosophy degree. With this educational background, Swartz had two tours of duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations’ Strategy, Plans, and Policy Division (OP-60). During the Reagan Administration with John Lehman as Secretary of the Navy, Swartz as assigned to the Strategic Concepts Branch (OP-603) under Captain Roger Barnett. There, he soon became the Action Officer for the Navy’s Maritime Strategy at a key point in 1983-84. He worked with Secretary Lehman as well as many influential officers, including Admiral James A. Lyons, Admiral Frank Kelso, Admiral Jerome L. Johnson, and Admiral Henry H. Mauz, Jr. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Swartz was serving as the senior naval officer with the U.S. Mission to NATO at Brussels, where he worked with Admiral James R. Hogg, who was the U.S. Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee. At the end of his career in uniform, Swartz served as a special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, General Colin Powell. Following his years of active naval duty, Peter Swartz continued to have close connections with the U.S. Navy as a research analyst at the Center for Naval Analyses in Alexandria, Virginia. In that role, he gathered both historical and current information, producing numerous influential briefings and reports that influenced naval officers in their thinking about current and future naval strategy.

As a junior officer, Peter Swartz was noted among fellow American naval officers for his understanding of the Vietnamese language; later, in the Pentagon, he was a master of discourse by PowerPoint presentation, the principal means by which the U.S. Navy’s staff offices and headquarters share ideas. Unlike most other recipients of a Festschrift, Peter Swartz is not the author of a shelf of widely read books and articles, but, in his unique way, he has been highly influential among American naval strate-

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gists, commentators, and multi-national students of American naval strategy since the 1980s.

Deeply knowledgeable about naval strategic thinking within the service as well as a prominent and well-known figure among the working staff and action officers who formulated the U.S. Navy’s strategic ideas, Peter Swartz has served as an invaluable intermediary between strategic thinkers inside the U.S. Navy and those outside the Navy. A collector and consumer of naval strategic ideas, Swartz made authoritative bibliographies of books and articles, while also collecting internal studies, briefing slides, and correspondence and even email messages that document and explain how, why, and when the Navy’s strategic thinking developed in the 1980s and 1990s as well as who the key people were. Generously sharing his recollections as one of many actors in the story, he has led other naval officers, government officials, analysts, commentators, and academics to sources and individuals that they would not otherwise have found. In this way, and as this collection amply shows, he has had widespread influence. Most importantly, Peter Swartz has been a loud voice in support of the study of naval history and the use of historical insights to inform current and future policy and strategy.

All the friends and colleagues of Peter Swartz, who have contributed to this volume—ranging from government officials and practitioners of naval strategy to academics, analysts, and commentators—have been influenced, informed, and benefited from Peter’s passion and knowledge of recent American naval strategy. In the best tradition of Festschriften, contributors to this volume not only celebrate Peter at the time of his retirement after a quarter-century of work with the Center for Naval Analyses but also move forward the areas of his interests with new thoughts and perspectives.

John B. Hattendorf
Navies both reflect and determine their international and domestic context. The context does much to set their objectives and, through the delivery of human and material resources, shapes the way in which they perform those tasks. At the same time, their activities help determine the context; if they did not, why bother investing in them? As such and as the world has changed, naval ideas and activities are responses to a process of continuing collisions between competing notions of what navies are for and what their operational priorities should be. The evolution of maritime strategic thinking since the Second World War is a dialectic because there is a discernible direction of travel through a process of often painful reactions to competing imperatives and ‘accidental’ because there is nothing, and no-one, in overall charge of this process, other than the blind forces released by domestic and international and development.

This portrayal of the strategy making process likens it to an old-fashioned pinball machine where the little ball of strategy bounces around between the pins in a random but generally downward direction until it drops out of the bottom with some kind of accumulated value. Such a presentation of the process of strategy-making is quite different from the one usually assumed by the great maritime strategic thinkers such as Alfred Thayer Mahan or Julian Corbett for whom strategy-making is presented as a calmly reflective, rational and linear process of identifying national objectives at the highest level and then setting the ways and possibly the means by which those objectives might best be attained. Strategy-making becomes a contingent rather than purely academic exercise.

Traditional strategists do, of course, accept that adopting a rational approach doesn’t preclude their coming to false conclusions, especially when these are based on false information. Carl von Clausewitz, for one, with his famous trinity of forces, was perfectly aware of the way in which popular passions could distort the principles that ideally framed the conduct of military operations.\(^1\) In this, though, he generally accepted that the intru-

sion of random and irrational forces appeared less in the initial phase of deciding the principles of strategy than in the later one of implementing them. In either case though, what constitutes rationality can be ‘relative’ rather than ‘absolute,’ in that to a greater or lesser extent it may well be affected by circumstances such as one’s service or institutional allegiance. To what extent does where you stand depend on where you sit? There is a huge literature on this issue, well beyond the capacity of a short chapter to incorporate, but clearly the greater the influence of such factors, the more the notion of being “differently rational” will cloud the distinctions between the ideal concept of strategy making and the much more prosaic pinball version.

So, this chapter will look at the evolution of maritime strategy since 1945 and will argue that the pinball model better describes the process of strategy making in this period. More importantly perhaps, it will then move on to consider the lessons that strategy-makers, and those interested in their ways, should draw from this.

Identifying the Pins

At the top of the strategy-making pinball machine, there are four pins representing major background influences, or ‘drivers’ of strategy. In this period, they were all closely connected, sometimes working in conjunction with one another, sometimes in direct opposition. Below them there were perhaps three more pins, that illustrate the actual strategy-making process: above the navy, alongside it, and within it. Finally, towards the bottom of the machine another indeterminate set of pins represent a stage in the strategy-making process often forgotten, those who interpret and implement it.

Level 1: Broad Influences

Perceptions of Threat

The first and most obvious of these pins concern the strategy-makers’ perceptions of the threat and what needs to be done about them. From these perceptions, nations and navies could draw their policy objectives, what political and strategic effect they needed to deliver, and what ways and means were required to do so.
After 1945, western navies faced a bewildering and constantly changing range of strategic challenges. In the first few years after the end of the Second World War it became clear that despite the relatively high hopes and noble aspirations inherent in Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill’s Atlantic Charter, the world was unlikely to see the end of serious interstate competition and possible conflict. Almost immediately a Cold War followed a hot one. Most Western navies faced the prospect of rapid demobilisation,\(^2\) while almost immediately having to confront the military and most specifically naval threat posed by the Soviet Union and its allies. As Soviet power at sea grew and developed both its reach into the open ocean and the quality of its forces, the West duly responded. This issue, though, was always more complicated than it sounds as there were varying interpretations both of Soviet strategic intentions and capabilities. For many years Western observers, perhaps reflecting their own experience in the Second World War, which emphasized the strategic value of the reinforcements and resupplies coming across the Atlantic, were apt to assign more attention to the prospect of a Soviet attack on NATO’s sea lines of communication than was warranted. There were also major differences of interpretation between theoretical analysts like James McConnell at the Center for Naval Analyses in Washington who pored over the texts of Soviet pronouncements and the practitioners who observed what they thought was going on at sea and whose conclusions were mediated by the Office of Naval Intelligence.\(^3\)

But for some years after the war, the threat of the Soviet Navy was thought limited and that raised unsettling thoughts about what a navy was to do when it already had sea control and it faced no real challenges on the open ocean. This was the background for the famous article of 1954\(^4\) by a young Samuel Huntington who argued that in such a case there was a very real need for the U.S. Navy to think seriously about maritime power pro-

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2 The availability of naval hand-me-downs made available from the draw-down of the major naval powers meant revival and expansion for a surprising number of Western navies, not least for that of Belgium which went from nothing to 60 units theoretically available in a few years.


jection, rather than continue to be mesmerised by the possibilities of another Midway or the hum-drum requirements of delivering NATO reinforcements across the Atlantic. This latter concern was a reflection of a deeper unease that the kind of Soviet threat that seemed to matter most was in fact a continental one based on the Central Front that was likely to relegate the U.S. and other navies into a kind of glorified escorted taxi service for the people who would do the real fighting and therefore attract the biggest share of the budget.

 Rather than preparing for a hot war with the Soviet Union, moreover, the most pressing requirement was how best to respond to Soviet pressure in a peace that seemed ever more contested. Because it called for responses that were rather more political and rather less operational, the requirement towed many senior naval officers a little out of their comfort zone, and through sheer familiarity with the narrower more military-technical aspects of their profession, many were inclined to be more kinetic in their analysis than was helpful. Such, for example, lay at the bottom of the dispute between Admiral George Anderson and Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara over the conduct of the naval quarantine of Cuba in 1962. Regardless, a messy world in the twilight between war and peace was something that strategy-makers had to get used to.

 For the navies of Europe this was a much more familiar problem because this messiness was a characteristic of their immediate if not most dangerous preoccupation, namely the painful and demanding challenges of a long period of decolonisation. The Dutch, French, Belgian, Portuguese, and British navies had to cope with the consequences of revolt and in many cases a fighting withdrawal from disputed areas all round the world where the appropriate responses were much more like the limited but painful wars of the 19th Century, and the writings of the likes of Charles Callwell, than those of high intensity warfare at sea against a peer competitor on the open ocean. The same applied to the possibly related consequences of emerging instabilities particularly around the Mediterranean, which called for external mediation if not intervention. These all had to be prepared for, and thought about.

 The tendency to conclude that strategy-making is just about preparing to deal with one’s adversaries can sometimes blind observers to the fact that the capacity to influence one’s friends can be equally productive

5 Although dealing with a later period, this is also the substance of Peter D. Haynes, Toward a New Maritime Strategy: American Naval Thinking in the Post-Cold War Era (Annapolis, MD: The Naval Institute Press, 2015).
strategically especially when one’s friend was a superpower. All the European allies, but the British in particular, also sought to maintain the political bridge across the Atlantic that secured the American guarantee of their survival against an apparently implacable Soviet Union. Under Churchill, the British had been assiduous in this regard, partly because of their sense of an absolute strategic need, and partly because of a sense that the Americans could do with helpful guidance. How this was to be achieved required very different kinds of strategic thinking.

For the British and most of the other NATO European powers, securing the guarantee played a substantial role in defining the strategic responses that an uncertain present and future seemed to demand of their strategymakers. For them, this was a particularly vexing issue when deciding their response to the United States becoming embroiled in its own post-Colonial war in Vietnam from 1964-73. In this painful time, all manner of novel littoral capabilities had to be developed, alongside a re-casting of traditional ones such as maritime power projection operations. What to do about the Ho Chi Minh trail and enemy riverine actions had become wholly unfamiliar challenges for American strategists to think about. Since these responses had to be balanced against the more classical demands posed by an ever more capable Soviet Navy, it was a confusing and demoralising time. Admiral Stansfield Turner’s *Missions of the US Navy* of 1974 was a praiseworthy attempt to make sense of it all.6

From then on things slowly began to return to normal as the Soviet naval challenge grew, as Soviet warships interposed themselves in NATO exercises and as British, American, and Russian submarines began to play their dangerous games under the Arctic ice.7 Although the technology seemed very different, all this was more familiar territory; eventually within the overall framework of NATO’s strategy-making and the replacement of “Massive Retaliation” by “Flexible response,” and after much deliberation, involving some very innovative naval thinking by the likes of Peter Swartz, *The Maritime Strategy* (TMS) of the 1980s appeared.8 This was a strategy that was Mahanian in its emphasis on forward operations against the seat of Soviet naval power (including most importantly its much-val-

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ued sea-borne deterrent force) and Corbettian in its celebration of the strategic benefits of manoueuvre from the sea by outflanking the Red Army on the Central front while presenting the Soviet homeland with the prospect of deadly air and cruise missile attack. It seemed to offer the ultimate triumph of the whale over the elephant, sea power over land power, and the maritime over the continental.

To its advocates, TMS exemplified competitive strategy-making that started with an analysis of the basic assumptions of the Soviet General Staff about the shape of a future intra-bloc war and systematically dismantled them. Where the General Staff wanted any such war to be quick, localised and reliably non-nuclear, the response was to use naval power to make it sustained, global and dangerously escalatory. TMS was a naval rather than a national strategy, and it had its critics, but it was welcomed by NATO, merging satisfactorily with CONMAROPS, and was found useful to allies such as the British and the Norwegians because it seemed amply to justify their own naval efforts. Certainly, when combined with other aspects of U.S. strategy, it had a depressing effect on Soviet attitudes and by wresting the strategic initiative away from an increasingly embattled Soviet Union played a significant part in concluding the Cold War.

That success, however, opened an entirely new and uncertain era in which there seemed to be no major power adversary against which to plan. The absence of a rival for sea control and the expectation of a peace dividend after 40 years of effort became the latest challenges for Western navies. Through the course of the 1990s, they reverted, as Huntington had recommended back in the 1950s, to a set of ideas about how the ability of basically unchallenged navies could defend stability by projecting power ashore. … From the Sea (FTS) and Forward From the Sea (FFTS) followed, both encapsulating some of the lessons of Desert Shield/Storm and preparing the way for operations in the Adriatic. The West’s navies all became

much more expeditionary and, as fast as their creaking acquisition systems would allow, invested in platforms and weapons suitable for littoral operations very likely to take place “out-of-area.”

At the same time, there were those who saw a much more radical shift occurring in the international scene, and one which would demand a quite substantial change in naval attitudes away from dominating preoccupations with high-intensity war fighting. Starting around 1999 with Richard Danzig’s *A Maritime Strategy*, voices within the U.S. naval staff and elsewhere began to speculate on the consequences of globalization. Some harked back to a nearly forgotten aspect of Mahan’s writing when the great man had warned:

This, with the vast increase in rapidity of communication, has multiplied and strengthened the bonds knitting together the interests of nations to one another, till the whole now forms an articulated system not only of prodigious size and activity, but of excessive sensitiveness, unequalled in former ages.  

Such thoughts eventually resulted in *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower,* (CS21) a radically different approach to thinking about maritime operations which gave prominence to the notion of navies not competing but cooperating with one another to defend an international sea-based trading system on which everyone’s peace and prosperity ultimately depended. Here the adversaries were faceless transnational criminals of various sorts, instability ashore, natural and human disasters and a few rogue nations. It required a new approach to traditional war-fighting skills. As Admiral Mike Mullen, then Chief of Naval Operations, concluded,

Where the old maritime strategy focused on sea control, the new one must recognise that the economic tide of all nations rises not when the seas are controlled by one but rather when they are made safe and free for all. 

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13 Haynes, though makes the point that this early flowering of the concept did not last (Haynes 2015, 137).
15 Bruns (2018), 194-207.
Partly for this reason, the strategy attracted a good deal of opposition in its making and in its consequence, especially from those who thought that the world had not actually changed that much. To them, that great power competition was still the scenario against which great navies and smaller ones too should continue to define their efforts. In Europe such feelings revived with the increasing truculence of a revanchist Russia under President Vladimir Putin especially after his conflict with Georgia in 2008 and the invasion of the Crimea in 2014. In the U.S., the swing back to the concept of great power competition was further reinforced by increasingly alarming perceptions of Chinese aspirations. The result of this was a ‘refreshed’ and much more muscular edition of the strategy in 2015 (CS21R), in which the absolute requirement for ‘all domain access’ was given considerable prominence.17

Strategy-making was shaped probably more by changing perceptions of threat than by anything else but each of those sometimes quite startling shifts in preoccupation were individually controversial both in how stakeholders interpreted their substance and in their likely consequences for the setting of national and naval objectives, tasks and force design. For this reason the resultant strategy making processes were all accompanied by much discord and discontent and all proved as impermanent as the strategic environment itself. Moreover, oscillations towards and away from great power competition underlines the point that strategy-making is not a teleological process always heading in one direction. The ball in the machine can bounce backwards, at least for a while, if circumstances require it.

Budgetary Preoccupations

As a second broad influence or driver, resource limitation is an abiding concern of those who would make strategy because it sets constraints on what platforms, weapons and sensors navies can expect to be given for the performance of their notionally allocated tasks. It can easily lead to conclusions that some tasks are simply beyond the capacity of individual navies to deliver and that advocating them or even thinking about them is there-

fore a waste of time and effort, however strategically justified they might seem to be. Because of this, there is always the fear that budgetary considerations might drive strategy-making rather than merely discipline it. For Western navies this certainly seemed true of the deliberations conducted in the shadow of the great recession of 2008-2009; in similar vein the navies of Southeast Asia had to face severe cut-backs in their programmes and their strategic aspirations after the economic crisis of 1996-7. These fears were reinforced by the apparently inexorable rise in costs of military equipment which far exceeded the rise in inflation, especially at a time when all governments, but accountable Western ones in particular, were faced with the rising demands for, and cost of, the other public services they were required to deliver to their electorates.

Sometimes, though, the desire to secure budgetary increases was often a driver of a strategy project or at least something that helped shape the discussion and conclusions. It was more than a coincidence that after their successful contributions to FTS and FFTS in the 1990s, the budget of the U.S. Marine Corps rose significantly when compared to that of the Navy. Relative to the number of personnel in the U.S. Navy, today’s Marine Corps is the largest in American history and the same is true of Royal Marines as a proportion of the Royal Navy.

Alongside the troughs, conversely, were some peaks when the threat seemed high and the national economy sufficiently strong to sustain efforts to contain it, as in the 1980s for example.

When perennial budgetary preoccupations coincided with major shifts in the strategic environment which made it seem either suddenly much less, or much more, threatening, their shaping of strategy-making could be profound. After the Second World War and the Cold War, navies found that the rewards of success were severe budgetary reductions; the desire to show that they were still needed in changed circumstances provided an incentive for a process of radical rethinking, but this thought took some years to deliver. The rapid rise of a clear Soviet threat to which Western navies had to respond provided a rationale for naval spending, but its later disappearance in 1989 posed real problems for naval thinkers. FTS and FFTS were steps toward a solution but arguably the intellectual answer only came with CS21 in 2007.

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18 This was widely held to be blindingly obvious in the controversial case of the U.K.’s Strategic Defence and Security Review of 2010, for example.
20 Essentially this is the argument in Haynes (2015).
Technological Change

At times the influence of technological change on the making of strategy was so strong that it too could become a driver, and occasionally even something of a substitute for it.

There were fears this might happen when what Soviet Admiral Sergei Gorshkov called the ‘atomic shock’ of the late 1940s and the 1950s caused his service and many others really to wonder what their function was and whether their hard-won experience in conventional naval operations had been rendered irrelevant. The initial response initially in the U.S. and most other major navies of the time was to seek technological, rather than strategic, solutions to the problem - deploying new aspects of war-fighting, by developing submarines, aircraft, and missiles that could carry nuclear weapons. For the time being, reflections on the detailed use of such weaponry and of their possible implications for the conduct of conventional naval operations were left on one side. In due course, though, they became just a critical part of naval operations; defensively the rest of the fleet assumed the task of sanitising their exits, or, as in TMS, a means of attacking the enemy’s ballistic missile firing submarines. It turned out in the end that the introduction of this new technology was not as deterministic as some had anticipated. In the words of Soviet thinkers, nuclear weapons seemed to “negate themselves” leaving many aspects of the naval business to go on as before. All the same, nuclear technology became and remains a major cause of reflection.

Another wave of technological development which for some observers seems also to threaten a major shift in traditional thinking is the current promise of the weaponry of sea denial – or to give it its modern name, Anti-Access, Area Denial (A2/AD). Naval mines, land-based aircraft, coastal artillery, and missile batteries plus stealthy diesel submarines, small craft and above all the prospect of “carrier-killing” ballistic missiles seem to threaten even a strong navy’s capacity to maintain the forward presence that they considered necessary. Again, the proposed “answers” currently being considered take a strongly technological form although their deployment or use may well require strategic realignments. It is in this context that the strategies of “archipelagic defence” are currently being debated in Washington as a riposte to the Chinese “anti-intervention” methods in the Western Pacific.21 In producing the emphasis on “All Domain Access” that

21 For example Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., “How to Deter China: The Case for an Archipelagic Defense,” in Foreign Affairs vol. 94, No. 2 (March/April 2015), 78-86.
was one of the chief differences between the first and second versions of CS21, such issues clearly had a major and immediate impact on U.S. naval strategy making at the time.

More subtly, the inclination to focus particularly on the effects of military technology was sometimes associated with a particular view of what strategy making actually was. Happier with the downwards link towards tactics than the upward link towards policy, people of this persuasion tended to downplay the political objectives of strategy and were more concerned about the accumulation of technical means and the way they should be used. Hew Strachan reminds us of that older understanding of strategy as the use of battle for the purposes of war rather than the use of war for the purposes of policy. Technological preoccupations tended to reinforce this line of thinking, as they did with the focus on network centric warfare under Admiral Art Cebrowski when the ability to put ordnance on target so dominated strategy making that the political aims of the exercise, and every other aspect of the campaign to achieve them, hardly seemed hardly to matter. The ‘Third Offset Strategy’ announced in November 2014\(^\text{22}\) likewise limited the scope of strategy-makings in the wider sense. Such is the preoccupation of many with the ‘military-technical’ dimension of strategy through a focus on the implications of artificial intelligence, big data, cyber operations and so forth that their operational implications for a war of ‘battle-networks’ can be rather lost sight of.

Strategic Culture and Expectations

Strategy-making is also influenced by a country’s historical experience, strategic assumptions, expectations, and ways of doing things. Because each country’s experience is unique (if only because of its geographic setting) its outlook is also likely to be singular, partly, or wholly. In the Second World War, Britain’s sensitivity to its manpower limitations led its Army to adopt a reliance on innovative technology as a way of reducing the prospects of loss. At the time this was much less apparent in U.S. forces, as was clear from a comparison of their respective landing operations in Normandy in 1944. Since then, however, the U.S. is commonly

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Geoffrey Till

held to have adopted a technology-heavy, high-intensity war-fighting culture markedly different from that of many of its allies. In Canada by contrast, there were publicly endorsed assumptions that the natural focus of the Canadian Navy was in humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HADR) and maritime interdiction, despite its long focus on the protection of shipping from the start of the Second World War and onwards. This softer focus was considered “truly reflective of Canadian attitudes and policies” to a public much less conscious of a direct threat to itself. In the U.S. on the other hand a war-fighting culture has contributed to an institutional reluctance to shift to other softer missions. This attitude perhaps influences American perceptions of threat and certainly has occasionally made it less interested in the conduct of crisis and peacetime operations, and indeed in underlying political considerations than strategy-makers like Peter Swartz thought it should be.

Level 2: the Strategy Makers

The next level of pins in the machine is that of the strategy makers themselves, above, alongside, and within the navy.

Above The Navy

Often navies make strategy in response to very broad outlines of national policy objectives handed down from the highest level of government, whether that be the President and White House Staff, the Secretary of Defense and Congress in the U.S., or Prime Minister and Cabinet and to an extent parliamentary defence committees in European countries. In many cases, but not all, the generalised statement of objectives, together with an indication of the resources allowed for their achievement, will already have been constructed after some consultation with naval realities and the naval viewpoint. Those handed-down directives were often very vague, leaving the navy with considerable leeway in how best to react. In others, such as

24 Hattendorf (2004), 79.
the UK Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) process of 2010 and 2015 the navy can be left with very little room for manoeuvre, which is presumably why no publicly available maritime strategy emerged in either case. In the U.S., the Secretary of Defense and/or the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have often played a pivotal role in setting particular strategy-making phases in motion and then closely monitoring their development. This was certainly the intent behind the radical changes in the strategy-making process brought about by General Colin Powell.25

Alongside the Navy

The general trend towards more and more ‘jointness’ has meant that naval strategy-making has been both enriched and limited by the growing influence of the other services and the “purple centre.” This is the case in the extent to which the strategy of the Royal Navy is now made not as an independent dark-blue endeavour as it used to be into the 1990s but from a cell within the joint Development, Concepts, and Doctrine Centre at Shrivenham. The result, some would warn, is the production of a kind of strategy characterised by bland homogeneity that offers little guidance and even less stimulation. One of the reasons for this drift into a purple centre, which is common in Europe, was a widespread view that the tensions that arose between the three services when they were making their own strategy generated more heat than light. The push towards a purple approach to strategy-making was, in short, a conscious effort to reduce the power of the dialectical effect in the making of strategy. By contrast, strategy-making in the U.S. remains much more service centred. This, though, could lead to the U.S. Navy focusing so much on what it considered its core sea control tasks that it neglected, and was caught out by sudden unexpected requirements such as to participate in the land war in Vietnam or the air campaign in Desert Storm.26 The practical utility of particular instances of navy-centred strategy outputs could also be lessened by the hostile and/or indifferent responses of the other services as arguably happened with FTS and FFTS, and perhaps with CS21 too.27 In these circumstances the uncertain status of these formulations as service rather than joint and national strategies was an undoubted weakness.

26 See Baer (1994), 392-393.
On the other hand, the processed doctrinal claims of the other services can often stimulate productive responses. The AirLand Battle concept generated by the U.S. Army and Air Force in the 1970s not only made effective use of the then current notion of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) but also helped stimulate the Navy into responding with TMS. Nor does the more single-service focus of American strategy-making mean that the ideas and perhaps institutional interests of the other services cannot be catered to in the production of maritime rather than simply naval strategy. Hence the ability of the U.S. Navy to incorporate the U.S. Marine Corps interest in FTS and FTS in the 1990s, the U.S. Coast Guard in CS21 in 2007, and in 2015, the Army and Air Force in CS21R through the comprehensive “All Domain Access” concept it featured. Civilian strategists could play a useful mediating role in this as well. The role of Washington’s Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) in producing the Air/Sea Battle concept which in turn helped pave the way for the All Domain Access section of CS21R is well known. A similar process may be underway with the delivery of Maritime Pressure in 2019.28

Within the Navy

At times, there could certainly be plenty of dialectical tensions within the Navy itself, between different institutions, between the different naval aviation, surface, and submarine communities and most especially between the oceanic war fighters, those more concerned with the land effect of naval operations, and those interested in the softer disciplines characteristic of crisis control, peace support, and maritime security operations. The exchanges between these different communities could often be heated29 and the inability to agree could either lead to the virtual disappearance of some strategy projects or bland outcomes that neither offended nor helped anyone. Given the possibility of such internal contention, the role of senior figures was all-important in acting as “champions” driving the strategy-making process through and enthusing the chosen few to deliver what they thought the navy needed.

29 Haynes provides a good example of this (Haynes 2015, 74).
American examples of this tension include Admiral Elmo Zumwalt with his Project 2000 aimed at deducing what kind of navy the future demanded, Admiral Thomas Hayward whose desire to “let a hundred flowers bloom” led to TMS or Admirals Mullen and John Morgan who drove through the original CS21. While none of these key documents survived for long (indeed it is not clear that Project 2000 ever appeared in unclassified form) they all at least enriched and, importantly, widened the debate away from technological aspiration on the one hand or battle fleet programatics on the other. What such leaders wanted was a kind of directed dialectic in which all opinions were canvassed so that truth would prevail. Other key figures, though, took a distinctly jaundiced view of such metaphysical and probably short-lived speculation, preferring to focus on a nearer term “strategy of means,” that was much more closely related to the delivery of the physical capabilities needed.30

30 According to Haynes this would apply to Admirals William Crowe and Vernon Clark (op cit, 26, 144).
How strategy is actually made, Till 2020.

**Level 3: The Strategy Implementers**

Too little attention is paid to those who interpret, implement, distort, or simply ignore the processed strategy that comes down to them. They are the last set of pins in the pinball machine. For this reason, there is much to be said for strategy makers attaching a specific action plan to their product, lest its finer points, or indeed its whole substance, gets lost in translation. Although it took a depressingly long time to produce and still more to implement, the European Union did exactly this, and for just this reason,
with its *European Union Maritime Security Strategy*\(^{31}\) a strategy followed by a specific action plan. In the case of the U.S. Navy, of course, the resulting action plans tend quickly to become classified and so disappear from outside gaze. This is a concern though, an institutional failure to link strategic output with force design has probably been the biggest single cause for expressed dissatisfaction with the U.S. naval strategy making process.

**Conclusions**

One attraction of the Pinball Machine analogy for the making of strategy is that this also seems all too often to be the way the world actually works, especially perhaps now as there is much less of a global directing agency than usual and far more influences and points of view often in violent contention, delivering uncertainty and unpredictable outcomes. To cope with this, strategy-makers need to be much more than merely kinetic in their approach, paying more attention to the social, economic and political aspects of their trade. U.S. experience suggests that institutions dedicated, and people educated, specifically for the demanding and important task of thinking strategically, for staying on course in the face of adversity and for providing heuristic and practical guidance for military technologists, force designers and operators at sea, are becoming increasingly indispensable.

In order to meet the frequently made criticism that the US Navy, like so many other navies, lacked the kind of people who had been educated so that they could ‘do strategy,’ the new 2300 sub-speciality code was created in 2015.\(^{32}\) Hitherto, budding strategists had no accepted career path and were people in other designated career specializations (such as Aviator, Submariner or Surface Warfare Officer) who were informally recognized as being interested in and good at ‘that kind of thing.’ This initiative, it was hoped, would create a self-aware band of officers with otherwise varied backgrounds who would confer ‘war-fighting advantage’ on the US Navy by helping it adapt quickly and efficiently to changing strategic circumstances. Variations in educational and career background and the consequent cognitive diversity this brought were thought advantageous in producing competing points of view in which ‘one hundred flowers would

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\(^{32}\) This followed a letter by Randy Forbes to the then Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Greenert in 2014.
bloom’ and higher truths emerge. But there needed to be commonalities too. Several pathways were designed to introduce budding strategists to this specialisation including courses at the Naval War College, Newport and the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey and a number of University fellowships and courses and those involved were encouraged to think of themselves as a distinctive cadre. Initially the branch came under N5 tasked with the provision of advice on joint operations and the development of joint strategies, plans, programmers and policies but in 2019 shifted over to a new part of the OPNAV organization to be known as N7 that was tasked to focus on education, training and warfare development. This can be seen as part of a broader bid to ‘prioritize learning as a strategic advantage.’

However delivered, such a band of strategic brothers needs not only the broad interests and the intellectual agility to cope with a bewildering range of substantive possibilities in the unfolding of world events but also an acute institutional sense of realism about what is worthwhile and achievable, the ability to get all relevant stakeholders on board, or at least to consult their interests, and perhaps above all else to construct a post-strategy implementation plan that translates theory into practice. Without such an approach there is every danger that the results of such strategic reflection, however brilliant and insightful, will have little practical effect in the randomised world of strategy-making and merely gather dust in some forgotten archive of things that should have made a difference, but didn’t.

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Deterrence and Its Maritime Dimension

James Henry Bergeron

Introduction

Peter Swartz has spent a career thinking about deterrence, although not always in that lexicon. The Lehman Maritime Strategy – which Peter contributed much to – reconceptualised what it would take to deter Soviet aggression on land by pushing hard on their nuclear bastions at sea. His work on Soviet naval intentions during the Cold War is illuminating and has gained a new relevance in subsequent years with the stand up of Second Fleet and Joint Force Command Norfolk, both tasked with SLOC protection. The Cold War reality that protection of those bastions rather than a war on SLOCs was the Soviet priority begs important questions today.

When the Cold War ended, there followed two and a half decades of US Navy and NATO focus on limiting the impact of the break-up of the Soviet Union, providing the security underpinnings of European Union enlargement, combating extremism and ethnic cleansing in the Balkans; Iraq, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and pirates off the Horn of Africa. The new era focused on fighting wars and insurgencies deemed winnable (wrongly in some cases), not deterring wars that were unwinnable. Deterrence seemed out of place as a central organising concept as early as 1992’s ‘…From the Sea’.

1 Political Advisor, NATO Allied Maritime Command, DD sometime lecturer in law at University College Dublin and fellow of the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge University. This paper is a personal contribution by the author and is not intended to reflect NATO policy or the position of any Ally. The paper is derived from public source information and earlier versions were published in The Naval Review vol. 107, no. 2, 134-154 (May 2019) and as “Die Dynamik der Ab-schreckung,” in SIRIUS – Zeitschrift für Strategische Analysen vol. 2, no. 1 (2018), 21-31.
But times change and Fukuyama was sadly proved wrong about the enduring triumph of liberal democracy. For NATO, the harbinger of this change was a resurgent and revanchist Russia. The warning signs were there from 2007 in Estonian cyber-attacks, the Russia-Georgia conflict of 2008, return of bomber deployments and investment in a modern navy. Finally, in the face of the Russian Federation’s aggression in Ukraine, the 2014 NATO Summit shifted Alliance focus back to collective defence against a peer competitor, a stance reiterated and strengthened by the 2016 Warsaw Summit in the context of Russian intervention in Syria and power projection across all of NATO’s strategic seas. Deterrence regained its mojo: conferences were held, deterrent management boards instituted, articles published.

The new NATO posture was built on a faster, more robust NATO Response Force agreed at Wales, followed at Warsaw by the deployment of Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) battalions in Eastern European states, backed by a new emphasis on Follow-On-Force availability beyond eFP and a return to Article V collective defence exercises. The 2018 NATO Leaders’ Meeting decided on a Reinforced Allied Maritime Posture and the NATO Readiness Initiative which includes 30 warships in addition to the NATO Response Force to be ready for action within thirty days.

By 2018, moreover, there was a growing Alliance awareness that deterrence of Russia in a crisis would require the ability to conduct a comprehensive military and non-military struggle across multiple theatres. The NRF could no longer be a single force to fight in one place at one time. The non-military dynamics of the new competition were brought home in spectacular fashion in 2016 by Moscow’s use of social media and new communications to promote a ‘post-truth’ information culture, attempts to undermine the US November elections and arguably to influence the BREXIT referendum.

Much of the revived discussion over NATO deterrence deals with the programmatics of its conventional military posture – are there enough troops, ships and aircraft? Can they deploy quickly enough in times of crisis? Can they deter hybrid or asymmetric warfare? To address those questions, this essay attempts to return to the fundamentals of deterrence thinking, in particular its psychological and cultural aspects. For that reason, it begins by embracing rather than marginalising the nuclear dynamic which remains central to any approach to conventional deterrence between Russia and NATO. It then explores the impact of Putin’s Russia on the deterrent equilibrium and the distinctive maritime contribution to deterrence today.
Deterrence is primarily an effect. Specifically, it is the effect of preventing an adversary from taking an action or position without recourse to an attack oneself but instead relying on posture, resolve and diplomacy to convince that adversary that they cannot succeed or that the costs would far outweigh the gains. In other words, deterrence speaks to altering states of action. It is ultimately assessed in terms of practical outcomes. One does not deter the adversary's intent, only their actions.

Deterrence can be assessed but not measured, or at least not measured negatively. The well-known criticism of deterrence is the impossibility of proving a negative. “Did the nuclear deterrent prevent World War Three or was peace maintained due to independent reasons?” the question asks. However, such a train of thought is partly flawed. While it is true that we cannot prove a negative, we can prove a positive. If an aggressor takes an action in the face of a strategy aimed specifically at deterring that action, then as a matter of fact that strategy has failed.

Much discussion on deterrence focuses on the posture element – the respective orders of battle, military capabilities, the ‘missile gap’, etc. This is a primary consideration which often dominates in NATO given the organisation’s focus on defence planning and minimum military requirements. The approach is particularly apparent in recent debates over the correct size and strength of the NATO Response Forces. But posture is insufficient by itself to achieve deterrence. This is because deterrence, like the concept of power itself, is founded on perception. Numbers of army divisions do not speak deterrence by themselves, they are given effect via the adversary’s belief in not only our readiness but our willingness to use them if attacked. A significant evidence of that ‘readiness’ comes from exercises and deployments, particularly naval deployments. But at the end of the day, the ‘willingness’ element in the adversary’s calculus is always psychological. Finally, in most deterrence scenarios, both parties have deployed deterrent strategies and military postures against the other. The situation is one of mutual or competitive deterrence.

These propositions, if accepted, imply at least four inter-related elements in a deterrent model: (1) our understanding of the comparative military balance as well other means of deterrence (such as sanctions) by the respective powers; (2) our estimate of the limits of our own and our adversary’s resolve in using them, based on our understanding of the interests at

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stake; (3) the adversary’s understanding of the comparative military balance and other means of deterrence; and (4) the adversary’s estimate of our resolve to use them as well as his own, based on their understanding of the interests at stake. These are the elements of a rational deterrence theory.\(^5\)

Deterrence thus operates on two interrelated planes. There are the military postures, procurement, budgets, and technological developments themselves; energy dependency and other essentially structural or static strategic factors (all objectively measurable elements) which together constitute a comparative baseline strategic advantage in an objective sense. It is the analysis of a chess board advantage (or disadvantage) in play prior to a move. This baseline provides the raw material for dynamic action such as exercises and deployments to assert readiness (another measurable element) and strategic messaging which attempts to build on readiness to assert willingness (the immeasurable and subjective element). The dynamic action is the chess move itself. Usually, both players are playing this game, thus the respective perception of intent and resolve adds to the baseline factors to constitute comparative strategic advantage and comparative deterrent effect.

There is also an indispensable diplomatic element to successful mutual deterrence. In a standoff arising out of military competition for strategic advantage – which mutual deterrent strategies help to create – it is essential that ways are found that allow the overextended party a means to climb down the escalation ladder without losing face. The paradigm example is the Cuban Missile Crisis.\(^6\) This equates to a win/not lose option, widely known in economics. Unlike in a zero-sum game approach, this means one side can win without the other side necessarily having to lose.

**Deterrence in the Cold War: How we learned to love the bomb**

In the context of NATO and Russia, deterrence has an existential element due to the nuclear capabilities of both sides. On any realistic scale, the nuclear dimension makes a full-scale military exchange between NATO and Russia mutually destructive. No approach to great power competition or conflict can ignore that nuclear dynamic, indeed both sides have tradition-

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ally leveraged it for advantage. As a result, strategic competition in the Cold War was not about military victory so much as coercion, intimidation and the purchase of political or strategic advantage.\footnote{Thomas Schelling, \textit{The Diplomacy of Violence} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).}

The deterrent model of the early Cold War was based on Soviet conventional military advantage and a NATO nuclear first-use posture. It assumed a full-scale Alliance – essentially US - response to aggression. So many pundits decrying modern Russia’s threat of tactical nuclear first use seem to have forgotten Cold War history and indeed the Alliance’s continuing first-use option. However, by 1954 Basil Liddell-Hart had concluded that Russia’s possession of the hydrogen bomb meant that, in practice, the nuclear option would not be used other than in response to a nuclear attack and history to date seems to have proven him right.\footnote{Basil Liddell-Hart, \textit{Strategy: Second Revised Edition} (New York: Plume, 1991).}

In 1967 the Alliance adopted the strategy of Flexible Response, where an Alliance military response would be graduated and proportionate to the level of Soviet aggression. Flexible Response was a recognition of Soviet nuclear parity and the prospect of mutual assured destruction. It sought to assure both sides that a full scale first strike was not the only strategic option in a crisis.

The next shift in Alliance deterrent practice came with the arms control, limitation, and reduction treaties. In that process, the question of resolve to use force if attacked became legalised as a negotiating assumption. Politically, \textit{détente} largely ruled until the revival of serious political hostility during the period 1979-1984.

It is important to note that mutual deterrence between nuclear blocs does not end conflict but usually displaces it. Proxy wars were fought throughout the Cold War in Korea, Vietnam, Angola, Afghanistan and many other places on the proviso that Soviet and Allied forces would not enter into direct combat with each other and caution was exercised where they might. Moscow did not retaliate against NATO’s airlift into West Berlin and backed down over Cuba. No Allied action was taken to provide support to the quashed Revolutions in Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968. In all of those cases, appreciation of the interests at stake – in the eyes of the other – was determinative.

Thus, by the 1970s the NATO-Warsaw Pact deterrent model comprised two effects, ideally consistent with a Nash equilibrium: A mutual nuclear deterrent which also largely ruled out direct conventional confrontation,
given the interests at stake, the systems in place, and the very real risks of escalation to a nuclear exchange. Beneath that mutually understood threshold, power politics took the form of strategic maneuver: military competition, proxy wars, probing the depth of political will, sensing for weakness or opportunity. This competition for superior deterrent performance ‘beneath the threshold’ - or perhaps better described as moving the goalposts of the mutually agreed threshold to one’s advantage - is the normal use of military activity in a system of mutual deterrence. It is the game that NATO and the Warsaw Pact played throughout the latter half of the Cold War.

The End of the Cold War

The strength of the détente-era deterrent equilibrium model – from Cuba to Afghanistan – was the largely shared perception of red lines. By contrast, the period 1979-1984 put deterrence to the test in ways reminiscent of the present day. The USSR invaded Afghanistan to prop up a proxy regime while Solidarity in Poland sought to attack the Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. They were not alone – a new wave of centre-right political leaders sought to overturn the 1970s’ consensus. Reagan, Thatcher, and Pope John Paul II challenged the détente model, returning to adversarial language and demanding a revision of the great power status quo. There is an eerie parallel to Putin in this, even if the ethics of the two cases are vastly different.

In that final, dangerous phase of the Cold War, Western deterrence took on an aggressive element (from a Soviet perspective) that drove home to the Soviet leadership their inability to compete with the West in the midterm. The Reagan-era Maritime Strategy (under the auspices of John Lehman, then Secretary of the Navy), the deployment of Pershing II intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs) in Europe to counter Soviet SS-20s, the shift towards the AirLand Battle doctrine and follow-on-forces attacks, the ‘Star Wars’ missile defence research as part of the Strategic Defense Initiative, and the rhetoric of an experienced U.S. actor-President (which the Politburo believed), forced internal economic and social pressures to full effect. Mikhail Gorbachev pursued entirely new policies under which the Warsaw Pact and then the USSR ultimately collapsed. A critical element in this was the Soviet leadership’s response to America’s departure from the rules of the game established as part of détente, or so it seemed to them. Public sources point to extreme fear in the Andropov years over a surprise NATO first strike, culminating (according to some commentators)
in their misreading of NATO exercise Able Archer 83 as preparation for a nuclear first-strike, leading to a Soviet alert and nuclear mobilisation.9

The era teaches the dangers of destabilising a deterrent Nash equilibrium when the defending party (here the USSR) had greater interests at stake and less to risk, due to a declining status quo situation. It also teaches the possibility for posture and bluff, backed by defence investment and technological gains (here on the U.S. side) to ultimately alter that equilibrium to one’s own advantage. Putin arguably learned a lot from this period.

With the collapse of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact, deterrence survived in NATO but in a more generalised form. With Russia as a new ‘strategic partner’, NATO Article V defence planning and posture relied on abstract threats rather than concrete adversaries. Further, the Post-Cold War NATO focused on very different conflicts that were about combat missions out of area, not deterrence at home. Of course, the US, UK and France retained their nuclear forces as the ultimate guarantee of their defence, but emphasis was shifting elsewhere - from threat to use as the primary attribute of military power.

The importance of that paradigm shift from deterrence to combat missions cannot be overstated: Almost no one serving today joined up before détente, most mid-level staff officers have no personal memory of the USSR being in existence. Thus, a generation of military leaders have grown up with military force as a tool to be employed, not as a hedge whose purpose was to signal capability and resolve so it would buy strategic advantage. After twenty-four years, a new generation of leaders needed in 2014 to relearn the art of deterrence and apply it in a very different context.

Deterring Russia in the Putin Era

There are many contemporary parallels to the old Cold War standoff. Once again, we are dealing with a mix of nuclear, conventional and uncon-
votional forces on both sides. Once again, the true aim of both sides (it is asserted, and it is a big assumption I will return to) is not to fight a war that could have catastrophic consequences, but to leverage the perception of comparative strategic credibility – readiness and willingness – to make political and economic gains.

So, what is different today that a new NATO deterrent strategy must address? First, the stakes are far more modest. Russia has no strategic ambition or ability to conquer Western Europe as a whole or to impose a totalising ideology by force. Further, the changing nature of war with much smaller professional forces using precision weapons makes a continental envelopment impossible with any foreseeable force package. Moscow seems to have a strategic desire to recapture the sphere of influence they had with Eastern European Allies (but without the direct use of force), to lose no further geo-political ground outside of NATO even if that means using force (read Georgia and Ukraine), achieve a respected military peer status, and recapture a competitive (or at least spoiler) role in the Middle East, North Africa, and possibly elsewhere. By 2019 they have largely achieved this, other than the Eastern European sphere of influence. But these came at the cost of two quagmires in Ukraine and Syria where the political benefits of Russian action have now been harvested but the bills keep coming.

The Russian threat is thus no longer existential to all Allies as a matter of pure military logic, as when Soviet tanks had to roll to the English Channel as part of a huge mechanised strategy for military success. The threat is now seen as existential politically for the Alliance and to its core values; which is a very different thing. In the Cold War the great question was whether the United States would sacrifice itself for Europe in a nuclear exchange. That question is different today, as a Western European Ally might have to decide on going to war with Russia over a slice of another Ally’s territory, knowing Russian troops will never arrive in their own country. To their great credit, the Allies were stridently united at Wales and Warsaw.

Second, the military balance is turned upside down. Now it is a conventionally inferior Russia (albeit with the new development of some quality forces, especially at sea) that relies on its modernising nuclear arsenal, new

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10 It is arguable that the Kremlin does seek to undermine Western liberal-democratic values through a clever use of information operations and media manipulation.
11 However, although very unlikely, there remains the danger of an unforeseen opportunity to regain control in the Baltic States, on the misinterpretation of a political signal by NATO or the United States.
army mobility and the aura of Putin to maintain its deterrent posture and shore up the perception of being a great power. What Russia has always had is the advantage of interior land lines of communication on several NATO borders. New Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities give them a significant anti-access parity with NATO (NATO has been able to threaten their access to the seas everywhere for the past twenty years). And they have a good sized and capable submarine force. But they remain a smaller and limited power.

As with Japan in World War Two, any serious Russian strategy of limited aggression would need to aim at undermining the Allied political will to respond and making the costs of conflict sufficiently high in the short term that the United States and its Allies would choose accommodation over risking a long and destructive war. This is the idea of the Russian ‘local operations’ or ‘60-Day War’, with active fighting of only a couple of weeks. Stakes would not be existential and the Kremlin would seek an advantageous peace, not a military victory. In deterrence terms, the value of that approach is to purchase strategic capital, if Allies buy the argument.

Third, the dynamics of competition and conflict with Russia have expanded far beyond the military element. Since 1991 Russia has re-joined the world community in terms of trade, energy links, mobility, elite ownership, and social connections. As a result, sanctions, energy dependency, the politics of oil prices, gas production, market access, restrictions on elite enjoyment of international life, asset seizures, and the importance of third-party crises such as China, Iran, Syria and ISIL all matter as much as the military balance to both sides. Employing those various tools cuts both ways. This was a dynamic largely missing from the Cold War confrontation.

Fourth and finally, all of the above means that the firm perception of the other’s resolve to respond with military force is not clear, with Putin appearing resolved and occasionally escalatory (like Reagan?) whereas Western leaders are deploying a sometimes confusing mix, even to one another, of caution and boldness in addressing the Russian challenge. It is open to question whether Putin represents Russia’s essential fear of Western encirclement and attack or whether Putin is playing the Reagan ‘cowboy’ for strategic advantage against what he knows to be a status quo and risk averse Alliance. In such a game of chicken, the difficult question is where those tripwires truly lay. It is here that the consequences for miscalculation on either side are great.
Based on the foregoing, the key questions for a NATO deterrence strategy appear to be:

1. **How not to be deterred by Russia?** This is really the search for a way of delivering superior competitive deterrent effect. A critical element is understanding how ‘escalation’ (a Bad Thing) relates to ‘deterrence’ (a Good Thing) in concrete situations, or indeed at all. The distinction between the two concepts was partly lost in recent years and that has arguably weakened the perception of NATO’s resolve in the eyes of the Kremlin. That mood appears to be passing, with NATO embracing the idea of a more robust and well theorized deterrent posture. But there remains an upper limit to the idea of not being deterred. Just as NATO might posture a capability and resolve that it believes the Kremlin will not cross, it would equally need to understand the limits of punishment it would be willing to endure as an Alliance and the risks of escalation it would be willing to take. In practical terms, this requires a sufficient Allied military presence in threatened states and in adjacent water space that would prevent a rapid Russian occupation to conclude in a bloodless *fait accompli*. The key to deterring the overt or covert attack is removing the Kremlin’s self-serving belief that NATO might shift to a passive, ‘negotiation-led’ response to a largely bloodless offensive.

2. **How to deter Russia from conventional military action which is ‘under the threshold’ of escalation?** On the high side of escalatory risk, it is safe to assume that there is a limit to the Kremlin’s ambition, a point beyond which they assume an Allied military response that could escalate into major war. And they assume we must have similar limits in relation to them. The prime debate on NATO’s side of the ledger has been over the Baltic States; and on whether both sides share the view that a Russian military incursion into Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania crosses such a line. By contrast, on the low side of escalatory risk, there is arguably no strictly military deterrent strategy that can deter action both sides solidly believe will not lead to direct conflict. This relates mostly to third-party crises: Russia never signaled that the US invasion of Iraq or the creation of an independent Kosovo would cross that red line, while NATO was very clear in
its initial signaling that Russian military action in Georgia and Ukraine would not trigger an Alliance military response.\(^\text{12}\)

The danger, of course, is in the grey zone of actions that do not appear to cross a red line \textit{per se}, but which might in certain circumstances, or if combined, invite a response of some sort. From the Russian perspective, the grey zone of Allied action likely includes potential NATO and European Union actions aimed at weakening their hold on Crimea, ending their destabilising presence in Eastern Ukraine, undermining the Russian presence in Syria, or using economic pressure to undermine the Putin regime. For the Allies, the grey zone has expanded to include Russian efforts to chill Allied naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea, Russian interference in elections, media manipulation, support for anti-liberal parties, or movements in Europe and the United States.

Countering the grey zone strategy requires that Allies have the courage to insist that their own \textit{normal} deployment and exercises are also ‘under the threshold’ whatever rhetoric about escalation is coming out of Moscow. Normal ought to mean robust but not rising to the level where a pre-emptive strike would be a serious danger in the honest opinion of the Oligarch on the Kremlin Omnibus.

3. \textit{How to deter Russia from ‘hybrid’ forms of coercion and harassment?} Hybrid action is almost by definition ‘below the threshold’, combining information operations, plausibly non-attributable proxy action, and shows of force. Each of these, on their own, would likely not justify the escalatory risk of a direct military response by NATO forces. The threshold between hybrid warfare (not a Russian concept) and conventional conflict may precisely be the point at which the Kremlin believes it can push its deterrent strategic capital.

But because almost all hybrid activity is ‘below the threshold’ as assessed by both sides, the scope for non-kinetic Allied responses below this imagined line is in fact wide. Economic instruments, capacity building, planning to support Allies as they deal with apparently internal hybrid challenges, training and exercises are all available as elements of a counter-hybrid strategy. This is arguably a form of deterrence by denial rather than deterrence by unacceptable punishment.

A NATO Deterrent Posture for a New Set of Challenges

An Alliance deterrent strategy that addresses these questions must necessarily include a combination of NATO and individual Allied efforts to raise the costs – military and otherwise – of Russian action beyond any reasonable utility and, perhaps more important, to deny any realistic hope of success in both the near and long terms but especially in the long term. Their costs may outweigh their gains in our view, but it is Russia’s view that counts. Military, economic, financial, political, and social levers of deterrent effect are required and need to be coordinated. However, it is within reason that some of Russia’s elites may see restoring the borders of the USSR worth a generation’s economic and political isolation. This is especially so if circumstances would appear to offer a quick win, few costs, and no armed retaliation. Economic and political instruments alone are therefore insufficient; the threat of military force and possibly devastating force is still necessary.

On that basis, the first military requirement remains to maintain a nuclear standoff that neutralises any perceived advantage gained from initiating nuclear strikes on the respective homelands and hence also discourages first strike thinking. Changing political cultures in the post-Cold War Era have actually facilitated this process by lowering the public acceptability of nuclear use to almost zero.

Russian efforts to bolster its nuclear posture with a new class of SSBNs, its much vaunted plan to deploy long range nuclear torpedoes and other innovations should be read as efforts to make their posture credible, in other words to remove the nuclear threat from the Western arsenal. Equally, the West will need to maintain its own credible nuclear deterrent, for the same reason. This does not preclude the continuation of strategic arms control so long as the agreed limits tempt neither side to bluff or adventurism.

The second deterrent requirement for NATO is to maintain conventional deterrence by denial in Europe – the ability to counter aggression on the ground quickly, avoiding a fait accompli, and able to inflict a tactical defeat (or at least a holding strategy) on Russian and proxy forces. That undermines a Russian short war strategy and presents unacceptable risks of escalation. Success requires a baseline force in threatened areas, now provided under eFP but backed up by on-call forces sufficient to stop a Russian advance were it of the conventional type. A part of that same force needs to be agile enough to respond to small or hybrid actions. The speed of deployment of the NATO Response Force (NRF) will be critical in achieving this deterrent effect.
Much has recently been written on the inadequacy of NATO land force posture to counter an incursion by Russia’s ground forces available in the Baltic region. That is a little beside the point in deterrence terms. On land, a deterrent presence can have several purposes: a tripwire for unacceptable escalation as in the case of Cold War Berlin (which the eFP rotational battalions provide), or enough capability to delay the advance of Russian forces to bring wider deterrent means to bear and to deploy on-call forces. The full NRF of roughly forty thousand troops would provide an adequate range of initial capabilities, so long as there were sufficient notice and political will to deploy them on indication and warning.

The Utility of Maritime Power to Contemporary Deterrence

Alliance maritime power has always played an important role in deterrence. In the Cold War it was given to the navies to provide the most survivable arm of the nuclear deterrent, to deliver carrier-based strike as part of the defence against invasion, to keep open the Transatlantic SLOCs allowing for North American reinforcement and resupply of Western Europe; to maintain the security of the Mediterranean and prevent a Soviet Invasion of the Eastern Mediterranean or oil-rich Iran.

In the current situation, many old roles continue but some are new and strategically subtle. As before, the submarine-based deterrent is the primary means of guaranteeing the nuclear standoff required to make major war between NATO and Russia highly unlikely due to escalation risks for both sides. But as noted, posture without the perception of resolve does not deter. As uncomfortable as it may be for Robert Kagan’s ‘post-Tragic Europe’, it may now be necessary to signal more clearly NATO’s nuclear readiness and resolve if attacked. Putin has played well the card of suggesting that the West could not be so barbaric as to resort to nuclear threats while making his own. But on the assumption that the Kremlin believed a conflict with NATO could be kept conventional or that gains could be consolidated before the risks of escalation were unmanageable (the ‘60-Day War’ approach), maritime power is an important part of the strategy to signal that an overt conventional attack could not ultimately succeed, even if initial Russian gains were made.

At sea, this means enough naval and air power to outmatch the Russian fleets in three theatres simultaneously, the Baltic, Eastern Mediterranean and GIUK Gap, including their submarine capability. The Russian Black Sea Fleet capability would need to be matched, at least sufficient to offer a deterrent tripwire for military escalation. Air power needs the ability to provide tangible air superiority over Russian air power. This includes maintenance of SLOCs, maritime embargo, sea control/sea denial as well as strike and amphibious support for joint operations.

The past few years has witnessed a rekindling of concern over Transatlantic and Mediterranean SLOCs. The standup of NATO’s new Joint Force Command Norfolk was predicated on the need to maximise the Russian perception that Europe cannot be isolated from North American support in a conventional conflict. Although most concerns have been focused on the risks to military reinforcement, a limited Russian campaign against commercial shipping cannot be ruled out. That might be especially attractive as part of a short war intended to pressure the Allies into negotiations. Countering this requires advanced theatre ASW capabilities, well trained, exercised and integrated, as well as lots of Maritime Patrol Aircraft and new autonomous solutions.

But it may also require going back to the schoolbooks on convoys, escort, manoeuvre and deception at sea. In two World Wars, the US and UK naval leaderships were tardy in protecting merchant traffic, the lifeblood of commerce, at huge cost. As the Centre for Naval Analyses points out, the Soviet Navy did not intend to fight a major guerre de course in the North Atlantic but to protect their submarine bastions. The Lehman Maritime Strategy was designed to press the Soviets in the north to keep them too occupied to threaten SLOCs. But will that work if the adversary’s strategy is for a short war and the infliction of limited shipping losses that nonetheless stresses the Allies into negotiations?

In another “Back to the Future” consequence, the Alliance may need to think about the desirability of signaling an ability to disrupt Russian seaborne trade if that would have a significant deterrent impact. This was not an issue during the Cold War, but since the 1990s Russian seaborne imports have blossomed, with the critical European hub being St Petersburg. In 2000 St Petersburg received 306K TEU in containerised cargo. In 2013 that rose to 2900K TEU. The Pacific commercial transport hub is Vostochny (near Vladivostok) receiving 1389K TEU in 2017 (up from 461K TEU in 2000) and which would be a task for the US Pacific Fleet.

14 Swartz (2013).
The third hub, much smaller, is in the Black Sea at Novorossiysk at 761K in 2017 (up from 13K in 2000). While an embargo may have limited effect on a great land mass in the medium term, the short-term economic dislocation of current trade patterns and long-term diminution of the national economy could be substantial. As it would be with us.

The enforcement of a Baltic embargo would likely be via control of the Danish Straits and conducted in the North Sea. NATO naval forces might be needed to enforce the embargo on either side of the Straits against Russian attempts to force them. There is also a significant consequential impact on the mine threat. It is not likely that Russia would mine the Danish Straits given that they depend on the trade route. But if the Allies were to impose an economic embargo in a conflict situation, Russia would then have every incentive and nothing to lose in mining the Straits to remove Allied trade and naval access to the Baltic. NATO mine clearance capabilities would play an important deterrent role in signaling that such an effort could not succeed for more than the short term.

Finally, and also new, NATO maritime forces need to be able to deter Russian aggression against Allies in the Eastern Baltic and Black Seas. NATO had always been present in the Western Baltic, but was postured to counter a force deployed from the Baltic Fleet base and from the ports of the Baltic States themselves. Now maritime forces need to ensure credible sea control of the Baltic to protect the maritime flanks of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. This effort requires assurance to Allies as well as deterrence of Russia, given that Allied intimidation has been an objective of Moscow’s military and political efforts. In the Black Sea, Allied maritime forces are more constrained short of war due to Montreux Convention limits. Deterrence there takes the form more of an escalation tripwire, where an attack on Allied maritime forces would trigger NATO escalation.

The Utility of Maritime Power to Comparative Strategic Advantage

As argued above, rivalry and the search for strategic advantage below the threshold of direct conflict is the normal state of affairs of great powers engaged in mutual deterrence. Arguably, the Cold War Nash Equilibrium may no longer apply and the mutual understanding of red lines is no longer so clear. Determining the threshold of mutually agreed restraint is the true strategic question. It is where NATO and the Warsaw Pact spent most of their time – from Berlin, to Cuba, to the Arms Race, to Solidarity to the collapse of the Berlin Wall. This is also the strategic dilemma that is back with us today. Perhaps NATO’s greatest challenge is in grasping that
the Alliance as a whole (and the maritime in particular) has a new(old) ‘operation’ to conduct, one so obvious and routine during the Cold War that it was never given a name – operating and exercising NATO and Allied forces to maximize deterrent presence, leverage and strategic advantage.

Along with air power, the maritime contribution to this endeavour is substantial. Strategic competition is most pronounced in the global commons, where rival forces can position themselves and signal readiness and willingness without crossing territorial boundaries and triggering conflict. The deployment by NATO of the Standing Naval Forces into the North Atlantic, Baltic, Mediterranean and Black seas – as a matter of routine – sends a powerful message that the Alliance is not deterred by Russian military postures or the advent of new capabilities such as long-range missiles for area denial. In effect, it calls the bluff of such weapons.

That said, posture matters as well as stated intent. Technology, design, tactics and procedures need to be developed to adapt to the Russian acquisition of long-range cruise missile, hypersonic weapons as well as the conventional ballistic missile threat. Tactics for the concentration of force from a distributed fleet need to be relearned and practiced. Improvements in ASW training and skills need to be undertaken. These improvements back up NATO confidence with credibility. Nonetheless, the ability to deploy Allied naval assets where needed – as routine activity - for presence, tracking, exercising and C4ISR is a critical component in a competition for strategic advantage. It sends a clear signal that the Alliance is not deterred. The tracking of the Kuznetsov Battle Group in 2016 and the NATO Standing Naval Forces presence in the Eastern Mediterranean in August to September 2018 - during heavy Russian Navy presence - were powerful examples of NATO naval forces presenting a deterrent posture.

A second area of maritime utility to comparative deterrent advantage is scale, so long as it can be managed and packaged for effect. Unlike the Cold War, the Allied fleets far outnumber the Russian navy in quantity and mostly in quality. The maritime is perhaps the domain of greatest relative advantage except where undermined by disunity, disorganisation, and lack of interoperability that erodes the strategic edge. Here strong Standing Naval Forces send a potent message. But even more, the visible ability to

harness, force-package and occasionally call on the bulk of deployed or rapidly deployable Allied naval forces is a powerful deterrent signal.

Conclusion: Some Doubts from the Cultural Dimension

Much of the above ought to sound and feel familiar to anyone who studied the Cold War or indeed lived through those years. But a few assumptions lay at the heart of this classic deterrence argument that are worth questioning as we finish the ‘late teens’ of the 21st Century.

First, Realist approaches to international relations privilege the existence of national interests that are comprehensible to leaders and which, it is assumed, they are more or less compelled to defend and advance. The above argument is largely predicated on the truth of that assumption. Governments and elites may at times misunderstand their own vital or even sectoral interests (a *lumpenelite*) or occasionally have little interest beyond personal political survival or economic enrichment. But ultimately the Realist approach to deterrence depends on professional, bi-partisan, interest-based governance. The public analogue to this approach is discipline in public and secret diplomacy in a world where all players are closely scrutinising stated positions for evidence of intent.

The world of today challenges the validity of this assumption about political culture. Disturbing trends in Western politics since 2016 show many individual leaders, parties and governments focused on their short-term survival over wider national or global interests, or worse, an inability to discern public interests independently from their own personal or ideological ones. Political messaging varies from the safe and bland radio interview to the incendiary Tweet, and there is a growing public and elite disbelief of either as a genuine statement. In such an environment, the tools of deterrent signaling begin to lose their effectiveness.

A second, partly contrary, consideration follows from the first. It can be assumed in part that deterrence works because political leaders cannot easily back down in a confrontation. If that is less true today, if leaders on both sides are more open to abrupt turnarounds in policies and red lines (witness North Korea), then the risk of major conflict may become less but the risk of a military adventure – testing the waters – might well increase.

At the end of the day, deterrent strategies are tested in a future situation that is not precisely foreseen, involving political leaders and prevailing concerns that were not anticipated when postures and policies were first established. That makes political will and the ability to effectively commu-
nicate it the most variable factor in deterrent credibility and delivering deterrent effect.

Works Cited


Peter Swartz has not only been a naval strategist, but also a scholar of the history of Navy strategy and especially that of its creators and practitioners. His experiences as a staff officer in the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) staff (OPNAV) in the 1970s and in the 1980s first exposed him to the rival camps influencing the development of Navy strategic concepts. Swartz began to study these concepts and after leaving active duty in 1993 and attempted to categorize them within a wider idea of who the average naval officer was in terms of professional thought and outlook. He vehemently disagreed with the notion a vague sense of “tradition” alone motivated the service’s officers, a concept popularized by RAND analyst Carl Builder in his 1989 book *The Masks of War*. Swartz’s own experience convinced him that forward-deployed operations, their planning and execution by naval officers afloat far from the continental U.S., were in fact the real Navy ethos of itself.¹ From this core assumption, Swartz sought to further identify and categorize the groups of officers seeking to create and influence the development of Navy Strategy and their places within the late 20th century and early 21st century officer corps. Swartz identified two distinct, but similar groups of resident on the OPNAV staff seeking to control the definition and development of naval strategy. His efforts drew a pattern resembling Army historian Brian McAllister Linn’s categorization of different types of Army officers based on their intellectual traditions in the 2007 book *The Echo of Battle, The Army’s Way of War*.²

The two primary competitors Swartz identified working to create and influence naval strategy were political/military analysts assigned to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations Strategy and Policy (OP-06) strategic concepts branch (OP-603) and the operations analysts working in the Systems Analysis Division (OP-96,) and its Long Range Planning branch.

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OP-965. Both were drawn primarily from the ranks of Navy line officers who regularly deployed overseas in support of the rotational Cold War operations from the late 1940s through the present day. While similar in terms of their service, their educational backgrounds were different, with the OP-603 staff primarily composed of liberal arts graduates while the systems analysis division drew primarily from quantitative analysts. Swartz noted that these competitors had wide followings and sought to out-do one another in terms of influencing the development of Navy strategy. He was not the only such witness. OP-96 Deputy (and later Naval Postgraduate School professor of operations analysis) Captain Wayne Hughes had a similar view, noting in a 2002 article that in 1973 he was sometimes called upon to, “smooth strained relations” between OP-96 and the Strategy Branch then led by future CNO Rear Admiral Bill Crowe.\(^3\) Both parties competed across the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s to influence development of Navy strategy. They came into something of a direct conflict in the early 1980s with the operations analysis cohort suffering a temporary defeat, only to rebound after the end of the Cold War as the lack of a defined opponent tended to reduce the need for defined naval strategy.

Although a member of the political/military analysis group and at times among its most partisan members, Swartz discovered that continued interaction between the two groups rather than the outright “victory” of one over the other was vital to the continued development of effective naval strategy.\(^4\) While Swartz’s overall description of the U.S. Navy officer corps “ethos” has gained greater acceptance in recent years, his classification of the competing strategy groups has not received similar recognition. This is perhaps due to the relative decline in the influence of both the pol/mil and operations analysis groups due to the rise of the post-Cold War, budget-driven strategy process identified by Naval Postgraduate School scholar Dr. Peter Haynes in his research leading to his book *Toward a New American Naval Strategy*.

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Origins of the Pol/Mil and Operations Analysis Groups

OP-603

Both groups Swartz identified as critical in the development of Cold War U.S. Navy strategy and policy had their origins in the attempts of the broader defense community to respond to the threat posed by the Soviet Union. Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Robert Carney created the office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Strategy and Policy (OP-06) in 1955. Carney intended it to serve as the CNO’s dedicated office to manage military planning and policy at the JCS level. Its distinct strategy and concepts branch OP-603 emerged in 1978 at the behest of CNO Admiral Holloway and his OP-06 and future Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Vice Admiral Crowe. Peter Swartz’s first Pentagon assignment commenced in 1978 as a member of the newly minted OP-603. He later described its roles and functions as follows,

OP-603 had been established in 1978 out of three earlier organizations within OP-60 (OP-605C (long range planning), OP-60N (strategic actions group) and portions of OP-601 (NATO). A variety of officers staffed OP-603, but it usually had a healthy contingent of officers with strong academic policy backgrounds. It worked most broad policy and strategy questions for the Navy Staff, including Navy inputs to the Defense Guidance, non-nuclear NSC policy documents, the NATO Defense Planning Questionnaire (DPQ), and strategic homeporting policy.

The OP-603 office had extraordinary academic credentials as Swartz suggested, achievements beyond most of their naval officer contemporaries. Its creator VADM William Crowe was a Princeton University Ph.D. graduate in political science. Many the staff officers were graduates of the Fletcher School of Law and diplomacy, as well as programs at the University of Southern California, the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), American, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, and Harvard in the 1970s. Ph.D.s serving in OP-603 between 1978 and 1991 included CAPT Roger Barnett, CDR Jim Stark, CAPT Barry Plott, CDR Fred Zuniga,

LCDR Stan Weeks, CAPT Betsy Wylie, and LCDR Tom Fedyszyn. Those with advanced Master Degrees from these same schools serving in OP-603 over the same period included CDR Tom Marfiak, CDR Jay Prout, CDR Obie O’Brien, CDR Ray Conrad, CDR Spence Johnson (OP-605 but closely collaborated with OP-603), CDR Peter Swartz, LCDR Anne Rondeau, and LCDR Jim Moseman. Peter Swartz later described them as, “both good ‘building mechanics’ and good ‘national security networkers’ as well as substantive national security sub-specialists. Most had studied Bureaucratic Politics, then in vogue in graduate schools, and took it to heart.”

These men and women also performed well in their regular naval career paths in addition to their academic achievements. Nearly all achieved command at sea if they were unrestricted line officers or received senior staff appointments if not in line for afloat command. Stark, Marfiak, and Rondeau achieved flag rank in their careers.

The OP-603 office stepped boldly onto a wider policy stage with its role in the development of the Maritime Strategy from 1982 through the end of the decade. Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral William Small first commissioned what became the Maritime Strategy in a December 1981 memo to Director of Navy Program planning and other senior OPNAV officers detailing his thoughts on the problems of Navy program management. Small was concerned that navy programs for the construction of new ships, submarines, and aircraft tended to drive the strategy for their employment, when the reverse situation would be a better choice. He wanted to change this so that, “Serious and responsible thought about the naval part of national strategy would eventually become the basis upon which the United States built its navy for the future.”

Small’s memo provoked action from multiple offices in OPNAV including OP-06 (Deputy CNO for Plans and Policy), OP-095 (Naval Warfare) and OP-96. There was general agreement that the Navy needed a strategy that fit with Secretary of the Navy John Lehman’s 600 ship navy program,
and supported the program objective memorandum (POM) that stated the Navy’s planned force structure acquisitions for the upcoming years. It was agreed that OP-603 would take the lead in developing the strategy. OP-603’s branch chief Captain Elizabeth Wylie assigned the work of assembling the strategic document to Lieutenant Commander Stanley Weeks, a surface warfare officer with significant academic credentials, including a Ph.D. from American University in International Relations. Weeks teamed with Commander William Spencer Johnson, another surface warfare officer with strong academic credentials from the Fletcher School of Diplomacy. He was then serving in the OP-602 office engaged in an effort to expand the number of ports that could support the permanent assignment of naval vessels in the continental United States. Johnson also had experience working directly with Secretary Lehman and spent 27 months assigned to the Joint Staff.

Weeks and Johnson molded the force structure for their strategy by adding together the force requirements from each of the unified commanders (CINC’s). They also used the CINCs’ own war plans as the basis for the Maritime Strategy’s Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean elements. Much of the inspiration for the plan also came from Admiral Hayward’s war planning for the Pacific when he served as Commander, Pacific Fleet prior to his selection as CNO. Weeks used elements of Hayward’s “Sea Strike” plan, which involved massing carrier groups for strikes against selected targets, as one of the core operational elements of the Maritime Strategy.

Other current and former OP-603 members played important roles in this initial effort as well. Weeks passed elements of his document through Commander Kenneth McGruther from the CNO’s Strategic Studies Group support staff in Newport (and OP-603 alumnus), and Lieutenant Commander Tom Marfiak (also from OP-603) in order to get their insights into the most recent intelligence on Soviet naval intentions. The strategy was extensively reviewed and critiqued by Weeks’s peers and superiors for accuracy and in preparation for the questions that would undoubtedly come from senior officers in response to the briefing. This process, known as “murder boarding” developed highly skilled briefers who would antici-

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14 Ibid.
15 Author phone interview with Captain William Spencer Johnson, USN (ret), 1 July 2015.
16 Author phone interview with Dr. Stanley Weeks, 16 February 2016.
17 Hattendorf (2004), 70.
pate and be prepared to answer detailed questions. Commander Johnson made sure the strategy fit within budget guidelines and served in the role of “adult supervision” for the junior Weeks. By the early fall of 1982 the strategy was deemed mature enough to present it to the forward-deployed unified commanders who would need to carry it forward.

The venue for this presentation was the October 1982 CNO’s annual naval commanders in chief (CINCs) conference. Rather than hold the gathering in Washington D.C., as had been the case for past events, the new CNO Admiral James Watkins decided to host the conference at the Naval War College in Newport, RI. The fleet commanders who received the briefing were in some ways critical of the presentation. Admiral William Crowe, then serving as Commander in Chief of Allied Forces Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH), warned the Mediterranean Sea would present challenges for implementing the strategy. Admiral Sylvester Foley, the Deputy CNO for Plans and Policy (OP-6) suggested it was arrogant of the Navy to assume it knew so much about intended Soviet operations. Despite such criticism, there was enough support to press on with the development of the Maritime Strategy. Its first full briefing was given to Navy Secretary Lehman, CNO Admiral James Watkins and Marine Corps Commandant General Robert H. Barrow on 4 November 1982.

The rapid creation and approval of this first iteration of the Maritime Strategy cemented OP-603’s role as the strategy experts in OPNAV. The strategy’s close connection with Secretary Lehman’s 600 ship navy concept however brought the strategy branch into conflict with the other OPNAV office whose analytical expertise, particularly in force structure and long-range planning, threatened to scuttle the new Maritime Strategy. The Extended Planning branch (OP-965) had similar academic and operational origins to OP-603, and according to Peter Swartz was a competitor in that, “There was a certain sense of rivalry between OP-06 and OP-090 on occasion, expressed at lower levels by a sense of rivalry between OP-965 and OP-603.” While rivals, they had often worked in tandem but the 600-ship navy question set them at odds in a contest that would ultimately prove fatal to one in the short run and perhaps to the other a decade later.

18 Author phone interview with Dr. Stanley Weeks, 16 February 2016.
19 Ibid.
21 Swartz (1996), 91.
CNO Admiral Elmo Zumwalt created the OP-965 Extended Planning Branch as an element of the OP-96 Systems Analysis Division in 1971. Zumwalt, who was the founding director of the Navy’s systems analysis office in August 1966, was supportive of making decisions “through analysis” when nominated to be CNO in 1970. He further expanded the power and scope of the analysis discipline within OPNAV over the course of his CNO term. He brought Rear Admiral Stansfield Turner back as OP-96 in late 1971 and gave him control of the CNO Program Analysis Memorandum (CPAM) process, the service chief’s assessment of all Navy programs in the annual defense budget. He founded the OP-96D Cost Analysis Group designed to advise the Navy on program costs in October 1972. He also placed control of the Navy’s interactions with the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) the Navy’s federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) with OP-96, a move that in the words of CNA analyst Jeffrey Sands, “Permitted him (Zumwalt) to overwhelm any opposition with analysis unavailable to anyone who might oppose him, both internally and externally.” Finally, in 1971 Zumwalt created the OP-965 Extended Planning and Net Assessment Branch in order to give a more long-range perspective to his analytical efforts.

Subsequently, in 1975 the net assessment function was split off from OP-965 as OP-96N, leaving OP-965 as just the Long Range Planning branch and perhaps setting it on a collision course with OP-603. Both entities were starting to look very much alike. Peter Swartz’s description of the Long Range Planning Branch sounds very much like OP-603,

OP-965 was established to develop the Navy’s Extended Planning Annex (EPA), a required Navy submission to OSD showing the implications of the POM for the distant future. It also did speechwriting and special projects for the VCNO, commissioned studies on strategic problems, and handled broad policy questions that had found their way into OP-090. It was normally manned by front-running surface, aviation and general unrestricted line officers and headed by surface warfare officers with strong academic policy backgrounds.

22 Swartz with Markowitz (2015).
24 Ibid, 57.
26 Swartz (1996), 91.
As Naval Postgraduate School Professor Captain Wayne Hughes remembers, the OP-96 and OP-965 staffs were full of future flag officers including future CNO Admiral Vern Clark, future four star Admiral Dennis Blair, office of Force Transformation lead Art Cebrowski and other future flags like Scott Redd, Bill Hancock, and Grant Sharp.\textsuperscript{27} Hughes also suggested the overall theme of the OP-96 and OP-965 team when he said of the work in the late 1960s and early 1970s, “In 1966, I was ordered to OP-96, the newly created Systems Analysis division under Rear Admiral Elmo ‘Bud’ Zumwalt. Those were heady times for a young commander. We were on center stage because decisions were going to be made ‘by analysis.’”\textsuperscript{28}


The catalyst for direct conflict between the branches was the 600-ship navy force structure concept advocated by incoming Navy Secretary John Lehman in 1981. According to Peter Swartz, OP-965’s long-range planning analysis strongly suggested that Lehman’s 600 ship navy force structure was unaffordable. The long-range planning branch was convinced that defense spending in general and Navy spending in particular would ultimately decrease; making the accomplishment of a 600-ship navy impossible. Criticisms of the 600-ship navy were common at that time, but the OP-965 critique further extended to the Maritime Strategy. As Peter Swartz explains,

But to a third group -- perversely taking their cue from Lehman -- the Maritime Strategy was a pipe dream, tied to a 600-ship navy too costly to ever be built. CDR Stephen Woodall USN, insisted that the 600-Ship Navy, and perhaps the Maritime Strategy would prove unaffordable. Woodall was the OP-965 action officer charged with developing and maintaining the Navy’s extended Planning Annex during the early 1980s. Woodall wanted the Navy to face up to and discuss the unaffordability of its planned force structure, so as to make more realistic plans for the future. Lehman and others, however, rejected any such discussion as dangerous, self-fulfilling prophecy, jeopardizing the very program he was trying to implement.\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{27} Hughes, Jr. (2002).
\bibitem{28} Ibid.
\bibitem{29} Swartz (1996), 83.
\end{thebibliography}
While Woodall was but one staff officer, his branch Chief Commander Harlan Ullman, himself a political/military Ph.D. holder from the Fletcher School, also took up the campaign to attack both the 600-ship navy and the Maritime Strategy. Peter Swartz suggests there was some irony in Ullman’s actions given that he was, “the drafter of Vice Chief of Naval Operations ADM William Small’s 1982 directive to OP-06 to develop the Maritime Strategy briefing” in the first place.30

The timing for Ullman and Woodall’s opposition to the 600-ship navy and to the Maritime strategy was extremely poor. John Lehman agreed that the Department of Defense needed, “tools of empirical analysis” that would be, “useful in providing a framework in making judgments” on “quicker, thicker and slicker weapons.”31 His concern was that this tool, “had become the decision process,” and was a dangerous development for a naval officer corps that already had an, “overwhelming engineering bent.”32 Lehman believed that an absolute focus on systems analysis would further limit traditional concepts of strategy from active consideration in the uniformed Navy. He worked throughout his tenure to reduce the influence of analysts within the Navy staff. The focus of his discontent was the OP-96 systems analysis division and its Extended Planning Branch OP-965 that targeted the sustainability of Lehman’s signature 600 ship navy program.33

The OP-965 analysis that was included in Commander Woodall’s 1982 Extended Planning Assessment (EPA) stated that the 600-ship fleet assumed an unprecedented growth in the Navy’s Total Obligational Authority, or the percentage of allotted Congressional outlays for one year, at 8%. The OP-965 office cited historical growth figures that suggested that average TOA growth for the Navy from 1949-1983 was 3% per year. Lehman believed the 600-ship fleet met the strategy conclusions of the last several presidential administrations. His retort was that the 600-ship fleet could be maintained by the planned 3% growth first suggested by the SEAPLAN 2000 study of 1979. Lehman said the post-Vietnam era of limited defense budget growth was in fact an anomaly and that the American people supported the Reagan administration’s planned higher spending.

Lehman already faced considerable opposition from Congressional Budget Office (CBO). A January 1981 CBO report bluntly stated that no plans

30 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Swartz with Markowitz (2015), 36.
had been made for a major naval expansion despite the fact that the winning 1980 Republican national platform contained a demand for a 600-ship navy. A March 1982 report issued by the same agency on the 600-ship navy stated, “As a gross ship total, the 600-ship navy can be justifiably criticized as an inadequate indicator of naval strength.”

Lehman’s reaction to criticism within the Navy Department are not surprising given this environment of opposition and his strong convictions regarding the 600-ship fleet size. Despite objections from some on the Navy staff, CNO Admiral Watkins and Lehman succeeded in abolishing the OP-96 division office. Peter Swartz states, “OP-96 had been abolished by Lehman in March 1983, in part as a result of a briefing on the Navy’s Extended Planning Annex to the POM, alleging the 600-ship Navy was unaffordable.”

Along with the OP-96 office went its Extended Planning and Net Assessment branches that had dominated Navy input to the Planning, Programming and Budget System (PPBS), which controlled most aspects of the U.S. defense strategy, programming and spending since the early 1960s. The former members of OP-96 were transferred to the Program Appraisal Division (OP-91), an office with a similar mission to OP-96 and OP-965, but one that did not produce products that traveled outside the Department of the Navy. Steve Woodall left for sea duty and Harlan Ullman retired from active naval service, thus eliminating the last members of the OP-965 team.

Peter Swartz described the OP-603/OP-965 rivalry as “unstructured” but the advent of the 600-ship navy brought the contest out into the open with fatal results for OP-965. OP-603 took over the remaining, long-range planning aspects of OP-965 and it appeared that long-range quantitative assessment would not return to the OPNAV staff for the near future.

The Enduring Legacy of OPNAV Competition

OP-603 perhaps became a victim of its own success. The Cold War came to an abrupt end with the collapse of the Soviet Union over the period 1989-1991. In the absence of a peer opponent there was no need for a

35 Swartz (1996), 94.
36 Ibid.
“strategy” but rather a policy for managing the Navy in a unipolar world. The incoming CNO in June 1990 Admiral Frank Kelso declared to the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on his confirmation in June 1990 that, “a military strategy needs a specific enemy” and that, “the issues before us today seems ones of naval policy rather than strategy.”

The Maritime Strategy’s ultimate “successor,” the “From the Sea” white paper of 1992 was tailored to support ground forces in the littorals and ashore rather than confront any blue water opponent.

The Maritime Strategy had joint input and involved the other services, but focused on naval missions. The new, “From the Sea” strategy was organized around joint missions and called the Joint Mission Areas (JMA) assessment process. First announced to the fleet in a follow-on policy paper to “… From the Sea” in February 1993, the JMA process identified six Joint Mission Areas and two Support Areas around which to construct OPNAV planning and decision-making.

The Joint Mission Areas were Joint Strike, Joint Littoral Warfare, Joint Surveillance, Joint Space and Electronic Warfare/Intelligence, Strategic Deterrence, and Strategic Sealift/Protection. The support areas were Readiness/Infrastructure and Manpower/Personnel and Shore Training. These six missions and two support areas were assigned to teams led by flag officers and senior members of the OPNAV staff. These teams were to draw inputs from the fleet and from the Joint Staff and other services on which systems and programs the Navy should base its budgetary requirements. Their mission was to create an integrated investment approach within each discipline and to propose programs and systems for inclusion in the Defense Department’s Planning, Programming, Budgeting system (PPBS). The JMA process directly tied the Navy’s strategy to its budget process in a much closer way than in past decades, and likely set the service on the path to an ultimate “strategy of means,” a condition best described by one CNO would later remark, “the budget was the strategy.”

37 “The Nomination of Admiral Frank B. Kelso, Jr USN, to be Chief of Naval Operations,” Hearing before the Committee of the Armed Services, The United States Senate, Second Session of the One Hundred First Congress, 14 June 1990, 326, 327.


39 Ibid, 5,6.

Admiral Kelso also radically altered the OPNAV staff to carry out policy in place of strategy. Kelso’s most important and lasting change in his reorganization effort was the creation of the powerful N8 organization and the selection of its leader, Vice Admiral William Owens. According to Peter Swartz, Kelso “Saw changing the process (of OPNAV management and decision-making) as more important than changing the organization.”

Kelso later stated, “I believed that the ‘give and take’ (of decision-making) needs to be at the flag officer level in OPNAV, and I wanted them to have to focus all the time on what we really needed to do as a Navy and how we needed to spend our money as a total Navy.”

The JMA process needed an integrator, and not strategists, so the analysis branch returned to OPNAV after a near-decade long exile. Admiral Owens gained control of the of N81 Assessments division, the hereditary descendant of the former OP-96 Analysis division of the 1960s through early 1980s in OPNAV, and placed it at the heart of the new strategy process. N81 was the key to the control of the process, described in the JMA memorandum, “The Assessments Division N81 oversees the assessment process for N8 and provides analytical resources to support the efforts of the JMA and SA assessment teams. The Assessment Division is also charged with integrating the results of the separate assessments into a single investment strategy (the Investment Balance review (IBR)).”

While originally designed as an integrator of the cross-OPNAV flag officer products, the N81 office “Increasingly became the heart of the JMA process and overshadowed the collective role of the participant flag officers.” The 1992 reorganization marked the return of the analysis discipline to a position of power on the OPNAV staff equal and in some ways superior to that of the old OP-96 analysis division disbanded in 1983.

There were also key demotions in the power and influence of OPNAV positions not under the direct control of N8. The Deputy CNO for Operations, Plans and Policies (OP-06), who had developed ... From the Sea from concept to Navy Secretary signature, was weakened in both rank and influence in the 1992 OPNAV reorganization. The office was re-coded as N3/N5 and saw a number of rank reductions in its subordinate flag officer
positions. Its Nuclear Weapons Policy Division (OP-65) was downgraded to a branch. Its Fleet Operations and Readiness (OP-64) and Political/Military and Current Plans Divisions (OP-61) had to share the same flag officer director as the combined N31/N52 branch. Its OP-60 Director of Strategy, Plans and Policy (now designated N51), and its OP-603 Strategy branch (now N513) remained, but neither had a role within the new N8 JMA process. Most notably, the OP-603 office lost its role as the first OPNAV office to review the Program Objective Memorandum document. OP-603 had previously conducted its strategy appraisal as part of the CNO Executive Board Review (CEB) prior to the other POM appraisals. The CEB was disestablished as part of the October 1992 OPNAV reorganization. Subsequent lists of POM development assessments make no mention of a strategy assessment.

This was perhaps not surprising given the magnitude of change that had taken place from the end of the Cold War through the period of the First Gulf War. Whether by deliberate design or benign neglect, senior Navy leaders viewed “… From the Sea” as a definitive document that would not require significant revision for some time. Admiral Kelso later suggested, “In my judgement, the short white paper … From the Sea, was a pretty good start and I notice it has not changed much (as of 2009). They’ve fiddled around with it, but it’s still pretty much the same thing if you look at it very hard so nobody’s come up with a lot better since then.” Admiral Owens had a similar opinion. … From the Sea, he stated, “recognized that for the foreseeable future, the Navy’s control of the seas would not be challenged and argued that the primary role of U.S. naval forces would be the application of joint military force in littoral areas.” There appeared to be little need for the OPNAV strategy branch in an environment where the strategic situation seemed so settled. CNO Admiral Vern Clark’s (an OP-96 alumnus) term as CNO from 2000-2005 perhaps represented the low-point of the OPNAV strategic community. As Clark said, “The Navy had no business advancing a strategy. That responsibility lay with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Joint Staff.”

Since Clark’s tenure ended in 2005 the Navy has produced two “cooperative” maritime strategies (2007 and 2015.) Both moved gradually back toward the idea that not just non-state actors and rogue states, but also potential peers such as a rising China and a revanchist Russia might also be identified by name. Both Cooperative Maritime Strategies were influential and shaped how the Navy viewed strategy and operations, but N81 re-

45 Haynes (2015), 144.
tained its vise-like grip on the overall process of force generation through the POM process and force employment through campaign analysis. The Assessments branch gained further power when it was “double-hatted” as the CNO’s close “mini staff” and known as the “Strategic Actions Group 00Z” from 2003-2009. Peter Swartz identified this significant shift in the strategist/analyst balance, saying that this new relationship was a, “Little-publicized, officially-sanctioned, direct, close-hold, back channel of analytical communication between N81 & CNO, used on occasion to circumvent perceived OPNAV chain-of-command filtering.” Only in 2016 did N81 see a downgrade in its influence and control over OPNAV processes when the OPNAV N50 Strategy Division, created by CNO Admiral John Richardson, was tasked with creating a strategic input to the POM for the first time since 1992. The pendulum swung again.

Conclusion

In his book *The Echo of Battle*, Brian McAllister Linn suggests that the way service groups interpret their own history plays a vital role in how they plan for future conflict. Likewise, the Navy staff’s strategists and analysts both brought their own interpretation of how the service should engage in creating strategy; whether by political/military or quantitative analysis. In the wake of the end of the Cold War the Navy’s leadership interpreted that it no longer needed the strategy discipline to the same level it did in the Cold War and promoted a concept of strategy by warfare assessments, and ultimately by budget allocation. This change in OPNAV organization that favored quantitative analysis over strategy also fundamentally changed how the Navy planned for future conflict. Instead of focusing on what specific goals the service might accomplish by its actions as was the case in the development of the 1980s’ Maritime Strategy, the Navy became obsessively focused with individual joint warfare missions and the specific force structure that supported them.

The ultimate decision to base strategy development on analysis and budgets in the early 2000s was first identified by Peter Swartz in in his 2010

46 Swartz with Markowitz (2015), 97.
47 Ibid.
project work for the U.S. Navy History and Heritage Command while working at CNA, entitled Organizing OPNAV (1970 - 2009). Swartz’s research and scholarship on the topic of competing intellectual groups on the OPNAV staff from the late 1960s through 2010, and the effects of that contest on the development of U.S. Navy Strategy is a significant contribution to contemporary naval history. It is also delivers a warning to the naval service about how it views and addresses strategy and what service and academic qualifications are required for that effort. A retired Navy flag officer recently described the current system as one where, “We don’t have an abundance of guys like [Admiral James] Stavridis, who taught himself three languages. There may still be an anti-intellectual feeling in the Navy. The other services have more tolerance for grooming strategists while Navy sees it as simply time away from the real work of operating in the fleet.”

Another retired Navy Captain said,

Now today in the post-Rickover Navy we’ve got this emphasis on technology. At least 80% of academy and ROTC grads are supposed to be STEM majors. This has created a real deficiency in humanities and has led to a decline in how the Navy approaches formulation of strategy. To me the 1986 Maritime Strategy was the last real strategy the Navy had. Today, too many officers tend to approach strategy like a hard science or math problem: if you follow this formula, with these inputs, this outcome will certainly result.

It is time for the Navy to act on Peter Swartz’s long record of scholarship on the “makers of modern naval strategy” and return to a balance of strategy and quantitative assessment as it formulates the strategies and attendant force structure to defeat a new generation of potential peer opponents. At this juncture, ignoring the opportunity to do so risks more than letting analyses or budgets dictate strategy; it may bankrupt the service.

50 See Zimmerman et al. (2019), 50, 51.
51 Ibid, 51.


“The Nomination of Admiral Frank B. Kelso, Jr USN, to be Chief of Naval Operations,” Hearing before the Committee of the Armed Services, The United States Senate, Second Session of the One Hundred First Congress, 14 June 1990.

Zimmerman, Rebecca, with Jackson, Kimberly, Lander, Natasha, Roberts, Colin, Madden, Dan, and Orrie, Rebeca, Movement and Maneuver Culture and the Competition for Influence Among the U.S. Military Services (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2019).
Elevating Difference:
Regaining the Navy’s Strategic Influence in a Joint World

Martin Murphy

The United States, a giant itself, stands on the shoulders of giants. It is the successor to the maritime powers that have gone before it that have shaped and ordered the global system in what has been called the Oceanic Age. It is the modalities of that Age which have led oceanic navies to be intimately connected to diplomacy, economics, trade, the suppression of piracy and slavery, and to the development of international law. It has also led them to view the use of naval force as a continuum stretching from presence, humanitarian assistance and policing through coercion to warfare. The result is that these navies have been tied much more closely to grand strategy as a cultural norm – and contributed to its formation – than any other part of the military. No great power has prevailed over its opponents during the Oceanic Age unless it was a maritime power. No maritime power has been a great power without a grand strategy.

This experience has driven a recognizable naval strategic culture. One that is very separate from other armed services yet at the same time closely linked to the nation’s everyday foreign policy, its relations with partners and neutrals, and with potential adversaries. As Peter Swartz, one of the U.S. Navy’s most respected strategists of the last forty years, puts it:

For the Navy, the world is its oyster. For the Navy, the World Ocean is a single continuous space on, under and over which it can maneuver at will to exert political and military power. It does not see the world in pieces, as a series of different sea-air-land regional theaters in which the land area is invariably the center. Regionalization restricts the global flexibility of the Navy and afloat Marines and therefore what they can achieve for this country.¹

This chapter addresses the strategic culture of the U.S. Navy. It is a militaristic culture. The chapter questions how appropriate this culture is in the geopolitical and institutional circumstances in which the Navy finds itself in the early to mid-twenty-first century; circumstances that include the

¹ Peter M. Swartz, Correspondence with the author, 29 March 2019.
need to operate jointly with the nation’s other armed services, to share their single-minded focus on warfighting, but in the absence of the grand strategy that is essential for a global navy. It maintains that preserving what makes the Navy different from the other armed services is important but, in a world where the aperture of conflict has widened, it needs to reacquire the skills, resources and strategic understanding required to achieve political, economic, perception and military effects across all-domains. It proposes – given that China has adopted a whole-of-government approach to its maritime interactions – that the Navy must argue for unification at the national policy level where its unique voice can be heard clearly.

An organization’s culture is summed up most simply as “what we do around here.” In the abstract it is the sum of its collective values, beliefs and principles that rise out of its history, traditions, purpose and assumptions about the world and its place in it that shape the habits of its members.

In the concrete case of the U.S. Navy, culture is distinguished by several special factors. Ultimately, it is a military organization tasked to support U.S national policy by killing people and breaking things while paying due regard to limits laid down in U.S. policy, national and international law. U.S Navy leaders state, without equivocation, that the service’s overriding purpose is to “fight and win our nation’s wars.”

High-intensity war demands proportionately high levels of attention but, as the British naval strategist Julian Corbett put it, too often naval thinkers have “come to feel [their] sole concern was fighting, and had forgotten the art of making war.” Coercion can be exerted and confronted in ways short of war and have played a larger part for longer in “what we do around here” for the Navy than they have for the Army or Air Force. It can continue to do so providing the importance of the maritime domain is recognized by defense and political leaders.

It is this maritime domain – and its unforgiving nature - which above all makes sailors different. Navies exert power and influence on, under and in the skies above the vast, turbulent, borderless expanse of the world’s seas; where attacks can come from any azimuth; and from those seas into

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the rimlands of the world’s continents where the bulk of the world’s population create the bulk of the world’s wealth. The spatial awareness of sailors therefore contrasts sharply with that of soldiers. Topography, the “ground,” shapes soldiers’ plans and tactics; they aspires to know what lies on the other side of the hill. Topography is non-existent at sea; the sailor’s view extends to the horizon, which is always receding before him. The soldier, as J.C. Wylie put it, is “hemmed in by his terrain” in contrast to the sailor compelled to consider the extent of an adversary’s global interests up to the possibility of global war.

Conflicts and even wars at sea have no fronts and are conducted in waters populated with people from neutral countries, which if conflict is prolonged can, using Julian Corbett’s word, lead to their “exasperation.” Over the past quarter-century the U.S. Army has become used to fighting “war amongst the people” in which distinguishing combatant from non-combatant can be a never-ending challenge. But this has always been the reality at sea, where, for the navy, the transition from peace to war has been seamless: there are no “discontinuities between peacetime and wartime… the environment does not change, and operations – except for open hostilities – are not altered significantly.”

These factors explain the navy’s attachment to independent command and decentralized organization. As deep-rooted cultural beliefs born of global experience they have given Navy and Marine Corps leaders sound reasons to oppose every move towards defense unification right up to and including the Department of Defense Reorganization Act (aka Goldwater-Nichols) of 1986.

Defense unification – now referred to more commonly as “jointness” – is the idea that greater centralization of both the operational direction and

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7 Corbett (2001), 638.


headquarters administration of the U.S. armed forces is desirable and beneficial. The idea first emerged in the years following the Spanish-American War. After World War I, support for unification grew in Congress motivated there by the hope that a less costly military could be realized by eliminating the waste and duplication it was assumed were the natural consequences of maintaining two independent armed services.

Almost immediately, however, a cloud emerged that hung-over unification throughout the interwar years. Its cause was the desire on the part of the U.S. Army Air Service (that eventually became the U.S. Army Air Forces in 1941 and the U.S. Air Force in 1947) not only to gain its independence from the Army but to absorb the navy’s air arm in the service of a single air power doctrine. America’s aviation evangelist was Army General William ‘Billy’ Mitchell. He, along with his acolytes, viewed all surface forces – not just the navy’s battle fleet – as vulnerable to aerial bombardment and therefore obsolete. His shrewd insight was that his campaign for an additional independent service might be accepted more readily if it was nested inside a larger, efficiency-minded reorganization of all the armed services.¹⁰

Mitchell’s views struck at the core of the navy’s institutional identity leaving any sympathy the latter might have had for defense unification – which existed to some degree before 1919 – dead in the water.¹¹ As far as the naval fliers were concerned, agreeing with the Army rebels would have drawn them into a separate service that did not understand naval warfare. This lack of understanding was the core of the aviator’s problem and cemented their rejection of a unified defense establishment alongside the rest of the Navy and Marine Corps.

After 1945, faced by the reality of unification, the Navy mounted a stout resistance. Its core concern was what would happen to the fleet if its performance was judged - or even ultimately commanded - by men steeped in prescriptive doctrine, a regimented centralized command structure and ignorant of naval purposes and potential.¹² In practical terms, it was fearful that the Army and a newly-independent air force would create a Joint sys-

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¹¹ Ibid., 31.
tem in their image; one that at the Joint Chiefs of Staff level would mimic the tightly-integrated War Department model.\textsuperscript{13}

To begin with its main fears were not realized. The Navy was not unduly affected by unification’s step-by-step encroachment on the services that began with the creation of a single Secretary of Defense in 1949 followed by the gradual concentration of power in the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) in the legalisation of 1950 and 1958. Not, that is, until the appointment of Robert McNamara in January 1961.\textsuperscript{14} The legislative changes had tilted authority over defense matters away from uniformed military officers towards civilian control. Before McNamara no secretary had taken up the authorities granted him by Congress (or never served in office long enough to do so); McNamara did both. He imposed the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS), a centralized process that sought to apply the methods of cost-benefit analysis not only to determine the utility of competing programs but to direct the entire Department. His was the approach of an industrial manager applying analytical tools to marry modes of warfare to conflict dominated by new technologies.\textsuperscript{15}

For the Navy, his arrival was a watershed moment. The 1958 Defense Reorganization Act had stripped the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) of operational command of the fleet. McNamara put that change into effect and diminished the CNO’s authority and influence further by effectively stripping from his control important elements of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV), the Navy’s Pentagon headquarters. In the 1950s the CNO’s job was strategic, operational, conceptual and long term; after McNamara it became programmatic, administrative, mechanical and short term. By centralizing authority and the bureaucratic means to exercise it in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), McNamara made it easier for him and his successors to centrally determine and direct U.S. strategy. By effectively grabbing the keys to the Navy’s fate, he made support for any centrally determined and directed strategy appear the only option for the Navy if it was to survive with the ships, weapons and person-

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nel aspects of its identity intact. As far as he was concerned, rationalism had trumped parochialism by—in his words—rectifying “the tendency on the part of the services to base their planning and force structure on their own unilateral views of how a future war might be fought.”

But McNamara was not combining the best of what each service could offer. He was setting in motion the creation of a single Joint culture, which in his case was characterized by hyper-rationality and the superiority of quantitative analysis over experience leading to detailed planning implemented through top-down micro-management. The operating environments inhabited by the Army and Air Force that depended on centralized authority to direct choreographed campaign plans made it easier for them to accept—or at least tolerate—McNamara’s changes. For the Navy, which viewed jointness as coordination not integration, they verged on anathema; verged, only because each service chief retained access to the President. In 1986 Goldwater-Nichols shut that door.

Critically, McNamara enacted changes in the Navy’s career paths that began to redirect its best minds into Joint billets, a move that slowly eroded its culture of independent strategic thought and eventually undermined its ability to generate its own strategy and plans: “In the 1940s,” Peter Haynes explained, “the path to promotion to admiral went through OPNAV’s war planning directorate. In the 1950s, it went through CNO Arleigh Burke’s long-range planning directorate. Starting in the 1960s, it changed to managing weapon systems programs and manpower—and has not changed since.”

By the early 1980s, supporters of jointness viewed progress towards their eventual goal as too slow. To substantiate their position they pointed to the confused strategic thinking and muddled command structures that afflicted the Vietnam War, the 1975 Mayaguez and 1979-80 Iran hostage rescue disasters, poor interservice planning and communications shortcomings during the 1983 Lebanon mission and Grenada invasion, and soaring defense spending under Reagan. A coalition emerged in the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill determined to rebalance joint and service interests.

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16 Ibid., 25-27.
18 Haynes (2015), 27.
The language used in an important 1982 report commissioned by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General David Jones, summarized the cause of the problem and the implicit solution: “A certain amount of service independence is healthy and desirable,” the report opined, “but the balance now favors the parochial interests of the services too much, and the larger needs of the nation’s defense too little.”

The passage of Goldwater-Nichols gave the advocates of jointness much (although not all) of what they had hoped for. The measure approved included:

- Making plain the authority of the Secretary of Defense;
- Strengthening the power and authority of the Chairman by ensuring all the corporate functions that had previously served the Joint Chiefs of Staff collectively now reported to the Chairman alone while freeing him from any obligation to consult with the other service Chiefs and secretaries;
- Making the unified combatant commanders (COCOMs) responsible directly to the President and the Secretary of Defense and granting them the authority that had traditionally been bestowed on supreme military commanders to ensure they could discharge their responsibilities;
- Requiring the President to publish an annual national security strategy based on which the Chairman was to prepare strategic plans within the budgetary constraints laid down by Congress;
- Measures to overcome the continuing lack of qualified officers serving on the Joint Staff, a shortage noticeable in planning billets particularly such that Joint planning was viewed as ineffective with the Pentagon.


20 Cited in James R. Locher III, “Has It Worked? – The Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act,” in Naval War College Review vol. 54, no. 4 (2001), 103. Identifying allegiance to joint organizational structures and approaches as being synonymous with loyalty to the United States was an unworthy but nonetheless persistent (albeit low-level) leitmotif running through the campaign for greater defense centralization. Locher, for example, in the same article, wrote in language associated more usually with conscience and belief, that “Goldwater-Nichols brings to the fore the struggle of each officer to find that balance between loyalty to service and devotion to the larger needs of the nation” (ibid., 113).

21 Wills (2016), 24-25.
devoting too much effort to programming and budgeting and too little to preparing for the long term.\textsuperscript{22}

In the three decades between the Act becoming law and the speech of Secretary of Defense Ash Carter in 2016 suggesting it was time to consider some degree of reform,\textsuperscript{23} there was general agreement that the legislation had achieved the undeniable plus of improving the military effectiveness of joint operations. The value of everything else, however, appeared to be open to question. Its effect on the efficient use of resources, the hope of Congress for over a century, was practically nil.\textsuperscript{24}

From the perspective of the Navy’s strategy development, Goldwater-Nichols impacted it in four ways:

- It removed strategic direction of the Navy from its leadership and transferred what had remained of OPNAV’s control over the Navy’s operational forces after the 1958 reforms to the regional COCOMs;
- Global-focused naval leadership and strategy formulation was replaced by regionally-directed strategies that cut across traditional navy geographical areas and nullified its global perspective;
- Regional commanders specified the ships and weapon systems that the Navy’s leadership built and managed, and the manpower it recruited and trained, creating a readiness versus innovation tension between the commanders’ shorter-term regional requirements and the leadership’s global and longer-term, material-based development programs;
- The Navy’s informal cadre of strategic experts was effectively dispersed by forcing them into Joint jobs rather than OPNAV billets.\textsuperscript{25}

Also, as the 1980s’ Secretary of the Navy John Lehman made clear, relieving the Joint Chiefs of Staff of their collective responsibility for advising the President and the Secretary of Defense and investing it in the Chairman solely, limited not only the scope of the military advice available to the nation’s political leadership but also the policy and priority-setting roles of the service secretaries.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{22} Locher III (2001), 106-108.
\textsuperscript{24} Locher III (2001), 111.
\textsuperscript{25} Wills (2016), 22.
\textsuperscript{26} Locher III (2001), 110; Wills (2016), 24; David T. Fautua, “The Paradox of Joint Culture,” in Joint Forces Quarterly (Autumn 2000), 86, who also notes that the Act
These differences amount to a clash of cultures; or, rather, a clash between an established ethos and one as yet unformed. The logic of defense unification – or jointness – is to minimize service-specific variations. Its advocates fear that so long as the separate services exist, they impede the emergence of a joint or “purple” culture in which values are shared or, better still, transformed into a new, domain-neutral homogeneity. How this might be achieved, or benefit defense policy, is unclear. Perhaps the nearest approximation to a new culture unencumbered by service tradition McNamara and his “whiz-kids” built, which although unloved has persisted, are the PPBS procedures that have too often and for too long been a substitute for strategy.

On the other side stands the Navy, and others who value heterodoxy. Their fear is that subverting service traditions and silencing individual service inputs leads to a dangerous singularity of thought; that the “friction of ideas” multiple sources of advice generate is natural and necessary not just for joint warfighting but also to deepen and broaden the strategic and policy debates at Defense Department and national levels. Inter-service competition has its creative aspects because, as Stephen Rosen put it, every “organizations tends to stagnate when it becomes the only game in town.” This thread has run through the unification debate for decades, but takes on added salience when the rise of China has made it increasingly difficult to draw boundaries around war and reconcile how we want to fight with how we need to. Competition with China, moreover, will be concentrated more in the maritime domain, and while this could make war more limited might also make it more likely.

This is the point where the defense unification debate, specifically about the Goldwater-Nichols model, becomes acutely challenging. The unsurprising mantra of those who argue it needs reform is that what works needs to be retained while changing what doesn’t. Few question that Goldwater-Nichols has been thoroughly effective at the operational level of war: “in forcing the services to act cooperatively in prosecution of war...No other nation on Earth is capable of the military operations the United States routinely accomplishes...(cooperation) is the basic principle of operation in today’s Pentagon that values consensus and cooperation while forcefully

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reinforced CJCS’s power by giving him control over the JCS agenda and thus over what topics were brought forward for consideration.

27 Fautua (2000), 81.
discouraging unseemly service-orientated posturing.”

It makes sense for U.S. forces to exploit this unique capability by developing concepts such as Multi-Domain Warfare.

The culture emerging out of Goldwater-Nichols was a top-down Army-style command structure driving a land-centric regional approach grounded in programmatic, not strategy. Multi-Domain Warfare, while it extends into what the U.S. armed forces refer to as Phase 0, cannot be confused with forms of Chinese and Russian unrestricted warfare derived from political warfare, and stretching the warfare into civilian life and the virtual world.

Mike Vlahos’s 1993 warning that jointness is inward looking and “does not focus our minds on the next challenge and the next war” was prescient.

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The best way to retain Goldwater-Nichols’ achievements while overcoming its strategy shortcomings is to raise strategy formation to a higher government level. In this context, its failure to correct the Department of Defense’s (DOD) traditional strategy weakness appears critical. The Act required the President to write a national security strategy every year and every one has fallen short. The blame for this cannot be laid at unification’s door alone; as Colin Grey noted, the connection between war and policy has been a persistent weakness in U.S. defense thinking.

This disconnect is no longer tenable. Great power competition has returned. The U.S military is gearing up in expectation of the high-intensity, technology-dependent and firepower-focused war it prefers. Even for the U.S. this form of war is hugely expensive and highly destructive. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world, America’s adversaries have found ways to potentially lessen that expense while exploiting our weaknesses. George Kennan defined political warfare broadly as “the employment of all the means at a nation’s command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives.” America’s failure to unify its foreign and defense policies effectively has presented adversaries with the opportunity to exploit emerging technologies and political measures to circumvent its military superiority.

Not that the Pentagon has ignored these changes. On the military and technology side of the equation, there is a general recognition that DOD needs to become more agile in its decision-making.

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39 McInnis (2016), 2; Locher (2015), 1.
needs to be more broad-minded in recognizing and assessing threats that are increasingly diverse and complicated, can emerge with astonishing rapidity thanks to networked communication, and require new ways of thinking and acting if they are to be confronted effectively.\textsuperscript{40} Goldwater-Nichols was, after all, predicated on the Cold War’s stable and predictable environment and its clearly defined threats and political guidance. As Kathleen McInnis put it, the “international security environment was already demanding when the Goldwater-Nichols legislation was enacted, yet most observers agree it has become significantly more complex and unpredictable in recent years.”\textsuperscript{41}

To remain effective every organization needs to be redesigned as its external environment evolves. In the view of James Locher, who played a pivotal role in Goldwater-Nichols’ gestation, the DOD typifies a twentieth-century organization. Drawing on the work of the management scholar John Kotter, he contends that experience over the past 15 years has shown that the department is incapable of fulfilling its responsibilities efficiently and effectively. Its internal processes generate reams of data – slowly – but lack the ability to resolve conflicting views constructively. Its mission-oriented ethos is not imbued with a culture valueing information-sharing, collaboration and team results. Consequently, like other organizations that have failed to make the transition from the last century to this, DOD finds it difficult to adjust to a rapidly changing environment.\textsuperscript{42} The world is littered with corpses of big organizations that could not adapt.

From a strategic perspective, however, the crucial challenge is fixing the U.S. national security system. Locher’s views have clearly evolved from observing U.S. national security policymaking at close quarters and matured beyond his previous Goldwater-Nichols advocacy. In his judgement, the whole system of U.S. national security institutions is “profoundly broken.” Organizationally this is centered on the National Security Council and its committees.\textsuperscript{43} According to Richard Hooker and Joseph Collins it is hamstrung culturally by the wide gulf between civilian and military leaders that need to cooperate to make effective strategy: “Civilian national security decision-makers need a better understanding of the complexity of military strategy and the military’s need for planning guidance,” to prevent strategy foundering on poorly defined or overly broad objectives related

\textsuperscript{40} McInnis (2016), p. 10.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{42} Locher (2015), 2 and 14; McInnis (2016), 13-14.
\textsuperscript{43} Locher (2015), 3.
only weakly to available means. Paucity of policy leads to poor strategy. For their part, senior military officers need a “deep understanding of the policy/interagency process, an appreciation for the perspective of civilian counterparts, and a willingness to embrace, not resist, the complexity and challenges in [the U.S.] system of civilian control.” The United States has known for over one hundred years the policy gap exists, with over fifty years of experience that defense unification, on its own, is not the way to bridge it. It is pointless, in Locher’s words, making “difficult changes to DOD in the false hope of circumventing national security system limitations.” Limitations, moreover, extend to Congress where no one single committee oversees the entire national security process. All of the national security missions require a whole-of-government approach and it is no longer possible to pretend otherwise.

The implications of the shifts that have taken place in the geostrategic environment – and the DOD’s largely technocratic and astrategic response – are, for the Navy, profound. However, there are few reasons to believe that giving the Navy greater strategic autonomy absent a significant change in U.S. defense policy formulation will result in a materially different outcome.

The Navy’s own strategic skills and resources have undoubtedly withered because of the slow but relentless pressure of unification culminating in Goldwater-Nichols. But the main obstacle to change within the Navy is not a dearth of strong, independently-minded thinkers, but its culture: ingrained habits of thought are more difficult to change because they are shared by members of Congress and among voters. Not, however, that these cannot be overcome; after all, the Navy has done this twice in its history already. But for that to happen – and be sustained – key constituencies in the Navy, Congress, among voters and now in the Joint community need to be aligned behind any new direction.

45 Hooker and Collins (2015), 413.
47 “It isn’t that there is no room for the Services to engage in strategy development; it’s just that history shows that when such attempts have been made, their beneficial effects have been focused on the Services’ Title X functions more than actual national strategy” (Robert C. Rubel, “What Critics of the Navy’s Strategy Get Wrong,” War on the Rocks, 6 January 2015, https://warontherocks.com/2015/01/what-critics-of-the-navys-strategy-get-wrong/).
The Navy’s first major cultural shift began in the years after 1880. Its figurehead was Mahan. It involved the obliteration of the old commerce war and coastal defense navy with a new, oceanic, battle-fleet navy in tune with the values of the Progressive Age. Its birth coincided with that of the German Navy and, for many of the same reasons, was imbued with a similar spirit of militarism. The second was realized after 1945, although it was born in the central Pacific in 1942. Its figurehead was Secretary of the Navy (later first Secretary of Defense) James V. Forrestal. This navy obliterated the Japanese battle fleet, overturning the idea that navies existed to fight one another and, replacing it with the hitherto revolutionary concept that a navy could achieve strategic effect from the sea far inland, built an aircraft carrier fleet in its place. We are now in the dog days of the Forrestal revolution.

What both shifts had in common was a militaristic core in tune with the twentieth-century’s way of war. China of the twenty-first century presents an explicitly different threat. While undoubtedly amassing a high-technology force capable of confronting U.S. military power symmetrically, it has also weaponized other arms of state power, under a centralized, Party-based command structure, that together must be confronted on their own terms. On the water this is best summed up by the fact that while the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) may have 300 ships, it has another 350 large ships in its coast guard and maritime militia that are designed to prosecute political warfare in the East Asian littoral and, potentially, further afield.48

The U.S. Navy anticipated these developments in the external environment. It recognized they would demand responses at both the high and low levels of the spectrum of conflict or, perhaps more accurately, the spectrum of competition. In 2007 it issued the Cooperative Strategy for Twenty-first Century Seapower (CS21).49 No document is perfect and CS21 certainly had flaws. It made no mention of China, although its authors en-

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48 David Axe, “U.S. Navy Nightmare: The Chinese Fleet Doesn’t Have 300 Ships, It Has 650,” The National Interest, 30 January 2019, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/us-navy-nightmare-chinese-fleet-doesnt-have-300-ships-it-has-650-42822. Axe points out that while the U.S. Navy had 285 ships in its battle force as of mid-2018 (compared to between 313 and 342 expected in the 2020 PLAN fleet), the U.S. Coast Guard operates around 240 cutters greater than 65 feet in length and MSC operates 120 logistics, cargo and support ships. Adding them to the Navy’s warships results in a combined U.S. fleet of 645 ships with military capability.

visaged that subsequent versions would. Instead it focused at the low-end on terrorism and other unconventional threats including nuclear proliferation and piracy. Nonetheless, as Bryan McGrath, CS21’s lead author explained, Chinese analysts clearly understood that the “strategy advanced an argument about the defense of the global system,” and interpreted it “as meaning that the United States would defend the system it had designed and led. Additionally, they understood that the strategy intended to help the United States retain its global leadership position.”

It would do it, moreover, in cooperation with other states with common interests in a secure and stable global maritime order. The political challenge it presented to a state which had maritime ambitions, but few friends, was obvious.

This was not enough to convince critics in the Navy and on the Hill. For them it ran against the grain of the Navy’s culture as they understood it. The follow-on 2015 strategic vision *A Cooperative Strategy for Twenty-first Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready* (CS21R) effectively took the Navy back to where it was before the original had reminded the service that a strategy that was distinctly “maritime,” going beyond the purely naval to include political and economic measures, was not only possible but necessary as a counter-weight to the overly militarized tradition stretching back to the navalism of the late nineteenth-century. “If one were looking for an elaboration or expansion of maritime-systemic thought,” Haynes’ noted drily, “one would be disappointed.”

CS21 was also a conscious attempt by the Navy to fill the policy gap. Critics accused it of looking upward; of trying to persuade policy-makers to provide the guidance its strategic community needed. That it did so by

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51 Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., Jonathan W. Greenert and Paul F. Zukunft, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready* (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 2015), The U.S. Navy has issued two strategy documents since CS21R: “A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority,” Version 1.0. U.S. Navy Chief of Naval Operations, January 2016 and a revised Version 2.0 in December 2018. Version 1.0 was characterized as providing “initial steps along a future course to achieve the aims articulated in CS21R,” while Version 2.0 was “a continuation of Design 1.0” as no major course change was deemed necessary. In other words, the Navy continuing to steer away from the politically-informed, maritime-systemic challenge to China’s global ambitions laid down in CS21.

52 Haynes (2015), 248.

53 McGrath (2010), 42.
suggesting a policy solution was not out of character. Of all the services, the Navy feels the absence of national policy most acutely because, like all oceanic navies, it has practiced cross-domain warfare for almost its entire history, inhabited a geographically and strategically borderless world, where the boundary between peace and war is blurred by continuous political, economic, legal and military competition. The affinity between naval and grand strategy has always been close. That withered with the passage of the 1947 National Security Act, and during the era of nuclear-induced strategic neuralgia that followed, as the Navy sought to align itself with the prevailing U.S. strategic orthodoxy by doubling-down on its military character. But in an age when it needs to confront China – a state that has adopted a comprehensive maritime posture – it needs to adapt again by crafting a corresponding but competitive strategic vision, resurrecting the economic and diplomatic skills it had prior to Mahan and needed now to blunt Chinese maneuvers across the political-military spectrum. For, as former Pacific Fleet Admiral Scott H. Swift has written:

> China itself does not just rely on sea power to achieve its objectives. It is using all elements of national power. China’s tactical actions are shaped by an operational framework; informed by a robust, integrated government mosaic of policy; and derived from a well-thought-out, active, assessment-informed national strategy. Their strength comes from the collective sum of all these parts. If it is to be successful, the U.S. government must do the same.

The unification the Navy, and the nation, needs is unification at the level of national defense and foreign policy across the federal government. Strategy cannot arise out of a vacuum. Only by filling this policy-strategy gap at the highest political level can any of the services have the guidance they need to achieve true cross-domain effects in a political context; and only by bringing other areas of government into the defense and security framework can political warfare be waged effectively.

54 “For much of the 19th-century the Navy was deployed globally in a half-dozen forward squadrons that worked in a whole of government manner (not militarily joint) with the ever-expanding Diplomatic corps and Consular Service (not the Army), forming relationships and undertaking activities that CS21 argued for today” (Peter M. Swartz, Correspondence with the author, 29 March 2019).

The intention here is not to undermine unification at the theater and operational levels of war. It is not to create an office or organization dedicated to producing one answer amounting to a *de facto* decision to be rubber-stamped by the President.\(^{56}\) It is not a panacea; it does not guarantee that the United States will adopt a less militaristic and more flexible force structure that plays to the Navy’s unique contribution to national security.\(^ {57}\) What it can do is provide the Commander-in-Chief with advice uncompromised by consensus that fills the “well-thought-out, active, assessment-informed national strategy” lacunae that Scott points to.

This is the point where service contributions matter. Domains are different. It is right and natural the domain-specific services should fight to gain acceptance for their insights and experience.\(^ {58}\) Their input here can provide the domain detail and the connections between them that is essential for making effective cross-domain activity possible at the policy and grand strategic levels.

The Navy needs to regain the space to think in grand strategic terms again and with effect. To do so it must recognize – as the Mitchellites did at the outset of the air power debates – that its cause is better served by supporting a wider effort to reform and unify policy formation at the national level. It will take a two-pronged approach to enable this to work to the Navy’s and the America’s advantage. First, it must nest its ambitions and unique perspective within a wider unification effort aimed at forming a maritime-focused, U.S grand strategy. Second, it must nurture the skills necessary to make its upward-focused contribution to grand strategy formation effective. As J.C. Wylie wrote:

> Let there be no delusion. Even though all [three armed services] serve the same common purpose and do so in all the honesty and sincerity of able and dedicated men, they do not think alike...differences of judgment, the clash of ideas...are the greatest source of military strength that the nation has...nothing would be more dangerous to

\(^{56}\) Hanne (1985), 88 and 91.

\(^{57}\) While the 2018 National Defense Strategy is the most coherent strategic document of its kind of the Goldwater-Nichols era, its heading is to take the U.S back to major war as the only possible justification for use of force.

our nation than comfortable and placid acceptance of a single idea, a single and exclusively dominant military pattern of thought.59

For war to be an effective extension of politics, and for war to be continued by political means, unification needs to be extended to the policy level. This, in turn, will require a clearer determination of what the national security strategy needs to deliver and professional staff at that level who can net assess inputs from multiple sources. In this context, and for the nation’s defense policy to regain its balance, policymakers need to hear the Navy’s independent voice clearly at this level once again.

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Elmo Zumwalt’s Project SIXTY: Driving Institutional Change in an Era of Great Power Competition at Sea

Peter D. Haynes

Introduction

In 1970, the U.S. Navy, for the first time in decades, found itself confronted by a rival capable of contesting the seas.¹ For the new chief of naval operations (CNO), Admiral Elmo R. “Bud” Zumwalt Jr. (CNO 1970-74), the emergence of a powerful Soviet navy and the need recapitalize the fleet and close the widening gap in sea control capabilities in an era of budget cuts required drastic changes in U.S. naval strategy.² Armed with an unswerving confidence in his ambitious vision, Zumwalt sought to overhaul the institution, modernizing it for a new era of naval (as well as budgetary) competition. From his perspective, the Navy had lost its way strategically. The Navy had splintered conceptually and materially. It was confused about its purpose and how to rationalize it. There was a lack of understanding of why fundamental changes in the security environment necessitated changing how the fleet was to be employed and what capabilities it needed.

Zumwalt’s primary instrument for institutional strategic change called Project SIXTY. He gave his small, handpicked team sixty days (hence the

¹ The author would like to thank Peter Swartz for his insights and access to his research material in the writing of this chapter and other efforts as well as for his indispensable support, mentorship, and friendship through the years. As no other, Peter has inspired, supported, and mentored a generation of naval strategist and scholars.

² “Sea control,” as Milan Vego notes, “can be described as one’s ability to use a given part of the ocean/sea and associated air (space) for military and nonmilitary purposes and to deny the same to the enemy in a time of open hostilities.” Milan Vego, Maritime Strategy and Sea Control: Theory and Practice (New York: Routledge, 2016), 24. To be clear, power projection (i.e., carrier strike warfare and amphibious assaults) is a capability. Sea control is an objective. Aircraft carriers can be used both to establish sea control (e.g., by sinking the enemy’s warships) and to exploit sea control (e.g., launching strikes on the enemy’s territory). By contrast, sea denial, usually practiced by a weaker opponent, is about preventing the enemy’s ability to use the seas.
name) from his first day in office to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. The plan was to be in the form of a classified briefing for presentation to the secretary of defense for his approval. It was to explain the Navy’s purpose in the post-Vietnam era, articulate and prioritize the service’s missions, and set forth the capabilities needed to execute them. Project SIXTY was a project as well as a document. As a CNO-driven effort to develop and drive an extensive agenda of bewildering institutional change, Project SIXTY remains unprecedented. As a document, it was also notable. With Project SIXTY, Zumwalt inaugurated the strategic capstone document. These self-generated statements, which come in various forms – strategies, visions, and concepts, are signed or directed by the CNO or the secretary of the Navy. To audiences (either internal, external, or both), they provide a conceptual framework needed to align the many activities of a complex warfighting organization and an explanation of the Navy’s purpose.3

For U.S. leaders and strategists, studying why and how Zumwalt sought to change the Navy in an era marked by maritime great power competition and the need to control the seas is critical. In short, the similarities between the challenges then and now are striking. Examining Zumwalt’s Project SIXTY – both the process and the document – helps isolate what U.S. naval leaders and strategists need to think about. The chapter examines how Zumwalt saw the challenges and why he saw the need to employ a capstone document and reorganize his staff, the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV). It examines and takes the measure of both the process and the document that is Project SIXTY and why it fell short, yet ignited a much-needed debate inside the Navy about its purpose providing the foundation for the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s. Finally, it explores how Zumwalt and Project SIXTY shaped a narrow, means-centered understanding of U.S. naval strategy that continues to haunt the Navy.

3 Peter M. Swartz, U.S. Navy Capstone, Policy, Vision and Concept Documents: What to consider before you write one (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, March 2009), https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/D0020071.A1.pdf, 1. Peter is (by far) the world’s foremost scholar on these documents. As a result of his dedication in curating, analyzing, and sharing material on these statements and background on how they came about, many scholars (none more so than the author) remain deeply in debt to Peter, and more so for his insights, enthusiasm, and mentorship. To examine Peter Swartz’s highly regarded series of PowerPoint briefs on the Navy’s capstone documents, of which there are seventeen, see https://www.cna.org/research/capstone-strategy-series.
Zumwalt’s Problems

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and Secretary of the Navy John Chafee had selected Zumwalt over seven admirals and twenty-six vice admirals. At 49, Zumwalt was the youngest CNO. He was also the first surface officer since Arleigh Burke (CNO 1955-61). In Zumwalt, they saw a charismatic leader, a leading-edge analytical thinker, and passionate agent of institutional change, just the type to carry out their mandate for change in an institution historically resistant to such. Previously, Zumwalt had been the commander of U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam, responsible for the coastal and riverine campaigns. Neither CNO Thomas H. Moorer (1967-70) nor the commanders of U.S. Pacific Command had paid much attention to these sea-control campaigns, which sought to interdict Viet Cong and North Vietnamese supply lines. From their perspective, these operations lacked the prestige of carrier strike operations and were not well supported. That did not stop Zumwalt, however. He transformed these backwater campaigns by instilling an aggressive mindset throughout the command. He secured needed capabilities, and gathered around him only the sharpest, most innovative officers. He was intensely loyal to those under his command, visiting them often to conduct frank and open round-table meetings with commanders and junior enlisted personnel to understand problems and impediments to change. Morale and operational effectiveness increased dramatically (along with casualties).

As CNO, Zumwalt brought the same approach to bear to address the Navy’s many problems. Among them were how to afford an all-volunteer force, which would come into effect in 1973. Competing with the civilian sector meant more funding to recruit and retain personnel, which would now take up a far greater percentage of the Navy’s budget. The need to recruit and retain personnel in a time of profound changes in naval technology was critical—and challenging. Morale in the fleet had plummeted. It suffered from rampant drug abuse and historically low reenlistment rates.

7 Rest of the paragraph based on ibid., 388–393, and Berman (2012), 166–203.
8 These officers included Lieutenant Peter Swartz, who did an advisory tour with the South Vietnam navy before joining Zumwalt’s staff.
Meanwhile, the cost of weapons systems was skyrocketing.\(^9\) Whereas the Forrestal-class carriers, built from 1955–61, cost $250 million each, a Nimitz-class carrier was $2 billion. The cost of a 1960s’ F-4 Phantom II was $3 million, and its replacement, the F-14 Tomcat, was $25 million. The cost of a destroyer went from $50 million to the Spruance-class’s $350 million. Admiral Hyman Rickover’s insistence that all large surface combatants be nuclear-powered did not help. Building and maintaining these ships cost five times more than conventional counterparts. In short, no longer could the Navy replace ships and aircraft on a one-for-one cost basis.

Like the carrier fleet, the submarine fleet needed to be recapitalized. Built in the early 1960s, the ballistic missile-carrying nuclear-powered submarines (SSBNs) would reach the end of their service lives in the 1980s. As the nation’s only invulnerable second-strike platform, the SSBN threatened the Soviet Union under all conditions of retaliation, serving as a maximum deterrent. The SSBN’s mission was Navy’s primary one for the Cold War, and was financially supported as such.\(^10\) In a time when the Soviets were reaching parity in the number of nuclear weapons, the importance of the SSBN’s mission to the Navy was unrivaled. A new class of nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) – the Los Angeles-class – was needed as well. The Soviets’ new Delta-class SSBNs did not need to transit through the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) gap, across which the Navy had erected a stout barrier of SSNs and maritime patrol aircraft and the Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS). Instead, they could launch their missiles in home waters where Soviet naval air, surface, and subsurface forces could better protect them. Of the Navy’s capabilities, only its (highly expensive) SSNs were capable of threatening the Deltas in their patrol bastions, much of which were under Arctic ice.\(^11\) For the first time in the Cold War, the Navy confronted the need to protect its SBBNs on patrol from a far greater number of modern Soviet SSNs while prosecuting opposing SSBNs in home waters. From a nuclear deterrence perspective, the importance of sea control was increasing.

These were only part of a broader set of problems. While the United States was preoccupied in Vietnam, the balance of power at sea had shift-

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9 Baer (1994), 410.
ed. An activist foreign policy and booming Soviet economy was driving a massive naval rearmament. Designed for sea denial and nuclear retaliation, the Soviet navy was competing with the U.S. Navy in terms of technology and day-to-day presence in key strategic areas such as the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Atlantic. Meanwhile, to help pay for the Vietnam War, the Johnson administration had cut the fleet’s operating budget, curtailing U.S. naval presence in all but the Western Pacific, and halved the shipbuilding budget.12 Between 1966 and 1970, the Navy built 88 ships, the Soviets 209.13

Apart from nuclear deterrence, Zumwalt also focused on sea control. He sought to close the yawning gap in the fleet’s sea control capabilities. The need to control the seas should war arrive was now far greater than at any time since the Second World War. The capabilities to do so, however, had ebbed. For the first time in the Cold War, the Soviets had a navy capable of cutting the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) to U.S. allies in Europe and Asia. To lessen superpower tensions and promote stability while the United States disengaged from Vietnam, the Nixon administration had deemphasized the nuclear option. For Zumwalt, this increased the likelihood of conventional conflict and therefore the importance of protecting the movement of personnel and material across the oceans.

However, protecting the SLOCs was a tall order. With a three-to-one advantage in attack submarines, the Soviets threatened to overwhelm the Navy’s ability to close strategic chokepoints like the GUIK gap and defend the convoys. With their long-range bombers, the Soviets threatened the convoys and mitigated the carriers’ ability to approach the Russian homeland close enough to strike submarines in their pens, the basis of the Navy’s maritime strategy in the late 1940s and early 1950s.14 As a result,

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13 Ibid.
14 See Michael A. Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy: the Development of American Naval Strategy, 1945–1955* (Annapolis, MD: The Naval Institute Press, 1990). 29–31. Of note, this is perhaps the earliest of many instances of authors thanking Peter Swartz. In a statement that could have been written anytime over the last thirty years, Palmer noted “I must acknowledge the help of Captain Peter M. Swartz, USN,” he noted, “in initiating, stimulating, and focusing the study.” Echoing the comments of many after him, Palmer continued, noting, “Throughout the writing of this work he has remained an invaluable supporter, source of information, advisor, and friend.” From this author’s perspective, no truer words were ever written.
the burden of sea control was shifting away from carriers and towards the well-financed ASW triad – SSNs, maritime patrol community, and SOSUS – and to the fleet of obsolescent surface combatants and ASW carriers, the latter of which were all retired by 1970. The lack of surface combatants to escort convoys was particularly acute. The SSBN program, which accounted for a staggering 13 percent of the Navy’s budget in the early 1960s, had devoured the funds needed to replace the 750 World War II-era ships that comprised the bulk of the surface force. Consequently, between budget cuts, rising maintenance costs, and high-tempo operations in Southeast Asia, the surface fleet’s material readiness plummeted. As a result, CNO Moorer scrapped ships without replacement, which continued under Zumwalt. By 1975 the fleet would number 512, down from 926 in 1969.

The Soviets went beyond attack submarines in expanding the threats to the Navy’s ability to control the seas. This complicated American efforts of how to recapitalize the surface fleet. In the 1960s, the Soviets began deploying large numbers of attack submarines, surface combatants, and bombers armed with anti-ship missiles, which outranged the weapons systems of U.S. surface combatants. The Soviets’ diversification meant that sea control was now a farther ranging and much more expensive three-dimensional problem. Multi-mission surface ships – ones capable of long-range anti-aircraft warfare (AAW) and anti-surface warfare (ASUW) as well as ASW – were far more expensive than more ships specialized for one or two of these missions.

In Zumwalt’s view, the Vietnam War had tipped the fleet materially and conceptually too far towards exploiting sea control at the expense of establishing it. In Vietnam, Zumwalt no doubt felt keenly the disparity of U.S. strategy that had placed overwhelming emphasis on strike warfare. As in the Korean War, the Navy relied heavily on the carrier to demonstrate its relevance. For Zumwalt, the Vietnam War accelerated trends that were unbalancing the fleet and corroding its coherence. In the 1950s, the carriers were a central element in the Navy’s three key tasks – nuclear de-
terrence, sea control, and limited war and operations short of war. That changed in the early 1960s – the SSBN supplanted the carriers in the role of nuclear deterrence and the SSN became (and remains) the primary sea control instrument. Given their (assumed) vulnerability to Soviet long-range bombers, the carrier was relegated to gunboat diplomacy and the type of limited war that showed up on the aviators’ doorstep in Vietnam.

Installed in 1961, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara’s Planning, Programming, and Budgetary System (PPBS) only exacerbated these problems. PPBS stove-piped the programmatic decisions of the Navy’s warfare communities: surface ships, submarines, and aviation. Their respective program sponsors on the OPNAV staff answered to McNamara’s staff (the Office of the Secretary of Defense, or OSD) more so than to the CNO, and hence were free to pursue parochial interests. Apart from coalescing around community-defined technologies, OPNAV grew in size and became unwieldy. Then (as now), the diversification of the threats to sea control across more domains exposed deficiencies in the Navy’s ability to coordinate its communities’ programmatic decisions and develop a strategy-based conceptual framework about how the pieces of the fleet should fit together.\(^\text{20}\)

To Zumwalt, one thing was clear. Should war come, as he bluntly testified to Congress, the Navy would not be able to keep the SLOCs open.\(^\text{21}\) The Navy had too few surface ships and most of those were poorly manned, trained, and equipped to defend themselves let alone the tens of merchant ships convoying across the seas. Between the gap in sea control capabilities and lack of a collaborative sense of purpose to maintain the cohesiveness needed by a fighting force, Zumwalt saw the need for drastic and unremitting change in U.S. naval strategy and the process by which it is developed and executed. Towards that end, he sought to reshape the Navy’s identity and purpose and rebalance the fleet in light of the Soviet sea-control threat.\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^{20}\) The warfighting domains are sea, air, land, space, the electromagnetic spectrum, and now cyberspace.


\(^{22}\) Haynes (2015), 28.
Zumwalt’s Project SIXTY

As Zumwalt knew, rebalancing the fleet with a greater emphasis on sea control required limiting the influence of the carrier aviators.\textsuperscript{23} Twenty years earlier, CNO Forrest Sherman (1949-51), a carrier aviator, managed that quite well. In 1949, senior carrier aviators had sought to redefine the Navy not as a flexible, carrier-based offensive sea control navy, but a carrier-based nuclear retaliatory one to rival if not replace the Air Force’s Strategic Air Command.\textsuperscript{24} Externally their bid had been rebuffed with Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson’s firing of CNO Louis Denfeld (1947–49) in what became known as the “revolt of the admirals” affair. Internally, it had been rebuffed by Denfeld’s replacement, Sherman, who reinstalled the attack-at-the-source offensive sea control strategy, which he had developed as deputy CNO for Operations in 1946–47.\textsuperscript{25} Like Sherman, Zumwalt understood that sea control and not power projection provided the glue that cohered the fleet. While supporting the need for the third Nimitz-class carrier (which would be USS Carl Vinson), Zumwalt sought to downplay the Navy’s power projecting image. In terms of U.S. policy, limited war was now passé. In terms of societal support, many Americans associated carrier operations with the disillusionment of the Vietnam War.\textsuperscript{26}

In contrast to Sherman, however, Zumwalt lacked the informal and formal power to drive institutional change and the temperament to manage the aviators. A protégé of Paul Nitze, secretary of the Navy (1963–67), Zumwalt was viewed as an upstart. Worse, he was viewed pejoratively as a “political” admiral, in other words, one whose advancement owed more to political connections and bureaucratic finesse than operational merit. While he was as brilliant as Sherman or Burke, whose exploits from the Second World War were better known, Zumwalt lacked their legitimacy.\textsuperscript{27} Unlike Burke, Zumwalt lacked experience in carrier operations and the trust of aviators. While both were destroyermen, Zumwalt had difficulty restraining his parochialism for the surface community. After Burke, the CNO no longer commanded the fleet, another source of power. Having been promoted at a comparatively faster rate, Zumwalt—who had just

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 28.


\textsuperscript{25} See Palmer (1990), 33–52.


\textsuperscript{27} Baer (1994), 408.
three tours as an admiral – lacked for relationships with senior admirals to leverage support. McNamara’s changes undermined the CNO’s formal power, too. In the 1950s, the CNO had more authority to manage the elements of naval strategy – the fleet, OPNAV, and the bureaus. A CNO could assess the strategic environment, establish a strategic approach, and rebalance the fleet accordingly. As a result of PPBS, the CNO now had little control over much of OPNAV or input into the PPBS. This was to rectify, as McNamara noted, the “tendency on the part of the services to base their planning and force structure on their own unilateral views of how a future war might be fought.” In short, Zumwalt found himself lacking the power for institutional change that CNOs once had.

To regain power, Zumwalt refashioned the tools of governance. With his infamous “Z-grams,” Zumwalt reasserted authority over the fleet. He gathered, coopted, and leveraged innovative thinkers. To provide him with independent advice and analytical firepower, he created the CNO Executive Panel (and OP-00K to manage it), which was comprised of senior civilian and Navy officials from the scientific, engineering, political, and academic communities. He reinvigorated strategic and tactical thinking by revising the Naval War College’s curricula. To gain control over OPNAV he reorganized OPNAV. Specifically, he sought to revise and control the Navy’s program planning process and elevate the importance of the Systems Analysis Division, OP-96 (renamed N81 in the early 1990s). Distrustful of bureaucracies (owing perhaps to his tour as the executive assistant to Secretary of the Navy), he created the CNO’s Executive Board, which consisted of OPNAV’s senior admirals and civilians, to drive consensus. To ensure Project SIXTY’s initiatives were being implemented, he established the office of the Coordinator of Decisions, OP-09C. To counterbalance the

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30 “When I was CNO,” as Admiral David McDonald (1963–67) noted, “I often felt that I had no more authority than a lieutenant commander.” Interview, David L. McDonald by John T. Mason, Jr., 1976, 139, U.S. Naval Institute Oral History as quoted in Hone (1989), 129.

31 See ibid., 85–98.
power of the three-star aviator responsible for the aviation community’s programmatic decisions, he created deputy CNO-level counterparts for the surface and submarine communities. In essence, Zumwalt had created a staff-within-the-OPNAV staff. Finally, he assigned only trusted agents to key senior positions in OPNAV, almost of whom were fellow surface officers.32

Zumwalt had a lot going for him, however. With an earlier tour in OSD Policy, preceded by attending the National War College, Zumwalt had far more experience in national policy making and analysis than his predecessors. He was well versed in strategic-level trends and U.S. national security. More importantly, Zumwalt, unlike most senior admirals, was intimately familiar with the new basis of knowledge in the Pentagon and how to leverage that knowledge politically. This basis of knowledge was systems analyses, which McNamara had made preeminent.33 McNamara had established OSD’s analytical research office. But OPNAV did not follow suit. In short order. McNamara and Secretary of the Navy Nitze grew dissatisfied with how the Navy justified its programmatic decisions, believing they lacked analytical rigor.34 To Nitze, senior admirals did not understand the importance of systems analysis.35 In real terms, the Navy’s institutional health was now in the hands of those slide-rule wielding officers in OPNAV whose analyses now determined and rationalized the Navy’s resource decisions.36 To compete with McNamara’s “whiz kids” in OSD, Nitze directed CNO David McDonald (1963-67) to task Zumwalt with establishing and leading OPNAV’s analytical arm, which was the Systems Analysis Division, OP-96.

Zumwalt, then a rear admiral, wielded his thorough knowledge of analytical data throughout OPNAV, the Pentagon, and Congress, amassing an enormous amount of influence over the process by which the Navy determined its warfighting capabilities. His goal was to establish an analytically based understanding of the Navy’s capability requirements and convey to OSD how the Navy’s resources should be apportioned and rationalized in what was (and still is) the lingua franca of the Pentagon, the so-called sys-

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35 Berman (2012), 155–156.
tems analyses. On his own accord, Zumwalt commissioned studies on fleet escort, ASW, tactical air power, surface-to-surface missiles, and the future of naval warfare. Given a broad set of campaign and net assessment-based analyses, no admiral had a clearer understanding of the Navy’s comparative capability gaps and inability to coordinate its programmatic decisions. None could match his ability to relate fundamental changes at the strategic-level, including U.S. strategy, with the Navy’s operational-level requirements. Zumwalt amassed so much influence that CNO Moorer, who had little control over the OP-96’s conclusions (particularly those that questioned the effectiveness of the carriers’ bombing campaigns in Vietnam), sought to transfer him away from the Pentagon. To ensure he did not raise the ire of Nitze, who was now deputy secretary of defense, Moorer upgraded the rank of the commander of U.S. Naval Forces, Vietnam to three stars before ushering Zumwalt out of the Pentagon and to the backwaters of the Vietnam War.

Consequently, when he returned as CNO, Zumwalt knew exactly what he wanted to do. He commissioned Project SIXTY on his first day. Rear Admiral-select Stansfield Turner and later Rear Admiral Worth Bagley led the project (Turner almost single-handedly at the start). Like Zumwalt, both were surface officers, former executive assistants to the secretary of the Navy, and, unlike most admirals, had tours in OSD or the Joint Staff that exposed them to national security issues. Zumwalt’s decision to establish a small team of highly innovative and strategic thinkers outside of the staff was telling. Either OPNAV did not have the capability to develop a comprehensive plan (particularly via systems analysis) or that if it did such an effort would require consensus between the warfare communities and, more importantly, a year to staff.

Zumwalt’s brief of Project SIXTY to the secretary of defense, his deputy, and the secretary of the Navy in September 1970 went off without a hitch. He secured a commitment from the secretary of the Navy for fundamental change and buy-in from the secretary of defense, which Zumwalt leveraged. In short, to reestablish the CNO’s ability to drive change, Zumwalt had invented a new tool of institutional governance – the strategic capstone document – that rationalized the Navy’s purpose, provided a conceptual framework for the fleet, and a plan of action to secure the needed capabilities. Having received his bosses’ imprimaturs, Zumwalt sent the clas-
cified brief, which consisting of thirty pages of text and forty viewgraphs, to all admirals and Marine Corps generals. In the cover letter, Zumwalt stated “I consider that the substance of this presentation sets forth the direction in which we want the Navy to move in the next few years. The decisions that we make, and implement, at the command levels of the Navy should be consistent with these concepts.”

The decisions that Zumwalt focused on were those associated with determining weapons systems. With its narrow, capability-based approach, Project SIXTY was all about resource decisions. Today, the document would be called the CNO’s programmatic guidance (albeit with far more analysis at the strategic level than contemporary ones). The document noted that “the Navy’s capabilities fall naturally into four categories.”

In priority order, these were “Assured Second Strike, Control of the Sea Lines and Areas, Projection of Power Ashore, and Overseas Presence in Peacetime.” Arguably, this was the first document that articulated and prioritized the Navy’s missions, which in essence were nuclear deterrence, sea control, power projection, and forward presence. For Zumwalt, a more holistic capability-based approach de-emphasized the warfare communities’ influence and parochial interests. To capture the conceptual high ground, he had introduced an explicit mission-based framework and associated vocabulary, which can also be seen as a way to re-establish the CNO’s power. Overall, Project SIXTY marked a shift away from implicit arguments about naval purpose in general to an explicit capability-based framework that defined the Navy’s purpose almost wholly in light of the Soviet threat and operational and tactical-level considerations, a trend that would continue through the end of the Cold War.

The document argued that two trends – nuclear parity and the emergence of a strong, globally deployed Soviet navy – increased the importance of sea control (and by implication the Navy). It argued that nuclear parity increased the need to ensure the SSBN’s invulnerability and the likelihood of conventional conflict. This, in turn, increased the importance of sea control and forward presence, the latter of which was required to deter the Soviets, be a position to respond to crisis, and compete with the Soviets for political influence overseas. Due to the lack of sea control capabilities, the Navy “will no longer be able to oppose [the Soviets] simultaneously in

41 Ibid., 4.
42 Ibid., 4.
the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.”43 It noted that the Navy had a 55 percent chance of defeating the Soviets at sea now and a 30 percent chance given what was programmed for the 1972 budget.44 To bolster its argument about the importance of sea control, Project SIXTY referred to the Nixon Doctrine. That message argued that U.S. allies and partners in Asia now had to shoulder more of the burden of managing the Cold War. For conflicts other than those directly associated with the Soviet threat, U.S. allies and partners would have to provide the manpower. They could, however, count on the United States to send military material and economic assistance, almost all of which moved across the seas.

All of these arguments set up Project SIXTY’s primary message. In short, sea control was now more important than power projection and should be fiscally supported as such. Much like today, naval officers in OPNAV no doubt skimmed over the pages that framed the strategic environment focusing instead on finding the real programmatic guidance – “the Soviet Naval threat, our commitments abroad, and the credibility of our sea-based strategic deterrent demand that the sea control mission be assigned priority of resources at the expense of projection of power ashore.”45 For carrier aviators, this was a shot across the bow.

However, Project SIXTY did not explicitly state what platforms were needed and which were not. As was made clearer when he introduced new programs into the Navy’s Program Objective Memorandum (POM), Zumwalt sought to rebalance the fleet and close the sea control capabilities gap by continuing to employ a “high-low” mix. In terms of the “high,” Project SIXTY noted “the Navy is committed to several complex and expensive systems.”46 These included the Los Angeles-class SSN, the Spruance-class destroyer, a Nimitz-class carrier, and large-deck amphibious ships.47 These programs, already embedded in the Navy’s POM, made up the majority of the budget. “I believe that we can and should complete most of these major projects that are now underway,” as Zumwalt noted in the document, particularly since “abrupt changes in direction of procurement are costly and disruptive.”48

Consequently, a significant part of the needed sea control capabilities (i.e., the “low” part) would have to be made up on the margins. The low

43 Ibid., 27.
44 Ibid., 28.
45 Ibid., 27.
46 Ibid., 17.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
part was to consist of large numbers of smaller, lower-cost defensive-oriented ships designed for local sea control in the open oceans. Zumwalt proposed four new ship classes, all of which were sea control-related. These were the *Pegasus*-class of small, but heavily armed hydrofoils. This capable platform carried the new Harpoon surface-to-surface missile, another program Zumwalt championed. These ships were designed to operate in less threatening areas such as the Mediterranean, which would free up more offensive platforms like carriers for duty elsewhere. The Surface Effect Ship was an 80-knot, cruiser-sized ship with a revolutionary air-lubricated hull. These were to be designed to operate ASW helicopters and AV-8B Harriers in a local AAW role or carry logistics or large numbers of surface-to-surface missiles. Then there was the *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class frigate. It was armed with the Harpoon, a short-range AAW missile, a 76 mm cannon, and two ASW helicopters. The hallmark of the low part was the conventionally powered Sea Control Ship, a small ASW carrier that deployed ASW helicopters and AV-8B Harriers for short-range AAW. Ostensibly, these ships would replace the eight ASW carriers that had recently been retired. Only half of the ASW carriers’ fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft transferred to the larger carriers.\(^49\) However, Zumwalt’s plan to rebalance the fleet and reorganize it around the sea control mission did not pan out as intended.

**Zumwalt’s Project SIXTY Falls Short, Yet Sets Off a Needed Internal Debate**

Materially, Zumwalt’s plan to reorganize the fleet around the Soviet sea control threat fell victim to budget cuts, a stagnated economy, and rising inflation that promised to increase the unit costs of these ships fourfold.\(^50\) Of the four classes of ships, only the *Perry*-class of 51 ships (the first of which was commissioned in late 1977) was completed. While 100 *Pegasus*-class hydrofoils were planned, only six were built. Neither the Surface Effect Ship nor the Sea Control Ship saw the light of day. While Zumwalt had some congressional support, neither the carrier aviators nor Rickover saw much value in the Sea Control Ship. They thought the ship would only undermine support for more *Nimitz*-class carriers. Indeed, Zumwalt’s plan was subject to untold institutional resistance.

From that perspective, Zumwalt would have been more successful at his *strategic* revolution had he not simultaneously embarked on a *personnel* rev-

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49 Coté (2004), 46 and 53.
50 Baer (1994), 410.
olution.\textsuperscript{51} For him, one was not be possible without the other. In Zumwalt’s view, the U.S.-Soviet competition at sea turned on advanced technologies. Consequently, the Navy needed to recruit and retain Sailors capable of operating far more complex weapons and information systems. To do so, Zumwalt saw the need to change the institution’s culture at the deck-plate level.\textsuperscript{52} Having released Project SIXTY, Zumwalt turned his attention towards personnel matters effort. He released a stream of personnel-related directives, many via his Z-grams. Many proved prescient and lasting and others controversial. His tireless efforts to change race relations should be accounted among his most prominent achievements. Spinning up his two revolutions, Zumwalt created a cloud of antibodies throughout the Navy. Many commanding officers and chief petty officers believed Zumwalt’s directives undermined their authority and ability to ensure good order and discipline; senior enlisted left the Navy in droves.\textsuperscript{53} For their part, many junior officers and junior enlisted personnel were highly supportive of Zumwalt’s initiatives. The tensions marked a generational shift from veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War to those buoyed by an unsettling countercultural revolution in the late 1960s that was consuming the nation. Having unleashed his own countercultural revolutions, Zumwalt created an unmanageable context where many within and outside of the Navy reflexively opposed his initiatives and refused to look at the merits of his arguments. He was a controversial and polarizing figure (and remains so today).

As Zumwalt knew, however, leaders have only a short time to institutionalize change: four years in the CNO’s (two two-year terms). Given his experience, leadership style, and mandate for change from the secretaries of defense and the Navy, Zumwalt sought to input a large rudder correction as early in his term as possible and only later steady up on a course. Instead of an evolutionary and consensually driven approach (not unlike the \textit{Maritime Strategy} of the 1980s), Zumwalt opted for a faster top-down revolutionary approach.\textsuperscript{54} While he strove for consensus, Zumwalt had little tolerance for those who sought to erect obstacles to prevent or delay change. He had an unwavering confidence in his crusade to change the Navy and in the ability of systems analysis to provide the right answers, both of which only increased institutional resistance. The assumption that

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[51] Sands (1993), 77.
\item[52] Ibid., 76.
\item[53] Berman (2012), 250, and Baer (1994), 410.
\item[54] Sands (1993), 78.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
“whiz kid” analyses trumped experience and intuition stuck in the craw of many senior admirals, most of whom had far more flag-level experience at sea than Zumwalt. Unlike CNOs James Holloway III (1974–78) and Thomas Hayward (1978–82), both combat-experienced carrier aviators, Zumwalt had not commanded a numbered fleet (e.g., U.S. Seventh Fleet) or a U.S. naval component command (e.g., U.S. Pacific Fleet, respectively). Unlike Holloway and Hayward, he did not have a tour as a four-star admiral. Zumwalt’s knowledge of carrier strike warfare was based solely on analysis, not operational experience. Due to his unprecedented rise through the ranks, Zumwalt had been denied flag-level experiences at sea that might have tempered his approach and expanded his narrow base of knowledge. As CNO Moorer noted, Vice Admiral Zumwalt “requires more experience [to be CNO]…he is simply not ready for this assignment.” For those who hired Zumwalt for the skills he brought to the task they envisioned, however, time was of the essence.

Whether he intended it or not, Zumwalt nonetheless provided a charged atmosphere and a spark that set off a much-needed debate in the Navy about the fleet’s purpose, how it should be balanced, and how sea control should be conceived and prioritized particularly in relation to power projection. With Project SIXTY and its pedagogic companion “The Missions of the U.S. Navy,” which was developed by Turner as president of the Naval War College and released in 1974, Zumwalt provided new concepts, a new vocabulary, and a solid intellectual framework upon which the decade-long debate would be conducted. In real terms, Project SIXTY and “The Missions of the U.S. Navy” represented the first effort by the Cold War Navy to address the inchoate state of sea power theory and broaden the thinking of naval officers beyond just tactically and technologically oriented community concerns. With his strategic revolution, Zumwalt catalyzed efforts of naval officers to think deeply about naval purpose and make clearer the logic behind their own community’s respective arguments.

On one side of the debate, sea control advocates such as Zumwalt (and later President Jimmy Carter and Harold Brown, his secretary of defense) saw the Navy’s purpose in terms of general great power war. The Navy’s overriding purpose lay in its wartime role of keeping the SLOCs open.

58 Paragraph based on ibid., 29.
From their perspective, there was a real threat to U.S. control of the seas and a dearth of capabilities to address it. Power projection capabilities did little to address the problem. In an era of nuclear parity and growing conventional military competition in Central Europe, the Navy needed a fleet not unlike those that won the Battles of the Atlantic more so than the current fleet, which was modeled on the Pacific Campaign of the Second World War. The ability to protract a war and ensure access to resources and the alliance’s industrial capacity, which depends upon the ability to control the seas, promised to deter Soviet aggression far more than one designed to project power.

By contrast, power projection advocates argued for a more expansive understanding of naval purpose. A balanced, carrier-based fleet was far more capable across the spectrum of warfare than was one designed more for specific missions like sea control. Such a fleet was more adaptable. As the Cold War demonstrated, the future was too unknowable. OSD’s prescriptive visions of conflict simply failed to materialize. The versatility of the carrier, the ultimate hedge against the unknown, allowed the Navy to participate in a breadth of missions across the spectrum, from nuclear war, limited war, and coercive diplomacy, and other ways short of war, a range unique among the services. Power projection platforms enabled all of the Navy’s roles: warfighting, diplomacy, and constabulary. Most sea control platforms, notably SSNs, were limited to the role of warfighting. In their view, sea control and power projection were not dichotic. The former is a condition and the latter is a capability. New capabilities such as the AEGIS cruiser promised to make the carrier viable in general war once again.

Regardless of which side, many naval officers saw Project SIXTY as too defensive. Since Mahan, the Navy’s identity was offensive in nature. Zumwalt’s four classes of ships were designed for local sea control. These ships were not versatile enough per dollar spent across the broad range of missions the fleet faced short of general war. Given resource constraints, they argued that these specialized defensive platforms came at the expense of more versatile multirole platforms—including surface ships—that could

60 Paragraph based on Haynes (2015), 29.
be used for offensive purposes. The power-projection view prevailed, manifesting itself most prominently in the *Maritime Strategy* of the 1980s.

**Conclusion**

In retrospect, Zumwalt’s Project SIXTY was based on a set of assumptions that would, in time, prove incorrect. Having learned from the Walker spy ring that their SSBNs were exceptionally loud and therefore vulnerable, the Soviets revised their thinking in the 1970s. Instead of sallying their SSNs to interdict the SLOCs, the Soviets planned to keep them near the bastions to protect their SSBNs. Zumwalt’s worse-case failed to materialize. The real threat to the convoys in the open oceans were not Soviet SSNs, the primary focus of much of Zumwalt’s “low” capabilities. Instead, they were Soviet bombers, surface combatants, and nuclear powered, cruise-missile carrying submarines (SSGNs). In this case, “high” capabilities such as SSNs, AEGIS cruisers, and carriers were of far greater use engaging these threats than Zumwalt’s “low” capabilities. The intelligence that the Soviet SSNs would not interdict the SLOCs and the introduction of long-range defensive weapons systems such as the AEGIS cruiser and F-14 resurrected the carrier’s role in general war and enabled the development of an offensive sea control strategy called the *Maritime Strategy*. Once again, sea control tied the fleet conceptually and aligned it materially.

While it fell short in delivering its procurement goals, Project SIXTY turned out to be profoundly influential, pervasively so. Many of the tools of governance that Zumwalt fashioned remain, none more important than the CNO’s program guidance. As a process and product, Project SIXTY was institutionalized the next year. It was called the CNO Policy and Planning Guidance (CPPG), which would be one of many titles through the years for what amounted to the CNO’s program guidance. Zumwalt inaugurated the capstone document in the form of that guidance. He elevated the importance of OP-96 and systems-based analysis, and shifted the path to promotion to admiral from developing strategy and campaign plans to

managing weapons systems programs and manpower.\textsuperscript{65} As a result, Zumwalt narrowed the conceptual basis for internal OPNAV thinking about the future.\textsuperscript{66} As Peter Swartz noted, it led to the “Deliberate fostering of OP-96-led OPNAV ‘program planning’ as intellectual center of the OPNAV staff, vice OP-06-led ‘planning.’”\textsuperscript{67} The lens narrowed to address not strategic, but operational and tactical-level problems. Comparative force-on-force capabilities, high-tech solutions, and kill chain-based analytical constructs now represented the lens by which OPNAV viewed the U.S.-Soviet competition at sea (and now views the U.S.-Sino competition).

The results were predictable. As George Baer noted, in the 1970s “The Navy made a mistake in stating its case largely in terms of competition with Soviet capabilities—that is, in terms of force structure, the same terms in which it justified its own doctrine. The mistake was the impassioned arguments about force structure…passed by most listeners outside the service. Such arguments failed to convey their implicit political and hence strategic context.”\textsuperscript{68} Project SIXTY elevated the analysts in OP-96 (most of whose officers came from the Navy’s Operations Analysis community) and marginalized the Navy’s strategists in OP-06 (which was changed in the early 1990s to N3/N5) who could convey that political and strategic context.\textsuperscript{69} Navy strategists, once preeminent on the OPNAV staff, found it difficult for broader strategic ideas to compete with quantitative analysis. Seen in that light, one can only marvel how the officers from the Navy’s Strategy community, established in the mid-1970s, overcame such obstacles in developing the highly successful \textit{Maritime Strategy}, whose intellectual roots, it must be said, grew out of the soil tilled by the internal debate of the 1970s. This small and tightly knit cadre of sharp and highly educated officers, among whose number included Peter Swartz (who played a key role in the \textit{Maritime Strategy}’s development), applied the lessons of Zumwalt’s Project SIXTY and the utility of a strategic capstone document in forging consensus for institutional change to a degree not seen since.

\begin{footnotes}
\item 65 Haynes (2015), 27. Zumwalt was the first of many CNOs –no fewer than seven – with a tour as the head of OP-96 or N81. By contrast, no admiral who has led OP-06 or N3/N5 has become CNO.
\item 66 Swartz with Duggan (2011), 15, slide 30.
\item 67 Ibid. Emphasis added.
\item 68 Baer (1994), 415.
\item 69 Swartz with Duggan (2011), 15, slide 29.
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How Poland’s Strategic Concept for Maritime Security was Developed

Andrzej Makowski

Introduction

On 10 February 2017 a document entitled The Poland’s Strategic Concept for Maritime Security (PSCMS) was presented at the Polish Naval Academy in Gdynia. The strategic concept was the cumulative work of two years for the team tasked with producing the document. The main objective behind the efforts of the team was to overcome the intellectual impasse concerned with working out systemic solutions for state actions in the area of maritime security. In particular, the missions and employment of the Polish naval force needed work, and planning for their development. The problem seemed important as in 1999 Poland became a member of NATO, which meant it had joined the “club” of maritime states and indeed a maritime alliance. How to use this opportunity in the political, diplomatic, military, economic or cultural aspect was an open question, with the continued national land-centered approach to these issues. Another important issue was the geopolitical changes that took place in the Baltic region after 1991 and Poland’s accession to the European Union (2004). In the subsequent National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland, a document developed between 1990 and 2014, maritime issues were not raised or were merely discussed peripherally. Another issue to be addressed was the real contribution of the country to the diplomatic and law enforcement actions carried out by NATO naval forces, as hitherto, with a few exceptions, the Polish Navy was prepared only to conduct war operations. Its participation in additional naval NATO and EU projects had an exceptional and episodic character.

The title of the document also needs brief explanation. Why the strategic concept, and not simply the maritime security strategy? The sarcastic claim is that Poles are grandmasters in creating new concepts. Instead, due to formal and legal reasons, the name of the document could not be a strategy. Strictly defined, strategies are within the domain of the work by the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of National Defense. Therefore creating successive, lower-level entities was not possible. Thus, there arose a compromise in the form of strategic concept as a general framework for implementation of planning and development activities and future use of the naval force.

Challenges in the area of maritime security and maritime strategy perceived in Poland

The Baltic Sea, Poland’s home waters, is a particular body of water. Located on the sidelines of world maritime transport routes, having a narrow and shallow natural connection to the Atlantic Ocean through the Danish Straits\(^3\), it has long been the area of lively multilateral trade and political relations between coastal states. Over the centuries, it was an area of peaceful trade, but very often also a theatre of fierce, long-lasting wars for hegemony, in which the extra-Baltic powers were also actively involved.\(^4\) It should also be stated that in its modern history Poland represented a decidedly terrestrial and continental approach to the issues of security and strategy, while the interest of the state elite in maritime affairs can be described as episodic and rather marginal. Maritime affairs began to break into the public consciousness only after 1918, with the regaining of independence and the establishment of the Polish Navy and shipping, fishing, and shipbuilding companies.

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3 The area of the Baltic Sea with the Danish Straits is 415,000 km\(^2\), the average depth is 52 m (maximum 459 m), the meridional extent is 1300 km, and the latitudinal 1100 km, see Joanna Maj-Szatkowska, *Oceany, morza. Leksykon [Oceans, Seas, Glossary]* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 2004), 41-42.
It should be emphasized that the shipping routes of the Baltic Sea are of primary importance in terms of navigation and economics mainly for the Baltic States. For some of them, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, it is the only sea route connecting them with the world’s ocean. The relatively small size of the Baltic Sea and the resulting geographical proximity of its states mean that the sense of community of interests and mutual benefits is now playing an increasingly important role in this region. Not without significance are also the political, economic and military changes that have taken place among countries around this basin after 1991. Currently, all Baltic countries, except Russia and neutral Sweden and Finland, are members of NATO. Besides Russia, all are members of the European Union (EU), which makes the Baltic Sea to some degree EU’s Mare Nostrum, with all the economic and legal consequences this entails.

The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact (1991), Poland’s admission to NATO (1999) and accession to the EU (2004), triggered profound geopolitical, economic and military changes in the Baltic region, and also posed intellectual and organizational challenges to the “philosophy” of perceiving issues from the perspective of maritime security and maritime strategy. Another challenge was brought by the year 2014 in the form of annexation of Crimea, armed (separatist) operations in the eastern part of Ukraine, as well as rapid increase in military potential in the Kaliningrad region to build an effective A2/AD structure by the Russian Federation. The labelling of the United States of America and NATO as “threats” in the Russian War Doctrine of 2014 and the Maritime Doctrine of 2015 were significant. It was therefore necessary to acknowledge that the period of dividends of peace and detente in our part of Europe, begun in the 1990s, had ended. In parallel, an area of security destabilization appeared on the eastern border of the country.

One of the key challenges during the work on PSCMS was the introduction of the term “maritime security” to the maritime theory and practice in Poland. The difficulty was that both maritime security and maritime safety translated into Polish the same way. Moreover, while issues in the scope of maritime safety are well known and explained, maritime security was seen only as protection of human activities at sea. Using the written achieve-

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5 Over the course of the day, between 2000 and 2500 vessels equipped with AIS are recorded in the Baltic Sea area. The Baltic Sea is also the 3rd ferry market in the world in terms of transport’s frequency.
ments of Professors Geoffrey Till\(^6\) and Natalie Klein,\(^7\) the above concept was introduced into the Polish “scientific and practical” circulation, separating them between “hard” and “soft” security, which allowed their implementation in PSCMS.

Another difficult challenge was to convince political decision makers, parliamentarians, and military that the navy is not only for warfare (military operations), but has three essential functions: military, diplomatic and constabulary.\(^8\) Indeed, the three are inseparable, and their validity depends on specific plans and operational situation. It seems that despite the two years which have passed since the publication of the PSCMS, the above truth is barely making its way through to the decision makers. It should also be noted that after the events in Ukraine in 2014, a more visible slant was seen in the military capabilities of the Baltic fleets with regard to their plans for modernization.

Among the key challenges to Poland’s maritime security are:\(^9\)

- An active and permanent cooperation in upholding the legal order according to the Law of Sea;
- The rebuilding of the potential of the Polish Maritime Forces, which would ensure an acceptable level of maritime security through an increased involvement in NATO and EU activities that protect the interests of the member states in connection to access to global marine areas, key region stability, and border protection;
- Logistics infrastructure development, which would enhance our Host Nation Support capabilities and forward military NATO presence in the Baltic Sea region, as well as the developing cooperation between NATO and EU;

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• A role in rebuilding NATO naval capabilities (NATO Maritime Force Posture), including their integration with land and air components, inclusion of this matter in long-term Alliance policy and active participation and development of the Maritime Situational Awareness/Maritime Domain Awareness MSA/MDA systems;
• Acquisition and maintenance of local (littoral) sea control, including the development of allied and national capabilities for overcoming anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities of potential adversaries, which aim to hinder allied forces from providing reinforcements in the region of the Baltic Sea;
• Creating conditions for diversification of energy supply sources to be delivered by sea;
• Neutralization of uncontrolled forced mass migration and human trafficking through maritime regions;
• Stopping sea environment degradation, with many of the changes to the natural environment in the Baltic region stemming from climate change;
• Maintaining Baltic Sea security and focusing on the management of sea traffic, sea and ecological rescue as a result of an increasing traffic on Baltic Sea routes and their key importance to raw material inflow to Poland.

Taking into account the geographical conditions of the Baltic Sea and the different combat potentials of individual fleets on this sea, on the one hand small and medium-sized states, on the other, nuclear powers, Poland can face the challenges of the maritime strategy with regard to:

• Deterrence and maintenance of peace, based on the cooperation of NATO and EU soldiers by building credibility and readiness during joint exercises, naval peace operations, participation in permanent NATO standing naval groups, and close cooperation of navies in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Poland in the Baltic region;
• Preparation of the Polish Navy for participation in joint operations in the national and allied dimension, as well as activities within the framework of hybrid warfare and critical infrastructure protection, devices, and installations at sea and in coastal regions in the Baltic Sea;
• Acceleration of the implementation of the naval technical modernization plan (the average age of Polish warships is 32 years), while the current condition should be treated as a threat, not just a challenge. In addition, modernization should take into account the various dimensions of contemporary activities in confined and shallow waters: maritime,
air, land, cosmic space and cyberspace, as well as the interoperability within NATO.

Why the PSCMS was developed

The need to develop a document having the character of a strategic concept was signaled by experts associated with the Naval Academy, Shipbuilding Council, and the Institute of General Jozef Haller (a security think tank). The diagnosis by the National Security Bureau confirmed that such a need existed, because Poland had not optimally used its potential as a coastal location in the conditions of a dynamically changing security environment. Moreover, the potential it possessed was not adequate to the mission set and the water regions in which they were to be carried out. Moreover, some parts of the documents published in the previous years (“The Concept for Navy Development by 2030” and the “Operational Program-countering threats at sea 2013 to 2022/2030”) raised doubts as to the relevance of the main directions chosen for modernization of the Polish Armed Forces. Considering many years of defense neglect, especially regarding the Polish Navy, which consequently might limit the implementation of tasks assigned, it was considered appropriate by the three groups to redefine and redirect modernization priorities for the Polish Armed Forces and other components of the naval force.

This definition was in particular needed to present the concept of implementable strategic tasks for the naval force and its consequent preparation and use to ensure national security and economic and social development of the state. The document also took into account the fact that the evolutionary departure from the dominance of military issues (that is, land forces) in the content of strategic planning, and the shift towards questions of integrated national security, including sea regions, is becoming more and more visible beyond Poland. The growing importance of non-military threats and challenges also results in the need to involve broader entities to achieve security policy objectives, which is another significant change in the perception of the security of the state as a whole.

Given the foregoing, it was justifiable to make use of experience of other maritime states and of some international security organizations possessing maritime security strategy documents. In particular, the European Union Maritime Strategy (EUMSS) of 2014 and NATO’s Allied Maritime Strategy (AMS) as of 2011, provided the umbrella for a shortened process of developing Poland’s own solutions.
In the light of the above, a conclusion was made that the National Security Bureau (NSB), in cooperation with the Naval Academy (NA), Naval Shipbuilding Council and other entities was the right place, under the present legal system in Poland, to initiate a public debate focused on this important but hitherto unappreciated area of national security.

The Place of PSCMS in the Strategic Planning System of National Security

To determine the place of the PSCMS in the strategic planning system in national security in Poland is a difficult task for a few basic reasons. The first of these is the strategic planning system in the field of economic development is subject to national law on principles for pursuing development policy (2006), whereas the strategic planning system in the field of security is subject to the law on obligations relating to common defense of the Republic of Poland (1967). This is the reason why in Poland there are two de facto strategic planning systems: in the field of integrated development implemented under the government program as related to the cohesion of policy and in the narrower field of national security.

Second, the Polish national security strategy is assumed to be complex and interdisciplinary. It embraces various fields and areas of security, including development policy issues, whereas the sector strategies (of development) embrace only the smaller segments assigned to them. Thus, it stems from this definition that the sector approaches are not of a complex character and their integrative character is determined through their uniform, equal embedding in the strategic planning system. This means that the relations between security strategies and development strategies are still not determined in a formal manner, and planning in both of the fields is subject to different laws.

With the above-mentioned conditions, the authors of the Concept recognized that it was justified to place it in the system of Polish strategy documents, so as not to violate applicable laws, or disturb relations with the documents already in effect, or the existing elements of strategic culture. To do so, the management of the NSB and members of the team of au-

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Andrzej Makowski

The authors adopted the “soft” formula of the Concept, as a grassroots initiative of the presidential center, aimed at presenting the desired vision of the development of the Polish Navy and other components of the naval forces. The significance of the document was additionally strengthened by the fact that the foreword to the Concept was authored by the President of the Republic of Poland and the Head of the Armed Forces. As individuals such as Peter Swartz have pointed out, successful strategy efforts must have top-level cover and shepherding.\(^\text{11}\)

The authors of PSCMS have made every effort to ensure that the content and form of this document are of a comprehensive, integrated and complementary nature, in relation to the National Security Strategy of 2014, the Strategy for the Development of the National Security System of the Republic of Poland until 2022,\(^\text{12}\) and other governmental documents. The changes proposed by the author team are therefore adaptive and transformative in relation to existing solutions and plans of action. Such flexibility offers policy-makers more leg room to utilize a conceptual document such as this. It was also assumed that the Concept would serve as an inspiration and basis for future governmental work in the field of developing the state-wide, whole-of-government maritime strategy.

**Organization of the team’s work, applied research methods, and tools**

In February 2016, pursuant to the order of the NSB Head, a nine-member task force for the development of SCMS RP was appointed. The team was headed by deputy head of the NSB Jaroslaw Brysiewicz, who was replaced on November 1, 2016 by Dariusz Gwizdala. The deputy head of the team during the entire period of his work was held by Prof. Andrzej Makowski, retired Navy Captain from the Naval Academy in Gdynia (and author of this chapter). The inauguration of the team’s work took place on February 25, 2016 at the commemorative conference at the Belvedere Palace (the official residence and workplace of president before WWII)\(^\text{13}\). The team was dissolved after the publication of the Concept (its “launching”), which for-


\(^{13}\) *Poland’s Strategic Concept for Maritime Security*, authors team: J. Brysiewicz, D. Gwizdala, A. Makowski, S. Hatlas, A. Adamusińska, C. Cierzan, M. Jăniak, S. Kamiński, J. Kraszewski, T. Szubrycht; ed. by M. Biernat, J. Kwaśniewska-Wróbel,
mally took place on February 10, 2017 at the conference summarizing its work, which was held at the Naval Academy in Gdynia.

The team of authors met at sessions that were held every few weeks at the NSB headquarters in Warsaw or at the Academy in Gdynia. In total (from 9 October 2015 to 10 February 2017), 17 sessions and one teleconference took place. Depending on the current needs, the chairman of the team invited representatives of selected ministries to some of the sessions. The team members also participated in additional undertakings, conferences, and seminars focused on maritime security, organized by other bodies, during which they promoted and disseminated the idea of developing the Concept. Pursuant to the order of the NSB Head, the members of the team were not entitled to any remuneration for participation in the team’s work.

The Concept document is composed of four chapters corresponding to the four main problem areas—the Marine Environment; Polish Naval Force; Directions of Development of the Capabilities of the Polish Naval Force; Recommendations for the Development of the Naval Force of the Republic of Poland. These align with the four phases of the classic strategic cycle (defining interests of a given organization and strategic goals assigned to them, assessing security conditions, the concept of achieving strategic objectives under specific security conditions and resources, forces and capabilities assigned by the organization to implement this concept). Hence, the subject-matter scope of the work embraced

- the characteristics of the marine environment, including the space of human activity at sea;
- threats, risks, challenges and opportunities in the area of maritime security;
- description of the areas of operations of the Polish naval force;
- definition of the naval force of the Republic of Poland as a whole and its individual elements;
- directions of development of the Polish naval force capabilities to secure the maritime interests of the state and achieve its strategic goals in the field of maritime security,
- and recommendations for development of the naval force.

The chapters of the Concept are supplemented with two annexes containing a description of the legal order on the seas and oceans, and the charac-
teristics and international legal status of and geopolitical situation in the Baltic Sea, a dictionary of concepts, and a list of abbreviations and acronyms.

During the work, both theoretical and empirical research methods were applied, and used at all stages of document creation: diagnostics, prognostics, and recommendations. During the diagnostic and prognostic work, the method of risk assessment (Common Analysis and Risk Assessment and Management Methodology) was applied with two parameters: the severity of the consequences (outcomes) of the hazards and the probability with which they may occur. The analysis of the security environment was carried out using the PESTEM method (segmentation of the environment into subsets of factors: political, economic, social, technological, ecological and military) supplementing it with a legal (regulatory) factor, due to its special importance for the maritime environment. At all stages of the document’s development, the work done by team of authors was objectified, corrected, and supplemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation, as well as the General Command of the Armed Forces, including the Navy Inspectorate and Special Operations Inspectorate, General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, Operational Command of the Armed Forces, the Coast Guard branch of the Border Guard, Maritime Search and Rescue Service and Crisis Management Center of the Pomeranian Voivodship (the Polish coastal administrative region). The draft document also went through the external review procedure, and was presented twice to the members of the parliamentary National Defense Committee.

**Functions of PSCMS**

The overall objective of the Concept development was supplemented with a utilitarian goal, which was to develop substantive foundations enabling the state institutions and authorities to take actions in the area of maritime security. Achieving such a goal required the implementation of three basic functions of the strategic concept: diagnostic, prognostic, and recommendations, the latter being the most important one. This was due to the fact that the recommendation function is the result of analyses which were carried out during the diagnostic and prognostic work. In addition, it expresses itself in proposing reforms and changes necessary for implementation, important for realizing the interests of the state in the area of maritime safety and achieving strategic goals in three interpenetrating and interde-
dependent spaces of human activity at sea: the political-military, economic, and socio-cultural.

In addition, the Concept should perform the following functions: informational, educational, popularizing, ordering (as a tool in politics and strategic planning), as well as for control, constituting, and integrating (building tandem capabilities: security and development). In uniquely Polish conditions, the informational-educational and popularizing functions seemed the most important. The majority of Polish society and its elites represent land-oriented viewpoints regarding state security issues, and they do not notice the close relationship between the presence of NATO’s multinational standing maritime groups with regional and even global security. Therefore, the informational and educational function of the Concept involves both ordering and presenting the knowledge and information in the field of maritime security, both to the state authority bodies and general public. The objective adopted by the authors was to develop a document which would contribute to building and shaping the maritime-oriented identity of citizens. That means understanding and identifying with maritime elements of social reality, in psychological, sociological and cultural terms, resulting from the coastal location of the country.

The informational and educational function of the Concept could not be properly implemented without fulfilling the popularizing function. This goal involves a precise definition of the quality and scope of the transfer of information on the maritime security of the state to the public and the most important bodies of the state administration. In connection with this end, the management of the National Security Bureau, as well as designated members of the team of authors, took some steps to promulgate the main content of the Concept, and especially its recommendations through cooperation with mass media, public speeches, participation in conferences, and other meetings dedicated to the state maritime security issues.

The ordering function of the Concept involves presenting this document as a strategic policy and planning tool that can have an effect on setting priorities and increasing the effectiveness, and harmonizing its processes in the area of state maritime security. The applicable dimension of this function also manifests itself in gathering, ordering and hierarchizing information in this field. The development of the dictionary of terms, as well as the cross-sectoral, cross-industry, integrated approach to the maritime security issues and to their role and importance in the state security system should be regarded as particularly important.

The control function of the Concept is defined by the fact that the various participants of the national security system (various groups whose interest are related to the sea and use of the coastal location of our coun-

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try) may build the hierarchy of their interests and strategic goals differently, and thus, have varying expectations about the system. Therefore, it was important to accurately define the problems of fundamental, national importance for the maritime security of the state, considered in the context of emerging megatrends in global civilization development.

The constituting function of the Concept involves a proposal to make the recommendations specified in the document legally binding in order to give them a lasting and obligatory character. Because PSCMS does not have the legal validity of an Act of Law, the recommendations contained in this document could only be regarded as proposals, or an inspiration for other state bodies to take actions. In the opinion of the authors these would be beneficial for the national security system or for shaping the security environment in a direction desirable to pursuing national interests and achieving strategic goals, both in the fields of national security and economic development.

The integration function of the Concept draws from the fact that this document covers various areas of security as well as economic development issues. Due to the relationships and interdependencies between development and security, it was advisable to link both strategic planning systems at the state level to ensure parallel work focused on building tandem capabilities for security and development. This last goal was aimed at identifying needs concerning desirable formal and legal changes necessary for better integration of the security and development policies of Poland.  

Weaknesses of PSCMS

The development of the Poland’s Strategic Concept for Maritime Security was an innovative project that has no counterpart in the entire history of the country. No precedent existed. It was also a difficult process, characterized by a high degree of complexity, implemented with little experience and few models or methods that could be referred to, due to the specificity

14 The competitive nature of strategic documents in the field of national security and development in Poland results not only from the provisions included in them, but also from the fact that work on development strategies are carried out in governmental centers (ministries), and work on the National Security Strategy is carried out with initiatives and according to the presidential administration regulations. Such a solution does not contribute to the ordering of the strategic planning system in Poland and does not result in its separation from the current political debates.
of the topic. Despite the high value of the results obtained, the study was not free from both organizational and methodological shortcomings. Firstly, it is impossible in the present formal legal conditions to precisely place this document in the strategic planning system (the document is of expert nature). Secondly, its creation is an ad hoc process, which lacks institutionalization. The work on the Concept was the result of a conviction shared by a determined group of people that such efforts would contribute to improving the functioning of the national security system (maritime security had not been part of strategic thinking at the national level). Thirdly, it is necessary to ensure transparent and depoliticized document development process, something that is challenging in the national security realm. In future work on the Polish Maritime Strategy, not only public administration bodies should be involved, but also representatives of expert and academic circles as well as representatives of the political opposition should join. This approach should be applied to work out a concept of use and development of the Polish Armed Forces.

At present a comprehensive, overarching Concept 2.0 does not exist. There appear to be two conflicting visions. The first, the Polish Armed Forces should perform exclusively military functions (execute missions mainly to deter and deny access), which the second would extend its missions to the promotion and protection of Poland’s interests both in the Baltic Sea and outside its area. In addition, the current document does not sufficiently refer to the interaction and relations occurring between the various components of the naval force, nor does it define the interdependencies between the Polish Armed Forces and other branches of the armed forces to the full extent.

These critical remarks are important, but they do not negate other substantive values of the Concept and the fact that its content, form, and scope have already contributed to launching a public discussion on maritime security in general and on directions for modernization of the naval force in particular.

15 The team of authors presents in the Concept a series of arguments for the necessity of applying the second approach, because Poland’s maritime interests are located worldwide, not only in the Baltic.
Conclusions

The inevitable element of subjectivity in assessing state security readiness, is a specific feature of national security, especially in a parliamentary republic. It stems from the scope of contemporary globalization processes. Hence, the conviction among the team developing the Concept of the need to develop a supra-ministerial mechanism which would show long-term directions in security policy at the state level, including in the field of maritime security. Owing to the comprehensiveness of this document, its integrated character and multifunctionality the PSCMS contributes to obligating state bodies to deal with problems of national security on continuous, not only ad hoc basis.

Also noteworthy are the annexes, which form an integral part of the project. They, in succession, synthetically present the applicable legal order of the seas and oceans, introduced by the Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982 (Poland ratified the Convention in 1998), the international legal status of and geopolitical situation in the Baltic Sea, and a dictionary of terms.

It follows from the analysis of the current capabilities of the Polish naval force, in particular the capabilities of the Polish Navy that its forces are not adequate to the missions and large maritime regions in which they are to be executed. Undertaking remedial actions in this area with the utmost employment of the existing national potential is not only urgent, but it is an indispensable condition for responsible and secure functioning in an unstable international environment.

As outlined here, Poland’s Strategic Concept for Maritime Security does not exhaust the presented subject. The main goal of its authors was to initiate a broader public debate on Poland’s maritime security and to inspire state-level bodies having competence in the field of national security, to undertake joint systemic work to ensure Poland’s maritime security, and the conditions for its successful development.

The decisive factor in the final assessment of the Concept will be whether it will achieve its objectives. Will it remain the “driving force” of public discussion in Poland on maritime security issues and the effective use of the coastal location of our country for economic development? Will it be used by state institutions and authorities to take action in the area of maritime security? Will it launch the process of developing the Polish Maritime Strategy? Will it contribute to the development of maritime-centered identification of the Polish society?
These are still unanswered questions. It should be noted, however, that the main motive for the development of PSCMS was the conviction of the team of authors that in the near future the answers would be affirmative.

Works Cited


On 13 July 2016, the Federal Government of Germany issued its “White Book 2016,” on Germany’s security and the future of the Bundeswehr, its armed forces. It described the cornerstones of Berlin’s security policy and was the first such publication since 2006, and only the third time in post-Cold War history that the Federal Government deemed such a document important enough to issue. Two years later, on 20 July 2018, the German Armed Forces published their derivation, the “Concept of the Bundeswehr.” According to the official MoD website, the 2018 capstone document seeks to refocus on the dichotomy between national and alliance defense, the area where the most backlogs have been identified. It deemed cyber, hybridity, readiness, and mobility as well as support for allied operations as the shaping characteristics and challenges of defense in the 21st century. For civilian and uniformed leaders of Germany’s defense community, these were hardly novel ideas. In fact, a few years earlier, in December 2014, an informal strategic advisory group to the Chief of the German Navy had been convened. In the wake of Russia’s annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea peninsula with the emerging hybrid warfare concept, the navy felt that a fresh strategic start was needed, something that would crystalize existing thinking and new and emerging challenges. Ultimately, this led to a “Dachdokument Marine” (or “Capstone Document Navy”). It somewhat preempted the White Book and the Concept of the Bundeswehr. Later, in fact, the Navy’s capstone paper was closely coordinated

with the superseding top-level document. Once the White Book was published, the MoD no longer saw the need for a separate, dedicated naval or maritime strategy.5

While the resulting document was ultimately never officially published, the strategic concepts and ideas in the navy’s draft document dovetailed with the White Book and the Concept of the Bundeswehr. This chapter tells the story of the work of this group and puts the efforts of the strategy writers into perspective. It also suggests an approach for how the German Navy should conceptualize its role in the national and international framework in the future.

1. Prologue: Little need or desire to strategize “from the sea”

From the outset, Germany’s Cold War navy—the Bundesmarine—had been planned for and operated as an alliance service, deeply embedded in multinational commands and operations, while remaining politically as well as geographically limited. With West Germany’s position at the Iron Curtain front line between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and given previous naval ambitions leading to two world wars, this was very sensible. It also aligned with the Federal Government’s tendency to rely heavily on NATO for its military framework and later on the European Union for its economic incorporation. Likewise, allies had well-founded interests in curtailing any attempt of Germany to go about strategizing on its own again.

The West German Navy’s operational environment was strictly dictated by the geography of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. Its strategic rationale came from top-level NATO plans and policy. This effectively eliminated the need for strategic force planning in the navy, at least for a wider set of

5 The author of this essay was a member of the strategic advisory group, thus serving as a participant to the process, an observer, and now an (ex-post) analyst. Conscious of this narrative challenge, this chapter seeks to display the process of arriving at a German naval strategy. It does not seek to focus on individual efforts in the making and unmaking of the strategy. Instead, it will lay out the thinking that drove the German Navy, so that its political masters, allies, and even those who seek to challenge it may arrive at a better understanding of the particulars of German strategy. The views of this author are his own, and should not be construed as those of the German Navy, the Ministry of Defense, the federal government, or any other entity.
missions and the interlinkage of theaters. Had the Cold War turned hot, Germany was bound to be a battleground for land and air forces, independent of nuclear or conventional exchanges. The Central Front thus dominated any military and strategic considerations in Bonn, West Germany’s capital and seat of government 1949-1999. It took until the 1980s to inject some conceptual verve into the military thinking. It was not a coincidence that during this decade, a focus on the roles and missions of the West German Navy came in the wake of the NATO’s Concept of Maritime Operations (CONMAROPS), with its emphasis on integrating the naval strategy with ground and air strategy, as well as the United States’ “Maritime Strategy,” which stressed forward deployment and challenging the Soviet Navy close to its home waters such as the Baltic Sea and the Norwegian Sea. Allied operational and tonnage restrictions were lifted, and maritime strategic intellectuals took more of a public stage.

With the end of the Cold War, Germany had to cope with managing its political-economic reunification and the substantial rebuilding of East Germany. In addition, the new world order and its security and defense problems was just taking shape. The East German People’s Navy was all but dis-

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7 On ConMarOps, see Peter M. Swartz, “Preventing the Bear’s Last Swim: The NATO Concept of Maritime Operations (ConMarOps) of the Last Cold War Decade,” in NATO’s Maritime Power 1949-1990, ed. by I. Loucas and G. Marcoyannis (Piraeus: INMER European Institute of Maritime Studies and Research, 2003).


mantled, its ships mostly sold abroad or scrapped, and most of its people discharged from the military. East Germany’s navy had always been under the firm grip of the Soviet Union’s Red Banner fleet; hence it possessed no strategic flagpoles and conceptual forward-thinkers to speak of. It was designed as a maritime border protection force and to serve in support of a Warsaw Pact amphibious assault on Jutland and Schleswig-Holstein rather than as an ocean-going navy. Its strategy was written in Moscow or Leningrad, not in the command bunker in Rostock-Gehlsdorf or in the defense ministry in Strausberg near East Berlin.

At the time, the Bundesmarine leadership had just formulated “Marine 2005.”11 Anticipating a thawing Cold War with shrinking defense budgets and the need for fleet recapitalization, but not German unification, Vice Admiral Hans-Joachim “Jimmy” Mann, chief of naval staff, presented a reduced fleet capable of warfighting, but compatible for less-intense crises and peacetime operations. The concurrent conceptual paper, “Zielvorstellung der Marine,” was published in 1991—just as the Soviet Union dissolved and the Gulf War signaled the dawn of what U.S. president George H.W. Bush previously described as a “new world order.”12 All of this spelled drastic cut-backs for the German armed forces in an environment eager for a peace dividend, and the Navy—which had thought purposefully ahead—was confronted with even more drastic reductions than its own thinking had insinuated. The numbers in “Marine 2005”—16-20 frigates, 20-30 patrol boats and corvettes, 20-30 mine countermeasure boats, 10-14 submarines, 15-17 tenders and support ships, 38-42 helicopters, 12-14 Maritime Patrol Aircraft, and 60-65 naval strike aircraft—were deliberately low; more of a lowest common denominator than wishful thinking. Now, they were seen as the Bundesmarine’s top-level numbers which could easily be scaled down significantly. This must have shocked witnesses and heirs

10 For an account of the final years of the Volksmarine, see Henrik Born, Es kommt alles ganz anders: Erinnerungen eines Zeitzeugen an die Volksmarine der DDR und das Leben danach (Hamburg: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 2018). Vice Admiral Born was the last Commander of the East German Navy, 1989-1990.
to this process. Any future flag officer could very well conclude that strategic thinking was a potentially harmful exercise that significantly risked force structure and ship numbers. Consequently, he would not undertake such potentially harmful endeavors.

In the 1990s, an era of constant expeditionary operations emerged. The German Navy no longer remained bottled up in the North and Baltic seas when its political leadership was increasingly looking to deploy the force beyond its traditional home waters as a politically inexpensive move minimizing actual military force. This was and remains an important point in Germany.\(^\text{13}\) Absent the Red Banner fleet and the Warsaw Pact, the Baltic Sea operating area turned into little more than a flooded meadow for exercises and training. From naval presence missions in the Mediterranean and mine-clearance operations in the Persian Gulf to embargo operations in the Adriatic, the declining force eventually became a very busy one, even before out-of-area operations for the German armed forces were officially sanctioned by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994.\(^\text{14}\) Except for the White Book of that same year, national strategic guidance during the decade was scarce. Navy documents hovered on the doctrinal and operational level as the reunited Germany began its long, arduous (and some may argue still ongoing) process of defining its foreign and defense policy and its national security contract. Strategic thinking such as the call by General Klaus Naumann, Chief of Defense (1991-1996), for a conceptually expeditionary mindset that would, *inter alia*, yield a Joint Support Ship comparable to an LHD, was widely ridiculed (“Arch Naumann”). Meanwhile, the ongoing naval operations, which included evacuation operations from Somalia in 1994/1995 and support of NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia in 1999,\(^\text{15}\) were conducted by remnant forces from Cold War days amidst an ever-declining number of ships, aircraft, and personnel. It


emerged that in light of this drastically changing world and land wars in the Balkans, conceptualizing a genuine German naval or maritime strategy document was not in the books.\textsuperscript{16}

The terrorist attacks on the United States of America an 11 September 2001 and NATO’s call for Article V operations soon thrust the renamed \textit{Deutsche Marine} into operations geographically wide-ranging for counter-terrorism and maritime security operations far from the homeland: Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and NATO’s Operation Active Endeavour (OAE). The Bundeswehr had undergone repeated reductions since the 1990s, which left the military bewildered and deepened the fight for ever-scarce resources among the \textit{Luftwaffe}, the Army, and the Navy. The fleet structure of the 2005, nominally not much different from Admiral Mann’s planning, had lost its naval bombers and had begun to age.\textsuperscript{17} After 2001, while NATO and allied land operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere dominated the headlines, the Navy found a new \textit{raison d’etre} in its vast spectrum of low-intensity maritime security operations in areas of the European periphery, using its legacy Cold War and modern units side by side. Additionally, while cuts continued, policy leaders in the new capital of Berlin found that sending the \textit{Deutsche Marine} was beneficial as it did not risk actual German “boots on the ground” in a very conflict- and war-skeptical society.\textsuperscript{18} Over-stretched, underfunded, stripped of its naval jet-air arm, and concerned with its public perception and future recruitment after the end of conscription (2011), and suffering a number of incidents creating unfavorable press, the navy was determined to make do, keep a low profile, and avoid disseminating lofty strategies that might upset the body politic.

“Jimmy” Mann’s ghost loomed large. A generation of naval officers seemed to internalize that strategizing and presenting a force structure plan would yield political pushback and a further unraveling of those very ship numbers. A notable exception from the rule was “Zielvorstellung Ma-

\textsuperscript{17} Ostermann (2019), 14.
\textsuperscript{18} Noted German political scientist Herfried Münkler characterized this as the “post-heroic society.” As an example, see Sebastian Bruns, “UNIFIL’S Maritime Task Force and Germany’s Contribution,” in \textit{Auftrag Auslandseinsatz: Neueste Militärgeschichte an der Schnittstelle von Geschichtswissenschaft, Politik, Öffentlichkeit und Streitkräften}, ed. by Bernhard Chiari (Freiburg i. Br.: Rombach, 2012), 151–160.
rine (ZvM) 2025+,” a plan published in 2008 in reflection to the White Book (October 2006) and the Concept of the Federal Armed Forces (August 2004). The proposed outlook of roughly 15 years reminds the reader of the same viewpoint taken in 1989 for “Marine 2005.” The counterintuitive evolution of documents is notable: First came the military strategy, then a national level document, then a navy statement. ZvM was issued by then-Chief of German Navy, Vice Admiral Wolfgang Nolting. He drew on a think piece that was written with MoD department heads between 1995 and 1998, and cleared by then-Chief of German Navy Vice Admiral Hans-Rudolf Boehmer and then-Secretary of Defense Volker Rühe. It was increasingly clear that on-going army operations of the Bundeswehr and considerable Luftwaffe procurement programs left little wiggle room for the sustainable growth and fleet regeneration of the navy. It was only after 9/11 and the invocation of NATO’s Article V with Operation Active Endeavor missions in the Mediterranean and Operation Enduring Freedom commitments off the Horn of Africa that the need to increase and modernize naval platforms was recognized by the MoD. Conscious but not outspoken about the particulars of seapower, the prevention of German “boots on the ground” became the overarching mantra and hence naval operations were increasingly welcomed. Nolting’s document drew from a seabasing concept paper issued by the Chief of Defense in 2007. It was also heavily informed by the emerging anti-piracy operations on the low end of the spectrum as well as Germany’s supporting participation in the “European Carrier Group Interoperability Initiative,” trying to align protection and projection in the maritime domain.

Throughout the period discussed, the German Navy maintained its significant commitments to Standing NATO Maritime Groups of large surface combatants and smaller mine countermeasure ships, respectively. The list below of naval operations is extensive given the small force and overstretched fleet. Not listed below are operations such as operational sea-

19 Wolfgang E. Nolting (ed.), Zielvorstellung Marine 2025+ (Bonn: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2008). Nolting makes a point in his accompanying letter that this would not be a Navy document, but rather the base for joint force planning under the Inspector General of the Bundeswehr.
20 Wolfgang E. Nolting, E-Mail to author, 16 October 2019.
22 SNMG = Standing NATO Maritime Group, usually composed of larger surface combatants. SNMCMG = Standing NATO Mine-Countermeasures Group, usually composed of a larger number of small mine-warfare ships.
training, joint and combined exercises (bi- and multilateral), as well as submarine operations.

Table 1: Major German naval operations, 1989-2019. Year connotes German participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Umbrella</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Southern Guard</td>
<td>Persian Gulf</td>
<td>Mine-Clearing</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1995</td>
<td>Sharp Guard</td>
<td>Adriatic Sea</td>
<td>Embargo Control</td>
<td>WEU/NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Southern Cross</td>
<td>Horn of Africa</td>
<td>Combatant Evacuation</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Allied Force</td>
<td>Adriatic Sea</td>
<td>Support of Strike Operations</td>
<td>NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2008</td>
<td>Enduring Freedom (Task Force 150)</td>
<td>Horn of Africa</td>
<td>Counter-Terrorism Operations, Counter-Piracy Operations</td>
<td>NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-2015</td>
<td>Active Endeavour</td>
<td>Mediterranean</td>
<td>Counter-Terrorism Operations/Maritime Domain Awareness</td>
<td>NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>South-East Asia</td>
<td>Tsunami relief operation by German Navy vessel in the vicinity</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since 2008</td>
<td>EU NAVFOR “Atalanta”</td>
<td>Horn of Africa</td>
<td>Counter-piracy, Naval Diplomacy</td>
<td>EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>RecSyR</td>
<td>Eastern Mediterranean</td>
<td>Maritime Security Operation</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 - 2019</td>
<td>EU NAVFOR “Sophia”</td>
<td>Central Mediterranean</td>
<td>Maritime Security Operation</td>
<td>EU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since 2015</td>
<td>Counter-Daesh/ISIS</td>
<td>Eastern Mediterranean</td>
<td>Support of Strike Operations against “Islamic State”</td>
<td>National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aegean Sea</td>
<td>Maritime Security Operations</td>
<td>NATO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNMCMG 1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mine-Countermeasure Operations, Naval Diplomacy</td>
<td>NATO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The naval missions were intensive on the low-end of the spectrum—and ever on-going. Recapitalization and reserves were increasingly hard to come by, and the de-facto-abolishment of conscription in 2011 robbed the Deutsche Marine of a key recruitment platform. The acquisition of human
capital emerged as a concern nearly as pressing as that of new warfighting platforms.

Domestic and international politics were thus the background under which the German Navy tried once again their hand at formulating a strategy. Referring to the fall of the Berlin Wall (and perhaps Admiral Mann’s naval planning), Vice Admiral Krause, a career submariner, stated that, “We were very optimistic in 1989. [...] 2014 [Russia’s incursion into Crimea and Ukraine] came like a surprise.”

2. Conceptualizing and Writing Naval Strategy: The Process

To push back against this strategic surprise, a working group was called for by the German Navy Command in Rostock. Vice Admiral Andreas Krause directed setting up this group on 17 December 2014, tasking the participants to start from scratch with the development of a capstone document. On 7 January 2015, at the 55th Historisch-Taktische Tagung der Marine (HiTaTa) in Warnemünde, a traditional annual gathering of hundreds of German Navy officers, Krause communicated widely about this directive in his keynote, thus making the effort public.

The advisory group was deliberately not institutionalized so that it would stand outside of established chains of command, but it drew on uniformed and civilian individuals with a high degree of intrinsic motivation, a multifaceted operational naval background, and a policy-strategic sensibility. This combination provided the German Navy with a degree of free thinking that is so very important for strategy, which is commonly characterized as both, an art and a science. It also signaled a new start after collaborative work on a working document tentatively entitled “Dimension See


24 The following section largely draws on a presentation and notes held for Führungskreis Marine, a naval leadership group in uniform. “Kapitän zur See Jan C. Kaack, Dachdokument Marine. Weiterentwicklung, Dimension See 2030+, ‘Sachstand’,” undated. The author holds a copy.

2030+" had come to a grinding halt over the summer. In the wake of Russia’s annexation of Crimea in the spring of 2014, a widening sense emerged that this geopolitical move fundamentally changed the security environment, not least for Germany, one of Europe’s economic powerhouses (and defense policy hopefuls). Together with a multitude of concurrent developments such as the increasing instability around the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, the U.S. re-balancing to Asia (Pacific pivot), a weakening of the European Union after the Euro crisis, climate change, demographic challenges, immigration, and an ever-shrinking, aging and costly fleet, there was fresh appetite in the Navy Command to consolidate naval thinking and to mold it into a fresh document. In parallel, the Ministry of Defense in Berlin began work on a new White Book in earnest while NATO, EU, and many allies reassessed their security strategies and produced documents—ongoing processes, no less.

The task for the new document, aimed at policy-makers and the society at once, as well as at the armed forces, allies, partners, and even antagonists, was very wide-ranging. First, its goal was to think ahead – and explain – the strategic orientation of the Deutsche Marine. Second, it sought to define areas of responsibility, both politically and geographically. Third, it necessarily needed to set priorities in an ever-more complex (and confusing) world. Fourth, it underlined the indispensable integration of current events and emerging and existing policy, strategy, and operational documents. Fifth, the capstone document needed to form the base for the maritime component of the White Book, in close cooperation and coordination with the MoD’s policy and planning directorates. Sixth, and finally, the strategy was designed to create publicity for the Navy among experts, policy-makers, and the community of interest in Germany. It was established, from the start, that cooperation with other ministries would be necessary. This turned a naval strategy into a broader maritime strategy that still sought to not superimpose on other departments. Concurrently, a

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26 The members of the strategy group drew on the previous, unpublished draft document and also utilized a piece published in Germany’s leading daily, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, a few years earlier. Lutz Feldt, with Carlo Masala, Hans-Joachim Stricker and Konstantinos Tsetsos, “Kein Land in Sicht,” Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 1 April 2013, 5.

27 Great care was taken to harmonize the advisory group’s thinking (and, by implication, that of the Navy) with the policy and planning staffs. The policy directorate in the MoD greenlighted the Navy’s effort; the security policy derivation was those previously approved by the ministry; it took into consideration the contents and results of a number of agreed and coordinated previous documents, but now focused on the maritime domain.
communications strategy was designed to take along the addressees of the strategy, to reduce reservations, and to gather support.

This ambitious program rested in part on full awareness of the host of corresponding defense and security policy documents. The documents included, inter alia:

- NATO’s (3rd) Alliance Maritime Strategy, issued on 19 November 2011;
- Africa-policy guiding principles of the Federal German government, 12 May 2014;
- European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS), 16 June 2014, and its corresponding action plan, 16 December 2014;
- Readiness Action Plan and NATO’s Summit Communiqué from Newport, 05 September 2014;
- The G-7 foreign minister Lübeck Declaration, 15 April 2015.

Corresponding initiatives and developments included, inter alia:

- Harmonization of policy guidelines and planning regarding the EU MSS action plan since June 2015.
- EU Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) 2020;
- Participation in the development of a new European Security Strategy 2016;
- Coordination on EU Naval Forces Mediterranean; and
- Planning for a high-level meeting in Germany, June through November 2015.

The writing group consisted of eight individuals hand-picked to reflect a broad background and to include civilian expertise. Aspects of note included strategic theory and practice, war gaming, maritime security, naval strategy, strategic communication, and scenario development. While a number of meetings were held over the period of almost two years, informal conversations often took place via the mobile phone messaging service WhatsApp. The group’s approach was inclusive and yielded an iterative process with both, senior German Navy leadership and experts from other navies, the German Coast Guard, and industry. The first official meeting took place in the MoD in Berlin in December 2014. It featured a presentation by the author of this chapter on “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Cen-

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28 Discussing strategy over a commercial messaging application run by an American company was not considered through the prism of information security, but solely for convenience.
tury,” and its revised version which was set to be published in 2015. In mid-March 2015, the U.S. Navy had published its revised version of CS-21, providing momentum to navalists in Germany as well. It was obvious the U.S. maritime strategy would be one of the first documents to reflect the changing global security environment. In an alliance still dominated by the United States and in light of the German Navy’s self-understanding as an “alliance navy,” it was prudent to align any German strategic approach with the American posture. Most importantly, the first session featured a translation and German adaptation of Peter Swartz’ invaluable guidance paper on issues to consider for naval strategy writers. A sound analysis of the maritime security environment, the overarching strategic guidance from national and international/multinational sources, and a clear definition of geographic/functional areas for German naval action complemented the methodology over the coming months.

A core word that soon emerged was “responsibility.” In a self-conscious and positive tone, the document sought to set the bar high. With it, the capstone paper created a proactive wording rather than a dull bureaucratic strategy. It was, for instance, quite conscious of the different tones of naval vs. maritime (for which the German language does not have a clear translation). It also reflected that the authors were well aware that a “strategy” might raise a few eyebrows. Hence, the essence was clear. This was not to be a national or even nationalistic strategy, but rather an international document shaped by the multinational DNA so instilled in what noted naval strategist Geoffrey Till described as post-modern navies, referring to those which guard the international system rather than solely defend national territories. Referring to Russia’s incursion into Ukraine in early 2014, the authors underlined that national defense remained the key responsibility of the Bundeswehr. Hardly a surprise today, but after a couple of decades where alliance defense and collective security worldwide had put the Navy to the distant shores of the Adriatic, the Horn of Africa, and the Eastern

Mediterranean, this was a useful starting point. At the same time, an ever-more complex world mandated national and international cooperation. This included comprehensive approaches inside Germany as well as in the EU/NATO realm. Conscious of the idea that in crises and conflict situations the Deutsche Marine could actively shape the battlefield (or, rather, the diplomatic dancefloor), the strategists underlined the intimately related responsibility this spelled out.

A very recent example at the time of writing was the quick evolution of EU NAVFOR “Sophia,” the European Union’s maritime security mission in the Central Mediterranean. The flexible and versatile naval means allows the Navy to react quickly to the deteriorating situation on this human trafficking and migration highway. It demonstrated German will and capacity to act upon saving lives at sea – not just for immediate political gain, but to buy time to develop and integrate a sustainable long-term maritime contribution that would not bind the few naval vessels available to Germany for extended periods of time (something that, sadly, was not sustained). A maritime security regime for the Mediterranean and Africa, synthesized cooperation with the German Federal Police’s Coast Guard, and enabling tools for Third World security and defense (such as good governance) have all since been floated to help navigate the maritime security challenges on the Mediterranean route. Low-intensity humanitarian assistance missions were in the news, where part of the group of writers had just spent a significant amount of time conceptualizing the high-end conflict roles and missions of navies. In the spirit of Samuel Huntington, who had written about this conundrum sixty years earlier, naval forces could obviously “do” low-end; but that is not what they were procured for.32

Expanding on the ability of naval forces to shape the political spectrum, the document reiterated that maritime presence by ships and experts ashore and embarked – in strategically relevant geographic areas, that is – was a very useful medium- and long-term investment. In line with an old saying, “A ship in port is safe. But that is not what ships are built for,” this mandated the Deutsche Marine operations, to contribute to international naval missions, and to build and retain relevant expertise in naval strategy, regional studies, and military-to-military as well as civil-military issues. Ideally, that approach would also include advisory groups, multinational training and exercises, maritime security regimes, and military assistance to stabilize certain regions of the world. In an echo of the gallantly framed

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1992 US Navy document, the German paper emphasized the opportunities of a naval force that effected “… From the Sea.” An increasingly self-confident German Navy would assert itself as the key enabler to guard national interests worldwide, as a reliable ally and ambassador of NATO and the EU, in order to shape the environment based on its own values and overarching policy. Informed by the understanding that genuine military threats decreased, but political and economic interdependencies surged and created significant vulnerability, the German Navy was comprehensive in its approach to include:

- Territorial integrity and defense of Germany’s population;
- Safe and secure global sea lines of communication;
- Containment of organized maritime crime (such as illegal migration, human trafficking, weapons and drug handling);
- Maritime counter-terrorism;
- Defense of critical infrastructure (such as ports, terminals, undersea cables, locks);\(^\text{33}\)
- Security of energy;
- Defense from ecological threats to the environment;
- Reaction to geopolitical shifts and changes;
- Future maritime areas of interest.

The final draft of the strategy, after describing the likely maritime environment of 2035 and beyond based on general trends and broad scenarios, developed a two-part methodology. The document used a point of view based on legally established responsibility, if only to make clear that a bureaucratic infight with other departments ought to be avoided at any cost.\(^\text{34}\) From national territorial defense to alliance/collective defense, a clear responsibility rested with the armed forces. For a trans-regional, even global approach to freedom of the seas and SLOC protection, this also held true. The second part of the methodology clearly stated that tension exist-

\(^{\text{33}}\) The German constitution sets strict boundaries between domestic security (typically a role for policy forces) and national/international security (typically a role for military forces) which would have to be managed through legal means prior to an extended German Navy mission inside German territorial waters.

\(^{\text{34}}\) In 2009, the German-flagged container ship \(M/S\) Hansa Stavanger was hijacked off the coast of Somalia. The ensuing lengthy legal discussion in Berlin about whether the federal police or the Bundeswehr special forces should free the hostages and take control of the ship led to the US Navy’s withdrawal of the staging platform it offered, \(USS\ Boxer\) (LHD-4). The mission was aborted and the cargo vessel was later freed in exchange for ransom.
ed between “known” and “unknowns” (once again echoing erstwhile US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld) when assessing future security challenges and operating factors. The German capstone document therefore described its naval and maritime ambition as the responsibility to frame policy; not as an end itself, but for the federal government’s ability to shoulder 21st century security obligations and challenges.

From that objective, the strategists derived three layers of responsibility – national defense, alliance defense, freedom of the seas – based on legal, historical, operational, and geographic factors. In essence, the nearer and dearer the layer, the larger the Deutsche Marine’s responsibility was. The further one moved outwards, the more reduced was the Navy’s genuine responsibility. This asserted that other countries, alliances, international organizations, and/or federal ministries would have to shoulder more as the German-centered perspective broadened. For instance, the Baltic Sea – instrumental for German national defense and for collective security – was a much larger area of responsibility than the Mediterranean, where only alliance aspects, but not territorial defense of German soil, were of direct concern. Other countries would ideally shoulder more responsibility in these areas and their maritime challenges (an idea to ensure that the German Navy would not be depleted in maritime security missions which carried in disproportionate political weight for Berlin but soaked up resources that were needed closer to home). Challengers to freedom of the seas, likely far away from German shores and much regulated European rimland waters, would then only see an even more limited presence of the Deutsche Marine.

Finally, the document discussed the consequences of this unique and useful approach in addressing courses of action and identifying areas (both functionally as well as geographically) where action ought to be taken. This anticipated follow-up documents that were planned at that stage, inter alia a shipbuilding concept and a recruitment strategy. Rather than a top-down approach, the capstone strategy advocated a bottom-up strategy establishing positions that could later be connected through overarching strategic policies. For the time being, permanent naval cooperation, temporary as well as permanent integration (such as through certification), multinational (EU) crewing, and a permanent integration of training components, the defense logistic chain, and ship maintenance were called for. In addition, the capstone document suggested a new direction with regard to the sea-going units. Only through more standardization and modularity, the authors continued, could combatting the strategic challenges of the future be paired with the necessary quick reaction ability in naval forces. Innovative concepts and ideas – such as moving away from building batches...
of classes of warships in favor of a more dynamic shipbuilding concept, and the force-wide implementation of “green technology” – rounded out the document.

In total, three versions of the main corpus were produced. First, a German-language document; second, an English translation to inform a much wider international audience; third, an informal “Geheime Erläuterungen” (rather, “confidential annotation”) to the paper where some aspects were clarified and expanded on. The latter was strictly for internal purposes, but not classified, and was not translated into English. It was, like all work, unclassified.

As 2015 drew to a close, the group’s work had been all but delivered. Some aspects from the document had already found their way into public statements and speeches by Admiral Krause and others. In mid-January, the group learned that the German Air Force published a glossy document of its own, the “Militärische Luftfahrstrategie.” This somewhat complicated a truly evolutionary and otherwise rather harmonious strategy-making process. At the time, it was increasingly clear that the dedicated naval strategy would be held back until after the White Book was published.

Vice Admiral Krause’s February 2016 “Wilhelmshaven Declaration on the future of the German Navy” contained much of the original thinking of the strategy experts and previewed the capstone document. The Chief of German Navy discussed a renewed focus on the high-end but also covered the low-end of the conflict spectrum (and not the other way around as naval reality had been practiced). The overarching ideas were to form centers of excellence in naval cooperation and integration (as opposed to a more top-down European Army approach), varying areas of responsibility for Germany (in other words, a prioritization of national interests along geographic and political boundaries), a focus on maritime security regimes and the Law of the Sea, a system of systems approach for procurement, tightening links between national/territorial defense and alliance defense, and highlighting the three major maritime focus areas: Northern Flank/Baltic Sea, Southern Flank/Mediterranean, and Indian Ocean.


36 Andreas Krause, “Wilhelmshavener Erklärung zur Zukunft der Deutschen Marine. Ansprache des Inspektors der Marine Vizeadmiral Andreas Krause anlässlich des Zeitzeugensymposiums 60 Jahre Marine am 12. Februar 2016 in Wilhelmshaven”. It deserves note that the Chief of German Navy chose a naval historians’ conference on the occasion of the West German Navy’s 60th anniversary as a platform for his message.
A timeline for a roll-out conference, a presentation of the document in Berlin, and wing-man publications in journals and magazines was scheduled for the summer of 2016. Meanwhile, the point of contact within the German Navy had been relegated from a Rear Admiral (who took command of the EU counter-piracy operation in the Indian Ocean) to a Captain. With limited top-brass cover, the process of finalizing and publishing the document came to a screeching halt. In addition, the demands of the participants’ day jobs reduced both personal availability and intellectual capacity to a bare minimum. The fact that all participants of the writing team shouldered this task in addition to their regular jobs took its toll.

In mid-July 2016, the German ministry of defense issued its long-awaited “White Paper.” Although little of true maritime substance could be found in that capstone document save for some words on the security of sea lanes and the freedom of the high seas, the concept of EU citizens serving in the German forces could be claimed by the naval strategists as one of their own. In the meantime, a roll-out speech and conference in Berlin were scheduled for November. As an aside, it was also decided that a final wrap-up meeting would be held in the Hanseatic city of Bremen in mid-September 2016. Coupled with a lavish dinner and a behind-the-scenes tour of the Bremen Ratskeller winery on the night before, the group met in a small conference room right behind the world-famous Bremen town musicians’ statue. The town musicians is one of the most famous fairy tales in Germany.

The location of the final meeting was telling. The Bremen town musicians—a donkey, a dog, a cat, and a rooster—talk to each other, they are sympathetic and emotive from the beginning and show both courage and ingenuity. Before the four beastly companions find each other, they are working animals who are kept by humans. They lead a life of hardship over which they have no control, and their aged appearance and frailty show the damage such an existence can wreak. By freeing themselves from servitude, escaping their masters and embarking upon a journey together to a new life, they are able to put their weaknesses aside. It is only when these animals band together that they become strong, brightening their somber mood to the extent that they no longer shy away from confrontation. Similarities to the naval strategy group were, obviously, purely coincidental.

The Bremen conference proved the final official meeting, as new jobs and projects, as well as uncertainty about the future of the group as an institution, loomed large. More so, the document was, by all accounts, finished and could be submitted to Naval HQ Rostock and the MoD in Berlin. Copies of the strategic document featuring a preface penned by
Vice Admiral Krause were printed in late October and circulated. Soon thereafter, in an eleventh-hour decision, the conference in Berlin and the unveiling speech were cancelled. The prevailing view in the capital was that the White Book, to which the German Navy capstone document was only a precursor, covered all necessary ground. Interpretational sovereignty on defense matters lay with the MoD, and no one else. A genuine naval document, although there was much overlap between it and the White Book, was no longer desired. In light of the absolute prerogative of civilian policy-making in German defense policy, given this country’s history, this was understandable. Although personally disappointing to the author of this piece (a citizen without a uniform, no less), the decision did not infringe on the professional contents of the document. In fact, the underlying ideas developed by the group persist in other formats. MoD actively encouraged use of bits and pieces from the document in presentations and keynote addresses by Deutsche Marine leadership. The process yielded, however, some interesting academic insights. Military historian David Rosenberg reminds us that,

“Process is the key to understanding and explaining naval strategy. It does not suffice to identify and analyze ideas and concepts. In order to elucidate the history of naval strategy, one must move behind the ideas to consider where they came from, and how they were translated from theory into practice.”

Key aspects from it were published in other formats, i.a. in a chapter in the Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security and in a MarineForum editorial. Vice Admiral Krause’s Wilhelmshaven Declaration retains much of the original thinking of the writing group and has served as a useful point of departure for those wishing to grasp the evolution of the German

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37 I am indebted to Rear Admiral (ret.) Torsten Kähler, former Chief of Staff at Naval Command Rostock, for providing to me some critical insight into this usage. E-mail to author, 15 & 16 October 2019.


Navy in the 21st century. While ownership of such ideas can hardly be claimed by any one member of the strategic writing team, recent discussions about EU citizens serving in the German armed forces, and the building of five (possibly ten) additional *Braunschweig*-class corvettes and two more advanced submarines (together with Norway) all mirror ideas of the capstone document. Process is key in naval and maritime strategy.

3. **Findings & Way Ahead**

The German Navy and those who serve in her navigate a difficult strategic environment. Its political masters eschew the active use of military force, often pointing to the history of two World Wars in the 20th century. Much of the public has a negative bias towards the military—remember the large crowds of the “peace movement” in the 1970s and 1980s in West Germany. When one considers that a sizeable percentage of today’s German population was raised in former East Germany, a biographical reluctance to align strategically with the transatlantic alliance and, by implication, the United States of America, also factors in. The rise of populist political parties to the left and right, both of which are sympathetic to closer alignment with Russia, amplifies this challenge. The fallout of the 2020 Corona pandemic on defense budgets and public support of a robust maritime strategy is yet to be assessed.

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43 Deutsche Marine (ed.), *Gemeinsam. Meer. Verantwortung. Chancen nutzen im maritimen Raum des 21. Jahrhunderts* (Rostock, 2016); and German Navy (ed.), *We Shape the Sea. Together. Responsibly. Using maritime opportunities in the 21st century* (Rostock, 2016). The author of this article holds hard copies of each document. Follow-up documents to these 31-page long working pieces, such as a recruitment strategy and a force structure strategy, were planned to be drawn up once the capstone document was rolled out. The MoD’s directive that relegated the naval strategy to the shelf made such plans obsolete for the time being.
The shift in the international environment since 2014 has refocused the military mindset on the nexus of territorial defense (pursuant to Article 87a, German Basic Law) and alliance defense (pursuant to Article 24, German Basic Law). Other obligations stem from Germany’s signature to the United National Convention on the Law of the Sea (1994), NATO’s Allied Maritime Strategy (2011), the European Union’s Maritime Security Strategy (2015), and a host of other documents and declarations in these systems of collective security and collective defense. The return of a sea-control challenge by Russia and its unwelcomed cousin, a hybrid anti-access area denial approach, caught the German Navy unprepared. It was coming off of 25 years of low-end maritime security operations, which, by all accounts, are not going away, but will remain a task that Berlin policy-makers will continue to expect from its sea-going force. The Baltic Sea is back on the minds of policy and military planners alike, joining the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, and the North Atlantic. At the same time, the more traditional operating areas for the German Navy such as the Central and Eastern Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Horn of Africa and Western Indian Ocean will remain important for Germany’s sea lines of communication, forward defense, and crisis management and conflict prevention. This confluence of old and new, high-end and low-end naval operations can easily cognitively overwhelm the shrunken Deutsche Marine, both in numbers and readiness, as well as intellectually. Even so, that matrix does not even address the ramifications of an actual major war in South-East Asian waters, or similar humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations on distant shores.

It is prudent to focus on the high-end warfighting and combat capabilities in naval design and force structure for the future German Navy. Politics of the day and the lengthy dynamics of warship procurement in the bloated defense establishment—think of the belated introduction of four low-end “stabilization frigates” of the Baden-Württemberg-class into the fleet—can easily challenge this path forward. It appears most useful, therefore, to make an even better case for the use of navies on the whole spectrum of peace, conflict, crises, and war. In an increasingly complex world with a relatively small fighting force, the German financial and intellectual investment in thinking about seapower has been absurdly low. Perhaps it

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44 Bruns (2016c).
is due time for a 21st century version of Samuel Huntington’s 1954 essay “National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy,” this one for Germany. In a country where academia and government have lived on different planets for too long, a structured use of talent and knowledge from the civilian field by the military, and an embrace of strategy and defense subjects by political scientists to become true experts in maritime and military strategy (or even war studies), is long overdue.

The Bundeswehr should aggressively drive sound operations research and maritime strategic analysis at its various schools and institutions, from the two universities in Hamburg and Munich, to the General Command and Staff College in Hamburg & its associated think tank, the German Institute for Security and Defense (GIDS). The German Navy HQ should drive a joint effort to develop a cadre of strategic thinkers, both civilian and uniformed. It must be integrated in Rostock (seat of Marinekommando) and in Berlin (the German capital), perhaps even in Bonn (former German capital and still the site of a sizeable German MoD contingent). There, it could provide critical access to senior military and policy leaders, and be tied into the academic world in Germany (such as the key expertise accumulated at the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University’s Center for Maritime Strategy & Security) and in Brussels (for easier access to NATO and EU).

To reflect the slogan of the U.S. Naval Institute, this common effort must yield the ability to dare to read, think, and write without fear of violating the chain of command or the challenge from obscure civilian university predicaments. If Germany is a “country of poets and thinkers,” this is an absolutely vital approach. A nation that has produced such great minds as Alexander von Humboldt, Johann Wilhelm Goethe, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, and Günter Grass just to name a few can certainly produce a strategy capstone document. The dean of strategic thought, Carl von Clausewitz, another German, would most certainly agree.

Should writing further documents be considered, there must be a clear process. While top-level cover by Vice Admirals Krause and his deputy (and fleet commander) Vice Admiral Rainer Brinkmann was vitally provided to the 2014-2016 document, the writers’ efforts suffered from several layers of access to leadership. In addition, there was some “friendly fire.” A clear definition of the audience of the strategy—the Deutsche Marine, the

46 Attributed to Edward Bulwer, Ernest Maltravers or the Eleusinia, Bell and Bradfute, Edinburgh; and J. Cumming, Dublin., 1844, v: “To the great German people, a race of thinkers and of critics.”
public, the politicians in Berlin, allies, antagonists, some or all of the
above?—was never thoroughly conducted. To understand the imagination
of the audience is perhaps the most important enabler for any maritime
strategy. In the future, representatives from these stakeholders should gath-
er to discuss the contours of a new capstone document, and give the pro-
posed working group some waypoints to refer to when drafting such a pa-
per. Growing and modernizing a navy is difficult. It needs careful thought
and continuous articulation, something which may be a bridge too far for
the current German force consumed with having to make do in current
operations and on-going procurements. In any case, it certainly does not
absolve Germany from creating an integrated maritime and naval strategy.
The immediate post-Cold War era where even some European allies were
skeptical of the Deutsche Marine discovering blue-water operations at all is
long-since gone, as these navies have also dramatically reduced their own
inventory as well.47

4. Epilogue

As Vice Admiral Andreas Krause, by then one of the longest-serving Chiefs
of German Navy in its history, stated on the occasion of the 60th Historisch-
Taktische Tagung der Marine in January 2020, the German Navy is growing
again and on an upwards trajectory.48 More ships and boats, better readi-
ness, more billets and significantly more political appreciation and atten-
tion will make the 2020s a transformative period for the German Navy.
Positioning the force beyond its operational and military spectrum could
underline, in a strategic communications framework, a number of innova-
tive roles for the Deutsche Marine. A naval force that understands its inher-
ent ability as a critical forward-thinking strategic institution, as the bearer
of key institutional knowledge for maritime security, as a central maritime
strategy and defense advisor to political masters, as a civilian-military-indus-
trial integrator and as a problem solver for 21st century challenges can
go a long way. For Germany, it is high time to continue to develop and
articulate strategy, as an all-hands maneuver for this serving in the Navy as
well as its cadre of friends and supports from academia.

47 Stöhs (2018b).
2020,” https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/organisation/marine/aktuelles/historisch-taktische-
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Peter Swartz’s Republic of Letters: Recent Works on the U.S. Navy and Strategy

Sarandis Papadopoulos

This essay aims to function on two levels. The first examines how Peter Swartz prompted a scholarly discussion about U.S. Navy strategy from a diverse group—both intellectually and internationally—of young scholars. For the authors examined here, Swartz served as mentor and a literal source for the doctoral dissertations written by them. The second line of effort seeks to generalize about what maritime strategy signified, identifying themes prevalent in these works to better understand what using the sea, and naval power, meant. In that light this “Republic of Letters” also shows what maritime thought can mean in the future. As Swartz himself has written, the prime purpose for creating American naval power is to provide options for U.S. presidents.\(^2\) Allowing for national distinctions in leadership, the same applies to all naval powers. To sharpen his point in the form of a question, what solutions did the Navy (as a “means”) offer to solve national and international problems (the “ends”)?

The three works considered here were completed as dissertations between 2010 and 2016. The authors, and their published works as used here with dates of completion, are:


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1 All opinions expressed here are those of the author, and should not be construed as representing the positions of the Department of the Navy, Department of Defense or the United States government.

Most interestingly, given their works’ focus on the U.S. Navy, the authors studied here are multinational: one Swiss (Forster), a German (Bruns), and an American (Haynes). Students of naval affairs are rare on both sides of the Atlantic. As this volume reveals, Peter’s research and writing, chiefly created to inform the U.S. Navy’s Pentagon staff, commonly called OP-NAV, managed to support the scholarship of non-Americans, even one from a land-locked European nation. It also provides a guide for how the lack of a strategy hindered the navy during a period of political indeterminacy.

Some theory needs consideration for context. Fundamentally, does strategy, and the documents written to enunciate it, matter? The answer is distinct from the interactions which classic wartime strategy assumes in historical literature. The approaches taken here instead represent Cold War or post-1989 thinking about what navies can or might do. It is also stands apart from the intellectual value drawing students to study strategy, which these works, and others represented in this volume, embody. As part of the human experience, these students found naval strategy worth addressing through their doctoral work, signaling its interest. Moreover, strategy is fundamentally difficult to create, unlike more engineering-oriented military problem solving at the operational or tactical levels, especially for naval forces which are more disconnected from the public imagination than armies and air forces. At best, strategic thought unifies organizational or national effort, adds coherence to explanations of intent, and creates trustworthy behavior over the longer term. Ultimately, then, what this essay seeks to ask is did written U.S. Navy strategy make a difference?

In answering this question, we can look at the roots of Peter Swartz’s durable oeuvre. When a relatively junior officer in the 1970s, the U.S. Navy publicly clashed with its own political leadership (the administration of President Jimmy Carter and Defense Secretary Harold Brown), and in parallel was internally divided on wartime operational plans, whether to de-

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3 Four more dissertations are not included, although they reflect Swartz’s influence and inform my own thinking: the works of Amund Lundesgaard, Michael Haas, Jeremy Stöhs and Steve Wills are all presented in this volume.


fend convoy routes to Europe or to strike directly at such a conflict’s homeland, the Soviet Union. Given such strategic disagreements, creating coherence of thought, and matching those ideas by building a fleet, properly crewed and equipped, to execute them, was essential. In addition, the Navy’s unstated but generally accepted service cultural mindset, is dominated by a “presentist” OPNAV and devoted to technological solutions rather than to strategic thought. These elements were the challenges Swartz confronted as a member of the Navy’s strategy community a generation ago.

After service in South Vietnam, Swartz’s Pentagon work mainly kept him focused on explaining how the Navy would prepare for or fight a war. His strategy efforts therefore sought to discipline OPNAV officers (who planned the organization), their programs (what the Navy physically bought), and Navy messages (what it said), to create a coherent whole. It is worth a student’s notice to realize that a modern navy, in particular the U.S. Navy, must be prepared to respond to political questions with clarity, especially with respect to its budget needs. Some may criticize this strict linking of writing strategy to an explicit “means, ways and ends” construct, yet the American government budget process is where all high-level choices and decisions are made, including about strategy and its execution. For over four decades it also was the universe in which Swartz’s work played a role.

As an example, and to unpack the second of these disciplinary responsibilities, consider U.S. shipbuilding. Since 2002, American Federal law has mandated the Navy annually report to Congress, as part of the Defense

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budget, its schedule for shipbuilding for the upcoming 30 years.\textsuperscript{10} Such documents in theory link the rationale for the unique set of means of the U.S. Navy—its ships—to an expected set of ends; why else write them? Better still, given the long lifespan of warships as capital- and technology-intensive assets, these reports should inform two branches of the U.S. government, the Executive and Congress, allowing them to allocate resources. To provide consistency such plans should evolve slowly, changing only as new ideas, challenges and capabilities arise. In a large organization of one-third of a million people (as of 2019), plus reservists and civilians, such discipline matters.

Instead, the annual shipbuilding plans neither link ends to means, nor do they avoid changing their approach quickly. The fiscal year 2015 report reported a current inventory numbering 289 ships and set out a force total of 306 by 2019.\textsuperscript{11} Nearly five years later—the target date for the earlier report’s force of 306—the Navy counted 301 vessels in its current inventory, but had substituted a goal of 355 ships by the year 2034.\textsuperscript{12} To be certain, an American presidential election had occurred, shifting national policy, and a 2016 Navy force structure assessment raised its estimate of ships needed for service missions. Three intervening plans, however, adjusted shipbuilding goals every year, showing an absence of consistency.\textsuperscript{13} None of these government reports explained from where the ships’ crews or maintenance staff would come, essential if the fleet is operate at all.\textsuperscript{14} They offer no semblance of a link between means and ends; despite their apparent 30-year time horizon, they are just snapshots of the state of Navy purchasing plans.


\textsuperscript{14} Kuehn (n. d.), 31.
What the armed services buy is a transient thing, while strategy should be longer-term, and intellectually durable.

In contrast, the 1980s’ Maritime Strategy always aimed at creating a 600-ship fleet, and Swartz’s efforts culminated in his shepherding of a declassified and published version explaining it in the *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*. The force objective had originated during mid-1970s’ discussions within the Navy Department, was based upon intelligence about Soviet capabilities (as the dominant opponent), and persisted until the Cold War’s end. Through official and public versions of the strategic rationale for a 600-ship Navy, Swartz sought to make the service sensible to American lawmakers and the public. It fundamentally and essentially bridged the gap in understanding between naval and political leaders, translating strategy usefully for policy makers, a lasting problem for the Navy since the document’s eclipse after 1989. The strategy also described the infrastructure needed, which the industrial base of the time could support. Together, these integrated a remarkably consistent explanation of the Navy’s influence, in peacetime, crises or war, all sustaining the force goal. Arguably, making such explanations is hardest for the Navy, which in addition to being the most independent of the services, faces the sharpest divide from American public understanding. Gallup surveys from 2001 to 2014 confirmed that, apart from the U.S. Coast Guard, the Navy was the armed service generally regarded as least important or prestigious to American de-

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18 In essence, 1980s’ commercial shipbuilding lost a Federal subsidy, which freed up yards and skilled workers to switch to warship construction instead. For explaining the one-time changes in American “differential shipbuilding” for merchant vessels during the period, I am obliged to my colleague Dr. Sal Mercogliano, of Campbell University, in an e-mail of 28 May 2019.

In contrast, the 1980s’ Maritime Strategy mattered for service prestige, its budget and its operational readiness.

After his first retirement in 1993, as a Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) researcher Swartz became a long-term advisor to the Navy’s strategy and policy office, N3/N5. He also served as a member of the Secretary of the Navy’s Advisory Subcommittee on Naval History, making his approach multidisciplinary. A voracious reader and expert networker, he tirelessly backed people intent on studying the U.S. Navy, supporting uniformed and civilian researchers, including the present author. Swartz’s contacts, advocacy, research, and writing over the next 26 years made him the single most valuable resource on U.S. Navy strategy in the Washington, D.C., area. Those contributions are why the three books studied here could be written.

Each of the works examined here will be evaluated and intellectually positioned, especially with respect to Peter Swartz’s approach to strategy. They partly reflect his generation-long commitment to making the case for the utility of thoughtful writing to the service. Specifically, this essay assesses what value each book assigns to the planning, programming and messaging functions of the U.S. Navy and the OPNAV staff. As well, this essay will use the authors’ presentation of the 1992 strategy document... From the Sea to clarify what the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps thought during the fin-de-siècle moment. That document, the first written after the Soviet Union’s end, shows naval thought when starting from a blank slate, illustrating how the two services managed the transition from the Cold War to addressing the more diffuse ensuing threats, if less existential ones, of the period which followed.

Larissa Forster positions her work at the locus of missions outside of war, roles in the past labelled as gunboat diplomacy. Employing the term “crisis-response” instead, she addresses the political uses of sea-going force, its strengths and weaknesses, how it influences diplomacy and coercion,

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21 Kuehn (n. d.), 34-35.
and concludes with measures of seapower’s impact.\textsuperscript{24} Her book inextricably links the missions of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to one another, given the littoral and expeditionary foci of their work of post-1989 crisis response.\textsuperscript{25} This truly is seapower influencing events ashore, and offers a potential yardstick to measure the applicability of the foreign policy alternative known as “off-shore balancing.” While not addressed by Forster herself, that idea posits a constrained role of influence, or “shaping,” through which to employ American naval strength. Shaping entered the American naval lexicon through the document . . . \textit{From the Sea}.\textsuperscript{26}

Organized topically, \textit{Influence Without Boots on the Ground} opens the background of naval operations other than war. To Forster, navies are fundamentally different military forces, which by their nature offer force in increments. The fleet’s span of six types of commitments, from most dangerous to least are: combat, shows of force, peacekeeping and arming of partners, surveillance and monitoring, noncombatant removal, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR).\textsuperscript{27} The emphasis on the last of these in her work is not coincidental, coming on the heels of a major U.S. Navy HA/DR mission in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.\textsuperscript{28} Notably, Forster does not address domestic use of naval force, such as occurred in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina hit U.S. states along the Gulf of Mexico.\textsuperscript{29}

Forster’s book tightly focuses upon employing a statistical methodology to measure and explain the importance of naval intervention during crises. Case studies of maritime roles, 241 in all, are the evidence used to evaluate

\begin{footnotes}

\item[25] Forster (2013), 35.


\item[27] Forster (2013), 100-101.


\item[29] 14 U.S. Navy ships and 3 auxiliaries, plus six allied warships or coast guard vessels. See Brian Walsh, \textit{Support to the Hurricane Katrina Response by the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander: Reconstruction and Issues} (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, September 2006), 81-87.
\end{footnotes}
the value and success of a seaborne contribution. That approach is important, for one of the most often-cited roles of the U.S. Navy, serving as a conventional deterrent, is truly obscure. Showing when an opponent did not act because an American aircraft carrier and escorts was over the horizon is simply too vague a proposition to prove. Outside of this book, the deterrent role of a gunboat is often asserted, and very difficult to show; unlike Förster, this essay’s author has tried to do so on several occasions, without success.

Influence without Boots on the Ground characterizes the central message of... From the Sea as directly littoral in nature and focused on influencing events ashore. In particular, the 1992 document showed how peacetime forward presence delivered the highest diplomatic value for the American government. Emphasizing that presence role for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps reflected the many regionally-defined needs of the day. After 1991, the Arabian Gulf and Adriatic Sea regions experienced repeated crises, political and military in nature, while Southeast Asia and the Caribbean also faced maritime challenges, migrant populations and environmental challenges. Confronting them, the full range of naval capabilities enunciated in... From the Sea, also six in number, included:

- Forward deployment/presence
- Strategic deterrence
- Control of the seas
- Crisis response
- Project precise power
- Sealift (for strategic mobility)

To use such attributes as means, Forster characterizes American domestic political ends around the turn of the century as seeking some sort a role in minimizing human suffering, limiting conflicts and fighting terrorism, all without waging costly combat ashore. For the United States, the 1992-1994 intervention in Somalia showed the limits of political reluc-

30 Forster (2013), Appendix A, 236-330. This is solely available in the online version.
31 Ibid., 45.
33 Forster (2013), 22; and O’Keefe et al. (1992).
34 Forster (2013), 59. See also O’Keefe et al. (1992).
tance most starkly.\textsuperscript{35} The three decades since then have also seen a fair degree of unanimity between the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps on the need for close relations, and commitment to littoral operations, starting with the white paper . . . \textit{From the Sea}.\textsuperscript{36} Such comity between the two minimized inter-service arguments. But that tight link generated a theoretical blurring, for in centralizing American naval forward presence as a mission, . . . \textit{From the Sea} also opened a gap from Julian Corbett’s historic assertions about the impact seapower delivered ashore. Writing a century ago, the British theorist saw maritime power as a military (i.e. land) enabler or hindrance during warfare, with his original meaning to address using naval combat for political ends, not necessarily the day-to-day of peace-time foreign policy.\textsuperscript{37}

Retrospectively, the utility of low-level naval diplomacy seems to have peaked around the time of the publication of Forster’s book.\textsuperscript{38} This does not mean that the need for maritime subtlety has declined; navies will always perform the six roles she outlines. Instead, the more recent demand signal reflects that the challenge faced by the United States and its friends has shifted emphasis to confront peer-competitors. This change puts more stresses on naval forces, asking them to prepare to deal with day-to-day forward presence needs and to prepare for war.\textsuperscript{39} A particular twist applies to the U.S. Navy’s unique force structure, too. While most researchers measure its aircraft carriers through their military and diplomatic impact, the ships are also truly high-volume platforms. That last aspect is, one suspects, why they are dispatched to meet humanitarian demands: an American CVN took part in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, 2005 Hurricane Katri-


na, 2010 Haitian earthquake and 2011 Japanese earthquake relief missions, events when the carriers’ prodigious through-put were complemented by much requested amphibious warfare ships. Doing everything prevents focus on any specific task.

Crucially, by using the quantitative methods of this work, Forster attempts to measure the frequency with which Navy and Marine Corps forces are considered useful to particular types of crises (Chapter 4). Her conclusion that naval forces are employed most frequently when territorial issues are at stake, probably because of their ability to remain in a theater over time, is both well-defended and important.40 In contrast, stationing land power ashore is visible, and its prolonged use can provoke local resentment, for example in the 1992-1994 UN mission to Somalia, the 1993-1994 Rwandan intervention, and continuous presence since 1990 of American service members in Saudi Arabia, have shown.41 Committing naval forces unpredictably even over time, while taxing on their readiness, avoids that risk.

More importantly, Forster’s method also illuminates the difficult-to-measure utility of naval interventions in operations outside of war (Chapter 5). Crucially, when U.S. Navy forces are committed on their own, as a minimal demonstration of force, they contribute the least to ending a crisis.42 Perhaps discouragingly, the author concludes that committing naval forces unaided most often generates a stalemate, as opposed to the greater success yielded by committing more varieties of military force, citing the example of the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis.43 This suggestion is important, although one might reflect that naval power is typically not employed without some other element of national commitment alongside it, such as diplomatic or economic pressure. Outside of warfare, navies are often simply used to buy time for other means to work. For example, economic sanctions, admittedly a tool beyond Forster’s scope, often observed by other nations, also reshape behavior over the long term when used in conjunction with naval operations.44 Further research may show if these complementary links are correct.

40 Forster (2013), 142-143.
42 Forster (2013), 157-158, see also 183.
43 Ibid., 167-168.
Peter Haynes’s credibility as a thinker is magnified by membership in one of the Navy’s three warfighting communities (surface ship, submarine and flying officers) and service on the staff of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy, N3/N5. He came to the strategist role after an aviator career, a rare officer who commanded an E-2C airborne early warning squadron and received duty time to complete a doctorate in strategic studies. That background positioned him to understand and critique the post-1989 American way of writing and using strategy. Central to his argument is the Navy’s operational and business-centric *mentalité*, in place of a strategic outlook, a method favoring the theories of Antoine-Henri Jomini rather than those of either Carl von Clausewitz or Alfred Thayer Mahan. In essence, when trying to craft naval strategy senior leaders, and OPNAV in the Pentagon, default to operational management techniques rather than long-term and contextualized thinking.

The book *Toward a New Maritime Strategy* is broadly chronological. Eight of its chapters are devoted to the high-level documents written between 1992 and 2007, typically retaining currency for two or three years. Under a variety of designations—as a strategy, vision or planning guidance—these texts strove fulfill Samuel Huntington’s 1954 formula for matching ideas to procurement and messaging. They also varied in length from three pages (“Anytime, Anywhere: A Navy for the 21st Century”) to ninety (“Navy Strategic Planning Guidance”) and in security classification. Just one, the 2007 *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, meets Haynes’s standard for a capstone document, which in the words of CNO Mike Mullen, should go beyond the idea “that maritime strategy exists solely to fight and win wars at sea.” Mullen was,

... in effect, revealing a missing dimension in American naval (and military) thinking that had caused the United States to neglect for too

46 Ibid., 3, 5-8.
48 Haynes (2015), 128 and 140.
long the full range of political and economic effects that military power can achieve.”

The 2007 Cooperative Strategy was superseded in 2015, just as Haynes’s book was published.

To unpack the milieu shaping Navy strategy documents, Haynes employs interviews with a generation’s worth of participants in the process. At least 10 former officers spoke with him, largely retired Navy captains from the strategist community. They also included retired Vice Admiral John Morgan, who oversaw writing the 2007 Cooperative Strategy, as well as that document’s lead author, Commander Bryan McGrath. Haynes’s reliance on interviews stems from the reticence to publish by post-1945 Chiefs of Naval Operations, just two of whom have written autobiographies, and who have set the tone for all senior officers to avoid putting internal processes on paper. Trying to reconstruct the thinking behind these Navy documents is therefore challenging, and the list of interviewees he relied upon counts most of the strategy circle’s core contributors.

For Haynes, . . . From the Sea attempted to solve an internal Navy argument about the nature of the post-1991 world. Inside OPNAV, the central difficulty after Desert Storm lay in answering whether the Navy should plan to address the most prevalent day-to-day management questions of the global system, fight small-scale actions, deter competitors, or prepare for the least likely challenge, but the most dangerous one, a war with a symmetrical or peer opponent. Each of these approaches would fundamentally shape what the Navy planned to do, what forces it sought to buy, and how it communicated its place in national security. After the Cold War the argument was imperfectly resolved.

49 Ibid., 235.
50 Ibid., see notes pages 253-282, especially for chapters 5 and 6, 10-12. It is worth noting that Peter Swartz shared his contemporary e-mail correspondence with Haynes, further filling gaps in the record.
52 Haynes (2015), 70-71.
Specifically, some naval thinkers (especially among the Marines and the surface navy) held the United States would become the fulcrum of the “New World Order” announced in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush. Their planned use of maritime power would seek to defuse crises. Others (largely carrier aviators) wanted to employ the fleet either to deter threats or when needed launch high-technology strikes to destroy them. Finally, the service’s submariners generally stood as the conserving school of naval thought, arguing for post-Cold War restraint, a measure designed to preserve the Navy’s technical military capabilities until needed to confront the next major challenger. It is interesting to note that subsurface officers, until 1982 dominated by the astute technocrat Admiral Hyman Rickover, had assumed preeminence in Navy culture, with three consecutive Chiefs of Naval Operations between 1982 and 1994 (Admirals Watkins, Trost and Kelso) coming from their ranks. In essence, that last group sought the most modest commitment of day-to-day naval capabilities to non-warfighting missions.

Haynes’s book is the most OPNAV-centric of the three studies reviewed here, partly reflecting his positioning as a uniformed Navy strategist. It highlights and criticizes the countervailing forces which turn most of the service’s strategic products into self-referential, unhelpful and anodyne documents. After the Cold War, only the 2007 Cooperative Strategy has met the standard of being a durable source of ideas with which the Navy can message, and even it never succeeded in disciplining OPNAV with respect to procurement. For Haynes, fixing the internal discontinuities of Navy thought, purchasing and message has been hard. Only a more deliberate focus on context and writing will fix that problem.

Sebastian Bruns explicitly seeks to bridge the gap in thinking between academic (more theoretical in method and aim) approaches to maritime strategy and internally created U.S. Navy strategic thought (written to satisfy the ends, ways and means construct) in the period up to 2016. His book, U.S. Naval Strategy and National Security: The Evolution of American Maritime Power is structured similarly to Haynes’s work, although temporally stretches forward two more years. It, too, addresses the strategy documents in order, setting them into four contextual periods: the 1980s’ Maritime Strategy; the long 1990s from the end of the Soviet Union to the 11

September 2001 attacks; the early 21st century; and the crucible following the 2008 Great Recession, the aftermath of the Arab Spring in 2011, increasing assertiveness by the People’s Republic of China, and the outright Russian aggression in Ukraine starting in 2014. Those four periods respectively, and not coincidentally, spanned the Presidencies of Ronald W. Reagan; George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton; George W. Bush; and Barack H. Obama.

Bruns’s sources bears the imprint of Swartz’s collation of public and internal strategic documents. The crucial elements of naval strategy in each period the book examines are the overall international setting, naval leaders, domestic politics and national policies, the documents themselves, fleet strength, what the Navy operationally did, and the impact strategy documents had on allies and the Navy’s organization. Strategy assumes a central role in this study, reflecting guidance from national policy and circumstances, and to then guide force development, operations and relationships. Bruns interviewed, or corresponded with, the U.S. Navy’s strategic community members, most notably retired Admiral James “Ace” Lyons, a late Cold War 2nd Fleet (based in Norfolk, Virginia) leader, thereafter Pacific Fleet commander. In U.S. Naval Strategy and National Security, that last interviewee sheds light on how an operational leader used and actually valued the framework offered by the 1980s’ Maritime Strategy. Fundamentally, for Bruns the thinking of U.S. Navy during the whole era proved to be on the cutting edge of American policy.

Where Bruns crucially stands apart from Haynes’s account is in his book’s focus on the operational and diplomatic spillover from writing and relying upon a naval strategy. The 1980s’ Maritime Strategy’s strengths are well known, unifying U.S. Navy method and signaling to the public, and the Soviet Union, the service’s intent. Bruns observes even popular culture picked up on the Cold War strategy’s themes, with Tom Clancy’s 1986 novel Red Storm Rising showing naval attributes of a hypothetical Third World War, and the same author’s novel and resulting film, The Hunt for Red October, illustrating the U.S. Navy’s aggressive tactics and operating patterns in peacetime. Such measures signaled American naval goals externally and internally. Similarly, for Bruns, in 2013 when Presid-

55 See ibid., chapters 4-7.
56 Ibid., 75. See also Lehman (2018), 67-81 and 189-208.
58 Bruns (2018), 100, note 56 and 106, note 177.
dent Barack Obama elected not to use military force to punish the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, he fundamentally redirected how U.S. naval power was employed, moving away from the so-called “Washington Playbook.” Obama’s rerouting of strategic practice, reverberant today, made a genuine operational impact, essentially downshifting the use of naval force. Bruns is fundamentally concerned with how political ends reshaped the ways maritime power was employed.

The ensuing decades also saw American thinking about maritime power spread across the globe and be adopted by a wide array of sea services. Operationally, for example, NATO allies joined in the U.S. embargo of Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and the former Yugoslavia during its civil war. A broader array of navies joined in the 1999 United Nations-mandated effort in East Timor, as well as the post-9/11 Global War on Terror. Many of these nations would go on join the antipiracy mission off the Horn of Africa in the 21st century. And the language of at least one strategic publication, the 2007 *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, with its observation “trust and cooperation cannot be surged,” entered the lexicon of allied and partner sea services in 2008 and 2009. As Bruns notes, “it was CS-21 which courted other navies, gave them a sense of ownership and participation in U.S. naval power, and provided a sense of political top cover to engage with the U.S. Navy.” Persuasive ideas can make a difference in very real terms.

Creating strategic ideas for the Navy and Marine Corps has proven an ongoing process, with Bruns enumerating 23 of them in period after 1991. The initial observation one is tempted to make is that these frequent rewritings has meant an average lifespan of about a year for each document. A further problem is that due to the past three decades of changes in service thinking, the profile of the Navy’s deployment only grew wider, while its actual size shrank. Absent a durable strategy, the fleet’s ships, and more importantly their crew members, only became busi-

59 Ibid., 231.
62 Bruns (2018), 205.
63 Tables in ibid., 127, 182 and 235.
er. In fact, by 2017 these pressures culminated in what one 2010 Navy-sponsored report had anticipated: a decline in maintenance and training, lowering overall readiness to operate, which ultimately led to two lethal collisions at sea in the Western Pacific.  

Bruns assesses the impact Navy arguments had on force goals, and cannot find a post-1991 example where strategy successfully justified the fleet needed. His assessment of . . . From the Sea measures its value in strictly political terms, reflecting the era but irrelevant to the operational fleet. To be sure, since 1991 the problem of matching those two demands was admittedly difficult, especially given little public interest in what the fleet was for, in particular during the two ground wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But the third disciplinary urge of writing strategy also dropped away: since 2001 the U.S. Navy has never had enough ships to fulfill all of its missions. By the second decade of the 21st century, the Navy’s own force goals showed the fleet lacked between one-tenth and one-seventh of the ships its missions demanded. For Bruns, the root cause for this intellectual shortfall is contingency, sometimes called the tyranny of events, which only a well-crafted strategy can ever hope to manage.

Risking accusation of over-simplifying Navy strategy documents as strawmen, their importance stands confirmed by these books, most of which were drew from Peter Swartz’s research. The choices made by the Navy, and secondarily the Marine Corps, came with consequences. The crucial choice enshrined in . . . From the Sea, reinforced through Forward . . . From the Sea, extended and fixed the service’s forward presence role as its central operational method following Desert Storm. The Navy stayed committed to East Asia, and substituted its Arabian Gulf role for the Mediterranean, while not fully leaving the latter. Meanwhile, during the 1990s the U.S. Army and Air Force chopped their strength by half in Europe, then by two-thirds more after 2001, shifting forces to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars of the new millennium. In contrast, the Navy shrank in strength while adding the requirement to support another distant station,

65 Bruns (2018), 132.
66 See tables in ibid., 143, 201 and 237.
67 Ibid., 255-256.
68 Whiteneck et al. (2010), 12.
and became busier with crisis response. The Navy would tackle every mission, but made no coherent argument that its fleet needed alteration in configuration, doing both while its overall numbers of hulls continued to fall.

Pulled in three directions—under-resourced, committed to peacekeeping and then warfare after 2001, while globally present—something eventually had to give. After the fact, it’s fairly straightforward to understand what trade-off the U.S. Navy made to support forward presence with combat-credible forces. The Navy dropped its overall personnel strength by nearly 35% between 1991 and 2000, only to continue cutting a sixth of its remaining strength after 9/11, bottoming out in 2012.69 Indeed the U.S. Marine Corps of that year was proportionally the largest it has been in American history, relative to the personnel strength of the U.S. Navy. While the Marine Corps should not necessarily become smaller, the Navy needs people to crew and maintain its units, in addition to those hurriedly added since 2012. The only ready source of personnel, the Navy Reserve, deserves greater attention as a stop-gap to improving readiness across the fleet. Such a message must be communicated to national leaders and the American public.

Programmatically, the service also ruined attempts to rebalance the fleet by halting construction of the ships it would need for either its system-maintenance role (frigates), or in the quantities needed for a peer competition (attack submarines). Plenty of advice from inside the Navy, including by retired Captain (and late Naval Postgraduate School Professor) Wayne Hughes, called for building frigates, or even smaller vessels, but the lack of a strategy to guide ship-design and -construction rates prevented making any decisions until after the end of the 20th century.70 Instead, the small surface combatant suited for the post-1992 world, designed as two types of Littoral Combat Ship (LCS, now termed frigates), had to be started from scratch after 11 September 2001. By then the Navy had not built a single


Ultimately working to maintain the international trade system, and unarguably accelerating globalization, the 21st century U.S. Navy has resorted to applying its shrinking high-end force, largely without any additional resources devoted to procuring and maintaining the fleet it needed. With the notable exception of its NATO allies, plus Australia and Japan, as well as intermittent support from partners including India, even at times Russia and the People’s Republic of China on piracy, the strain is taxing the world’s fleets. The end—rules-based global prosperity—is wearing down the means, the navies needed to defend it.\footnote{Derived in part from Simon Reich and Peter Dombrowski, The End of Grand Strategy: US Maritime Operations in the Twenty-First Century (Ithaca & London. Cornell: 2017), esp. chapters 5 & 6.} A conjuncture of events, the peace dividend, followed by multiple crises, two land wars and American budget quarrels, alternated different types of strain on the service now nearly three decades old, causing instability at sea and creating strategic
consequences we cannot predict. Merely managing programs and operations, as . . . From the Sea and most of its successors have been employed since then, is inadequate.\textsuperscript{76} It seems safe to say that writing a durable maritime strategy, one recognizing the national and international importance of seapower and explaining the means needed to fulfil national ends, is central to recognizing the world’s oceans as central to human activity. It is also the essential first step for the current generation of American leaders to take.

The objective success of these three books rests in their discernment of the conditions and challenges the U.S. Navy has confronted since the mid-1980s, and in showing its institutional thought processes in managing them. They demonstrate the granularities of linking policy ends to strategic means, giving naval leaders and academic readers plenty of food for thought. If the American service’s record in overcoming these obstacles is less than stellar, the response again is that strategy-making is difficult. This is not to suggest that the U.S. Navy’s current strategy problems are either new or insuperable. Even the 19\textsuperscript{th}-century theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan recognized just how hard crafting strategy was, and how tempting material solutions were as rival approaches to problem solving during times of rapid technological change.\textsuperscript{77} But these books also suggest the U.S. Navy needs to do some more thinking, preferably in concert with its sibling sea services, both American and international. The time to invigorate the strategic approach is now.


Works Cited


Seapower: The Cost of Abdication

Seth Cropsey

Introduction

Strategy is defined by paradox.¹ As Clausewitz formulates it, warfare is a struggle in which each party attempts to impose its will on the other. Conflicting wills create paradoxes, in which the right choice may be the least logically obvious one. This interplay of forces cannot be separated from strategy’s political element.² War is a political activity – politics is, in part, the domain of the will.

The relationship between politics, strategy, and history contains another paradox. Deriving strategy from purely historical assumptions helps create military organizations that “fight the last war,” rather than recognize the conditions that define the contemporary balance of power. Conversely, deriving strategy from abstract analyses of capabilities and assumptions of human rationality provides an inaccurate model of both politics and conflict.

Good strategy is a mean between fighting the last war and abstractions, however rational. Strategy is political. Since man is by nature political, history is simply politics reiterated in different circumstances. Examining history helps the strategist to identify political universals within strategic and geographic limits, deriving “lessons” that are as close as possible to timeless. History trains the strategist to understand particularity, thereby cultivating the practical requirements for statesmanship and, by extension, strategy-making.

Mankind’s relationship with the sea is ancient. The Hebrew Bible recounts the Noaic Flood, in which God, angry at the world’s wickedness, sent a great storm to wipe it clean. As the tale goes, all of creation rode out the storm in a massive ship – captained by the eponymous prophet. In more historical terms, the first human civilizations sprouted alongside the

banks of major rivers, relying on the waterways for transportation and agriculture. The desire for new products, new land, and a hunger for adventure nourished trade, creating the great seafaring peoples of the Mediterranean, whose polities and empires defined Western history. One can see a similar trend in Asia. Successive monarchs discovered that maritime transport was far more efficient than moving goods over land—a fact which holds to this day, despite man’s conquest of the skies.3

Nearly every major empire—Athens, Rome, China, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, England and France—has derived significant political power from control over a major body of water or maritime chokepoint. The only exception, the Mongol Empire, proves the rule—the united Khanate fragmented in under a century, while each portion of it was assimilated by the cultures of conquered peoples. States have resisted the tide of history solely because of their naval power. The Maratha Confederacy, the most powerful political unit on the Indian subcontinent in the 18th century, confronted and defeated the Portuguese, British and Dutch at sea multiple times. An internal political crisis finally gave Britain a strategic opening. Still, it took Britain three wars and four decades to defeat the Marathas.

Pericles observed that “if happiness requires freedom and freedom requires courage, do not shrink from the dangers of war.” Preserving one’s freedom requires war, which in turn requires seapower. Seapower is integral to the happiness of nations.4

Nevertheless, history contains examples of nations that willingly surrendered their naval power. Maritime power is expensive and difficult to maintain. Free regimes with good political leaders have had seemingly valid, logical reasons for relinquishing naval supremacy. Venice turned away from the sea to adapt to Europe’s changing geopolitical landscape in the 15th and 16th centuries. Britain also surrendered global naval supremacy in response to shifting geopolitical trends and finance. Both states attempted to replace maritime strength with land power, fostered by territorial expansion and alliances. Both viewed land power as a cheaper, and more reasonable, alternative than seapower.

Both were politically and strategically wrong. Venice’s attempt to pivot from sea to land helped transform it into yet another player in the Italian

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balance-of-power contest, ultimately condemning the city-state to political
decline and irrelevance. Britain’s choice to abandon global naval supremacy mortgaged its Empire and ensured its diminished status in the 20th-century.

Exploring the reasons for each state’s pivot away from seapower and the other choices available to them at the time offers enduring lessons about politics and strategy. Most important – the individual choices of statesmen, rather than the structural conditions a state faces at the time, are critical in determining its survival. As the West’s rivals increase in strength and ambition, American political leaders and strategists would benefit by remembering the importance of statesmanship.

Desponsamus te, mare– Venice and the Sea

Analyses of international politics are biased towards large political actors. Empires usually possess greater access to resources than smaller city-states. Paradoxically, however, smaller actors, with their greater organizational efficiency, can manipulate geopolitical conditions and achieve regional primacy.

Venice is a paradigmatic example. Using maritime power, a city-state with a population that never exceeded 200,000 people managed to dominate the Mediterranean world until the 15th-century, and despite such strategic mistakes as attacking Constantinople in 1204 and failing materially to assist the Byzantines two-and-a-half centuries later, successfully resisted the Ottomans for another 300 years. Venice survived until the end of Europe’s first Imperial age, only succumbing to Napoleonic power in 1796. Its prosperity and expansion rested on its maritime power. Similarly, when Venice turned from the seas, it became like Samson shorn. La Serenissima lost its power and its ability to compete with larger, better-organized adversaries.

Founded as an Adriatic trading post in the early 5th-century, Venice became a refuge from the increasing violence that accompanied the Western Roman Empire’s political disintegration.5 Initially under Byzantine suzerainty, Venice was caught between Byzantium, the Lombards, and the growing Frankish-Carolingian Empire. Geography allowed Venice to resist external invaders. By 803-804, the Byzantines had recognized de facto Venetian independence, while the Carolingians, unable to take the city, ceased

attempting to extend their sovereignty over it. Venetian dukes, known as Doges, began expanding the city-state’s influence in Italy, gaining control over the surrounding towns. Venice first exercised its naval power in the 830s-840s: the Venetians dispatched a 60-galley fleet to support Byzantium in its wars against its near Eastern Arab rivals.

Venice began its ascent to great power in 1000. Having carefully husbanded its naval resources, the Venetian fleet purged the Adriatic of pirates, and conquered Dalmatia’s petty principalities, weakened as they were by internecine warfare. It was then that the Sposalizio del Mare ceremony was first performed – the Doge led a procession of ships out of the harbor at Lido, and then presided over prayers for the extension of Venetian power over the seas. In later centuries the line “Desponsamus te, mare, in signum veri perpetuique domini (We wed thee, sea, as a sign of true and everlasting domination)” was added to the ceremony. Venetian policy first assured, and then abdicated, veri perpetuique domini of the seas.

The rise of Venetian power in the 11th through 14th centuries cannot be understood without examining its ruling regime. Three points are critical. First, the mercantile nature of the republic created a robust middle class that fused with the aristocracy, undermining the power of individual aristocrats. Venetian society was stratified, but those in power possessed decentralized—and therefore “nationalized”—interests, resulting in a political class more likely to embrace the common good rather than the merely private one.

Second, the regime was intentionally mixed, balancing factional interests through different policy-making organs. This stimulated discussion and debate over policy and strategy in which councilors and senators examined strategic issues from the position of the common good, rather than from their own factional interests.

Third, the Venetian government could act without public accountability in times of crisis, particularly after the institutionalization of the Council of Ten. The Venetian regime was designed to think strategically, rather than factionally – one can attribute Venice’s careful strategy to this political system.

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6 Ibid., 25.
7 Ibid., 32.
Starting in the 11th century, Venice was faced with a fundamental strategic choice.\textsuperscript{10} It could engage in the developing Italian balance-of-power system, and compete with Florence, Milan, Genoa, and other rivals.\textsuperscript{11} Or it could recuse itself from the Italian system and pursue maritime supremacy. The latter choice would require a much longer-term strategy.

Venice took it. Naval power takes decades to develop. It requires industrial infrastructure, specialized training, and a consistent revenue stream, along with political commitment to a specific economic system. Naval powers seldom gain the immediate spoils of conquest. But the ultimate benefits of maritime supremacy far outweigh the costs of achieving it. A state with a miniscule population compared to its rivals was thereby able to dominate the Mediterranean and become a major European player on equal footing with Byzantium, the Spanish Kingdoms, France, and the Holy Roman Empire.

All of Venetian strategy was divided into three parts. First, Venice conquered locations in the Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean, including Dalmatia, several Greek islands, Crete, and Cyprus. Venice controlled little physical territory compared to nearly every other European power. However, its island and coastal outposts precisely matched the trade routes that ran from the Levantine Basin to the rest of Europe.\textsuperscript{12} Venice linked its maritime outposts together, and policed the Eastern Mediterranean’s waterways with one of the most powerful and militarily competent navies in the world at the time.

Second, Venice created the Arsenal, a cluster of shipyards and armories that was Europe’s largest industrial hub until the 1760s.\textsuperscript{13} Each workshop in the Arsenal produced a specific product, enabling labor specialization, increased efficiency, and technological innovation. The Arsenal’s engineers created the innovative “frame-first” construction technique, which replaced the Roman-developed “hull-first” method. It is said that in times of crisis the Arsenal could produce a galley in a single day.\textsuperscript{14} Even if untrue,
the Arsenal’s production techniques were astounding for Medieval Europe – they are noted in Dante’s *Commedia.*

This industrial project allowed the Venetian Navy to recover from potentially ruinous losses. The War of Chioggia with Genoa in the late 14th-century is a good example. Genoa, one of Venice’s greatest maritime rivals, had occupied a small fishing port of Chioggia, in August 1380. The town itself was of no economic importance, but it blocked an access point to the Venetian lagoon. Prolonged Genoese control of Chioggia would have threatened Venetian access to the Adriatic, and by extension, its survival. Several months of intermittent skirmishing, followed by a major naval confrontation, yielded a strategic victory for Venice, but savaged the Venetian and Genoan combat fleets. Venice and Genoa concluded a peace settlement the following year, which at first seemed favorable to the latter. However, both sides had accumulated significant public debt, which would take up to two decades to retire. Venice, however, was able to field full combat fleets soon after the conflict, and by 1400 had rebuilt its navy. Genoa, lacking the industrial capacity the Arsenal system provided, was virtually eliminated as a naval power.

Third, Venetian power relied on savvy diplomatic maneuvering. Venice’s decision-makers set no goal higher than the polity’s strategic interest. Every enemy could become a partner, while most allies were erstwhile adversaries. Like Richelieu in 17th-century France, Venice’s leaders distinguished between the temporal salvation of the State and the eternal salvation of the soul. Hence Venetian willingness to convert the Fourth Crusade, convened in 1204 as an expedition against the Ayyubid Sultanate, into an attack on their commercial rival, the Byzantine Empire. The Doge at the time, Enrico Dandolo, orchestrated the attack at an age variously estimated between 85 to 95 years old— and commanded the invasion while fully blind.

This confluence of strategic factors catapulted Venice to Mediterranean dominance. By the early 15th-century, Venice dominated the trade routes between East and West. Its string of overseas bases and colonies tied together by maritime power, and girded with the Arsenal’s industrial capacity, ensured that any political player seeking access to the riches of the

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17 Ibid., 224-226.
Mediterranean and beyond would need to negotiate with the Venetians, or initiate a foolhardy military struggle.

Structural factors subdivide international political relationships. No state, not even the most powerful, can escape the constraints of shifting economic and political trends. However, the disintegration of Venetian power illustrates the primacy of political choice.

The rising Ottoman Empire confronted Venice with its first structural challenge. 14th-century Anatolia was politically fractured. Byzantine rump-states, and the reborn Empire itself, competed with a dozen or more Turkish Bayliks. The Balkans was similarly splintered. Petty duchies and principalities, nominally organized under a supreme authority, competed for local power and interest. No competitor held the upper hand. The first Ottoman leaders ruthlessly maneuvered between rival political actors, crushing each one in turn when the circumstances permitted aggression, and maintaining a tense peace otherwise. Much like their future Venetian competitors, the Ottomans benefited from a centralized state apparatus, the likes of which no other political unit in Anatolia could operate.

Despite a brief setback after Ottoman defeat in 1402, the growing Sultanate consolidated its control over Anatolia, and began launching raids into, and later conquered, the Balkans. There was a clear logic to early Ottoman strategy: Turkish forces progressively separated Byzantium from any European partners over land, intending eventually to descend on Constantinople and topple the Empire.

Venice had a clear interest in these geopolitical developments. Starting in 1422, Venetian possessions in Greece, largely coastal, came under attack. As always, Venice’s erstwhile Byzantine rival became a potential ally against this new threat from the East.

Growing Ottoman power threatened to crush the critical toe-holds Venice had created from the Adriatic across the Aegean to the Black Sea. Its maritime possessions would logically be the next target, after the Ottomans dispatched Byzantium. Depending upon Ottoman objectives, the rising Empire could prove to be the greatest threat Venice had ever encountered.

This was the critical policy issue. Venetian strategists and statesmen were confronted with the most difficult, and significant, question in inter-

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national politics – of what nature was the Ottoman regime? Structural pressures have a say in creating state policy. Larger states will naturally somewhat dominate, even threaten their smaller neighbors, and rising powers always upset the delicate balance of any established system. But no state is monolithic, working with a single rational mind. Every polity has a complex decision-making process, with several relevant personalities. These multiple personalities are inseparable from a state’s identity – culture, religion, and self-image. They create an international image. But understanding how these elements interact requires inhabiting the mind of one’s adversary, deconstructing every ethical and political presumption, and seeing the world as they see it.  

Venetian statesmen failed at this. They assumed that the Ottoman Empire was much like any other state. Natural geographical and military factors would slow Ottoman momentum. After a handful of decisive defeats, like every other rival, the new Sultanate would seek a deal with the master of the seas. Thus, Venice left Byzantium to its fate. Despite 1,000 years of separation, the City of Constantine fell just as the City of Romulus did – bathed in conquering fire. Historian Michael Critobulus, later writing a history for Mehmet the Conqueror, reported that Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos, upon witnessing the fall of the city, ripped off his Imperial finery and charged to his death as a common soldier. As the city burned, Venetian war fleets stayed in port.

Venice estimated wrong. The Ottoman Empire could not be treated like any other European actor. Perhaps, after another century of warfare against a Byzantine-Venetian alliance, Ottoman sultans would have abandoned their expansionist ambitions, and struck a deal with Venice giving the latter control of the Eastern Mediterranean. And absent effectively applied maritime power, it is unclear how the Ottoman Empire could have prevented Venice from supporting Byzantium – much like Sparta was powerless against the Athenian long walls. In the event, the conquest of Constantinople and the death of Byzantium simply inflamed Ottoman ambitions. Venice would be locked in a struggle over the seas until the late 16th-century that would culminate in the fleet action at Lepanto in 1571. But even the Venetian and allied victory there could not reverse the Republic’s decline, because of its second strategic failure.

Venetian strategy was premised upon control of the Eastern Mediterra- nean, which in turn assumed that the Levantine basin would remain the nexus of international trade. Columbus’s discovery of the Americas, alongside Portugal’s expansion into the Indian Ocean and the northern/western European states’ design of deep-hulled vessels that could reach Asia by rounding Africa’s southern tip, threatened to overturn this equilibrium. Venetian control of the Eastern Mediterranean no longer guaranteed the Republic’s maritime power.

Hence, Venetian statesmen were faced with a second choice. They could either attempt to recoup Venice’s maritime strength using creative policy measures, or pivot towards the land, and use Venetian maritime wealth to raise armies and expand the Republic’s security perimeter. Indeed, Venice began to gravitate towards the latter option in the early 15th-century, attempting to roll back Milanese expansion in the Italian *terrafirma*.23 It is no coincidence that, for the most critical three decades of Ottoman expansion, between 1423 and 1453, Venice was preoccupied fighting land wars against Milan and its allies. Despite winning tactical and strategic victories, Venice was never able to create a stable balance with Milan through force alone. A year after the Fall of Constantinople, Venice *de facto* acceded to the Treaty of Lodi, which established formal boundaries between Venice and Milan.

Venice did experience four decades of relative peace in Italy, despite the Treaty of Lodi’s abrogation in 1483. Nevertheless, the later Italian Wars demonstrate the dangers of turning from the sea. Despite its wealth, Venice could never have hoped to compete with Europe’s great powers on land. Even Machiavellian citizen-soldiers, with their patriotic zeal, would not have matched the discipline and training of professional German, Swiss, and Spanish pikemen.

Athenian warships, rather than Spartan phalanxes, preserved the ancient Greek world against repeated Persian invasion. The same would have been, and was indeed, similar in the Venetian experience. Venice’s European rivals, fearing Ottoman expansionism, could not cannibalize Venetian naval power.

Could creative strategic thinking have helped Venice combat changing structural trends? Egypt was a potential partner against Ottoman expansionism. More important, the Mamluk Sultanate in Cairo sat along a potential corridor between East and West. A partnership between Venice and Egypt could have allowed the Venetians to mitigate the effects of the 16th-

23 Garrity (2012).
century’s transatlantic trade – indeed, a greater volume of shipping moved through the Mediterranean than across the Atlantic until the early 18th century. Selim the Grim, one of the most strategically shrewd Ottoman Sultans, conquered Egypt in 1517. One cannot doubt that he feared a partnership between the Mamluk Sultanate and a European power.

Statesmanship links Venetian ascendency and decline. The Venetian regime purposefully encouraged strategic thinking, which in turn enabled a polity with a fraction of the population and territory of Europe’s empires to dominate the Mediterranean, and become the West’s foremost medieval power. Venice did not lack statesmanship during its decline. Indeed, Venice remained politically relevant into the 18th century, in no small part because of commanders and statesmen like Sebastiano Venier and Paolo Sarpi, the latter of whom inspired the American founders. But Venetian political leaders gravely miscalculated the threat of the Ottoman Empire. Even the best of regimes make mistakes. But Venetian miscalculation condemned the Republic. Nearly two centuries after Sarpi uttered *Esto Perpetua* on his deathbed, Venice was devoured by Napoleon’s armies, succumbing to history.

*Exhaustion: Britain and the Sea*

Modern man accuses his ancient antecedents of lacking “historical consciousness” – the understanding of the social, political, and cultural distinctions that separate past, present, and future societies. This consciousness makes history intelligible. The contemporary observer can observe progress and regress, triumph and tragedy. This, of course, requires temporally privileging the present position in history, as Hegel would term it placing ourselves at history’s “end.”

While ancient man certainly lacked *historical* consciousness, however, he cannot be said to have ignored his own temporality. His history involved beginnings and ends, strung together cyclically over mythological eras and, in turn, human experience. He eschewed speaking of history, and in-

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stead observed *histories*, each unique to its own culture and civilization, each with its own beginning and end.  

Historical periods end, of course, with a culminating moment that signals a shift in a society’s and civilization’s self-image and role in the external world. That moment may only be visible in retrospect, and often involves violence. Britain, however, is unique. Its history ended on 5 July 1945, with the Labour Party’s landslide victory in the first post-war general election. The United Kingdom had survived its “supreme exertion for freedom, for right, and for truth,” after which its citizens chose to turn inward, electing a government that would transform Britain’s regime into an administrative welfare state.

The Britain that died in 1945 was not England as such. Today’s United Kingdom has rendered itself up to political torment over questions of European integration and fringe arguments about diversity. But today’s Britain is a ghost of the England that once ruled a quarter of the world’s population and was suzerain over one fourth of its landmass. *That* England was born between July and August 1588, when through tactical skill, diplomatic maneuvering, and fortuna’s blessing, Elizabeth’s kingdom repelled the Spanish Armada.

Control of the seas was a compass to the earliest English kingdoms. Viking freedom of maneuver at sea allowed Scandinavian raiders to identify weak points along the English and Scottish coastline. Comparatively small forces were able to crush the petty Anglo-Saxon polities. Viking raiders transformed into colonizers, and after only 80 years all but one English kingdom had fallen to the invaders. It took a leader with Alfred the Great’s strategic vision to turn the tide, and to establish an effective maritime presence. After fighting the Danes to a standstill, Alfred commissioned warships built to outclass the average Viking long ship and defend the southern English coastline.  

Notwithstanding, a century and a half later Norman invaders landed in the south of England and crushed the Saxon kingdoms.

This Norman heritage drew England into the first “Struggle for Mastery in Europe.” Successive English dynasties never surrendered their interests in France, resulting in nearly constant warfare for the next four centuries, culminating in the Hundred Years’ War. Ironically, it took not only the

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loss of its French possessions in 1453, but also the death of every male heir in both the houses of Lancaster and York, finally to sever England’s ties to the Continent. It was then that England could begin to flourish.

The Elizabethan victory in 1588 not only secured England from invasion, it also solidified its role as an independent Protestant power that sought political autonomy from Europe, not to rule it, as France and Spain did. Elizabeth was known as the “Virgin Queen.” Part of the rationale for the Spanish Armada was to punish Elizabeth for refusing to marry into the Habsburg line. As Venice was wedded to the sea, Elizabeth was wedded to a sea-girded England.

Britain’s regime in part explains its strategic success. Montesquieu was the first succinctly to describe England’s uniqueness, arguing that it bucked the trifold classification of regimes in *Spirit of the Laws*.27 England lacked the civic virtue of the ancient republic. Economic equality was antithetical to the English system, which thrived on commercialism and competition. Nor was England’s “principle” honor – the nobility that a monarchy requires either numerous or politically relevant enough to define its regime. But England was not despotic. The monarch was forced to share power with Parliament – each branch of the regime checked the other, while the common citizen jealously guarded his individual liberty, despite his political apathy.

This mix produced two results, both of which explain England’s rise, and the United Kingdom’s subsequent strategic effectiveness. First, the English regime was economically dynamic. This created a hunger for power that enabled it to sustain major setbacks – like the loss of the American colonies after 1783 – and still project power. Second, English society’s commercialism combined with the vestiges of its feudal aristocracy to allow a political class to coexist alongside a commercial one. The English regime was not corrupted, but rather translated its commercial power into political expansion, coordinated by a well-trained class of statesmen.

Much like Venetian strategy, Britain’s possessed three defining characteristics. First, Britain maintained a powerful enough land army to stay relevant in Europe’s continental conflicts, while never creating a ground force large enough to conquer continental territory on its own.

This gave Britain outsized influence in its coalitions – even before it established global maritime supremacy, British support was the deciding factor between victory and defeat. This precise balance allowed statesmen like

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John Churchill to emerge. Marlborough linked operational and theater strategic successes with Britain’s political goals, placing himself and his country at the center of the Grand Alliance, dictating policy to the Holy Roman Empire and Habsburg Spain. Indeed, Britain remained an indispensable partner in any 18th-century land war in no small part because its political success during the War of the Spanish Succession allowed it to maneuver between potential allies better than any other power.

This first factor enabled the second – Britain’s wholly practical diplomatic maneuvering in Europe’s fluid alliance system. Unsentimental foreign policy allowed Britain to capitalize on sudden changes in the balance of power. The so-called Diplomatic Revolution in 1756, in which Britain jettisoned its 25-yearlong alliance with Austria in favor of an alliance with Prussia, solidified by paying a subsidy, exemplifies Albion’s “perfidy.”

Third, and most important, throughout the 18th-century Britain engaged in a sustained effort that used its supreme naval power to capture strategic chokepoints, build colonial networks, and link together its overseas possessions. Britain’s capture of Gibraltar in August 1704 inaugurated its imperial period. Not only did Britain control transit between the Mediterranean and Atlantic, it also dominated North America, securing exclusive access to American resources, and denying any hostile power the ability to cultivate overseas markets. The Royal Navy linked colonies and strategic chokepoints together, policing international sea lanes and, in times of conflict, converging to seek out and destroy enemy forces.

Two clear shifts in the late 18th-century – the loss of Britain’s American colonies and the Revolution in France – forced British statesmen to adjust their strategy. They replaced the American colonial empire with the Indian imperial one, while refocusing on naval power. The United Kingdom relied upon natural balance of power dynamics, alongside its stranglehold on Europe’s littorals, to contain Napoleon’s expansion, and eventually suffocate the French Empire. Britain’s five-year campaign in Iberia, conducted alongside Portugal and its erstwhile Bourbon Spanish enemies, undermined Napoleon’s power. But, as the Oracle at Delphi told the Athenians more than two thousand years earlier, Britain’s floating walls of wood preserved its freedom. In the event, it took no more than every man doing his duty, alongside a one-armed one-eyed admiral’s tactical brilliance, resolve, and life, to win the day.

The United Kingdom’s victory over Napoleonic France inaugurated Britain’s second imperial period. Two important differences deserve note. First, Britain’s imperial focus shifted from the Americas to India, giving it a vested interest in global sea control, rather than Atlantic primacy. Second, Britain was forced to formalize the European diplomatic system. Having experienced the costs of intervening after a disruption in the balance of power, British statesmen, particularly Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh, created a system designed to release stresses in local conflicts, while making a general war contrary to the interests of all, and providing diplomatic outlets for major crises.30

The term “Splendid Isolation” characterizes British policy between Napoleon’s defeat in 1815 and the pre-Great War ententes in 1907. Britain remained aloof from European confrontations, only becoming involved in the Crimean War to check Russian designs against the Ottoman Empire. The Royal Navy was the world’s most powerful force. It guaranteed British control over international chokepoints, while ensuring that the UK could dominate Europe’s littorals, and deny any potential challenger access to overseas trade.

But “Splendid Isolation” was not Britain’s initial policy choice. Lord Castlereagh, alongside Austrian Foreign Minister and Chancellor Klemens von Metternich, designed a system that required Anglo-Austrian engagement to balance Prussian, French, and Russian interests.31 Britain could restrain Prussian ambition in central Europe, thereby allowing Austria to keep the region divided, and out of French hands. British maritime power, along with Austrian diplomatic pressure, would limit Russian designs against the decaying Ottoman Empire. France, while divested of revolutionary spirit, would have no need to fear a central European coalition, given Austria and Prussia’s arrangement. Indeed, the Holy Alliance between the stalwart conservatives Austria, Prussia, and Russia could only work with British involvement as an active balancer. With Britain de-escalating conflicts between the three members, each would receive a free hand to pacify internal unrest, most importantly Austria in Italy.

Lord Castlereagh, of course, succumbed to a madness of unspecified origin, robbing Britain of a personal link to the diplomatic system. And by the randomness of fate, rather than the logic of interest, Britain withdrew from Europe.

31 Ibid., 145-147.
The subsequent half-century is well chronicled in European history. The “Vienna System” that Castlereagh and Metternich had created became brittle. And Metternich was forced to rely upon the Holy Alliance’s ideological underpinnings, rather than working with Britain to maintain the European system’s balance.\(^{32}\) The first shock came in 1848. While the revolutions were not successful, they still undermined the conservative ideological links that bound together Central and Eastern Europe’s monarchs. While the liberal Grossdeutsche German intellectuals of 1848 established the framework for a united Germany, the Kaiserreich that emerged in 1870/1871 was one of blood, not of reason.

Britain remained aloof despite two great-power conflicts in under five years. Like all of Europe’s statesmen, Britain’s leaders assumed that Austria would handily defeat the upstart Prussian state. But after 1866, there is little strategic excuse for not recognizing the potential threat Germany posed to the European balance of power. Louis-Napoleon had isolated every potential ally by stoking nationalist movements and dragging Russia and Britain into an inconclusive Eastern war. But Marlborough’s political shrewdness was lacking. Britain permitted the consummation of the German Empire, at the expense of European stability. Austria became a German appendage. Central Europe, united under Germany, became the second-ranked European power.

Hence, Britain’s choice to remain aloof limited its options. Despite the challenges that change posed, the UK’s decision to eschew continental politics restricted its options and permitted the creation of a systemic-political monster. A united Germany, with its population and economic power, would always have the potential to upset the European balance of power and trigger a general war. Like any royal line, the House of Hohenzollern contained men of uneven quality. Friedrich III, Kaiser Wilhelm I’s immediate successor, was an accomplished military leader and outspoken liberal. He and his British-born wife, Victoria, hoped to rule as co-monarchs and reform the Kaiserreich, replacing Bismarck’s autocratic Prussian technocracy with a cabinet-style system. It is impossible to say if this could have restrained German ambition, as liberal internationalism tempered the fires of Weltpolitik. But Friedrich III ruled for only 99 days, dying of throat cancer on 15 June 1888. His temperamental, ambitious, conservative son succeeded as Kaiser Wilhelm II. Statesmanship, like virtue, is not hereditary. Absent Bismarck’s restraining hand, it was highly likely that Germany would drag the continent into a general war.

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\(^{32}\) Ibid., 312-313.
Structural changes began to accelerate in the 1880s. Within Europe, German coal and steel production began to outpace Britain’s, hollowing economic superiority. Outside of Europe, first the United States, and then Japan, emerged as independent economic powers. Britain could no longer rely upon economic coercion to preserve the political balance: in a future crisis, force would be necessary.

From these economic shifts arose a new political situation. Britain’s strategy from Castlereagh’s death to the 1880s relied upon two premises. First, undisputed British naval supremacy would allow it to balance any European coalition if needed, and ideally would preclude any challenge to the European order. Second, and more important, Britain’s control of the European littorals would functionally equate to global sea control.

Germany’s rise jeopardized the first of these premises. Structurally, the “German question” transformed into the “German problem.” The Kaiserreich’s economic power and population automatically jeopardized the European balance of power, regardless of Germany’s precise foreign policy orientation. Until 1890, however, British policymakers could ignore the structural threat Germany posed. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck understood the pervasive threat Germany would present to the other great powers, and therefore engaged in a delicate balancing act, restraining German ally Austria to cultivate good relations with Russia, and keep France isolated. Although the Triple Alliance of 1882 nominally created a central European coalition, Austro-Italian enmity cast doubt upon the arrangement’s viability, doubts that would be confirmed in 1915. Thus, Britain could deny that the fundamental structure of European politics had changed – that is, until Bismarck was forced from office in 1890.

Without the Iron Chancellor’s leadership, Balkan friction between Russia and Austria could not be diffused peacefully. Austria could not avoid Balkan brinksmanship. Doing so would have encouraged internal division within an already fragmented Empire. However, without countervailing diplomatic agreements like the Reinsurance treaty, which Bismarck’s successors immediately abandoned, there would be no means of restraining Russia during a Balkan dispute absent pure coercion.

Between 1890 and 1905, British statesmen began to recognize that two competing European alliance structures had formed – France and Russia on the one hand, Germany and Austria on the other. Britain’s naval power alone, however, did not deter Germany. Even after British victory in the Anglo-German naval arms race, and Britain’s loose affiliation with the Franco-Russian alliance, British naval power failed to restrain German planners. Britain was never willing to truly maintain absolute independent global naval supremacy. Even in a European context, this fleet would need
to exceed the combined fleets of Germany, Austria, France, and Italy – even if all four became German allies or proxies, this force could have confronted and contained a German-dominated Europe without any allied assistance. If one combines the forces operated and under construction in 1914, this would total 48 dreadnoughts.\(^{33}\) Of course, this force was financially impossible unless funds for social welfare programs were redirected to the Navy: in 1914, Britain would have needed to field at least fifty dreadnought battleships and battlecruisers.\(^{34}\) Independent British naval power was therefore never as potent as the UK’s political leaders assumed it would be.

Early 18\(^{th}\)-century Britain lacked European naval supremacy. However, it compensated for this by actively participating in the European balance of power and using moderate land force and money to gain political leverage amongst coalitions. By retreating from the continent in the 1820s, Britain allowed the political connections it had cultivated to disintegrate. Rather than serving as an active balancer that could dictate to other powers, it was viewed as a passive one that reacted to structural changes – thus, Britain’s still considerable naval power did not deter its adversaries.

But the second premise of British strategy, that control of the European littorals, alongside key international chokepoints, would ensure global sea control, is arguably more significant. If true, Britain may have been able to build a massive fleet and deter Germany through its overwhelming maritime superiority. However, by the 1890s, both Japan and the United States became strategically relevant naval powers.\(^{35}\) In 1906, a combined US-Japanese fleet included 26 battleships to Britain’s 61, while in 1914, the two powers fielded 12 dreadnoughts to Britain’s 22.\(^{36}\) To maintain absolute global sea control, the Royal Navy would therefore need to increase fleet size by approximately a third – a seventy-dreadnought fleet would have crippled the British economy absent restructuring.

While 15\(^{th}\)-century Venice miscalculated, its statesmen directly confronted the issues the city faced. The same cannot be said of Britain’s leaders. While some, Joseph Chamberlain foremost among them, proposed


\(^{34}\) Note: Dreadnoughts under construction are included in fleet totals, because if Britain were to rely exclusively on seapower, it would have needed to take into account all projected and actual European capabilities.


\(^{36}\) Ibid.
converting Britain’s empire into an Imperial Federation, within which each former dominion would share the costs of Imperial defense, British leaders were never able to confront the policy problems that faced them. Maintaining naval supremacy would have been financially ruinous, while actively engaging in the European alliance system would have required providing concessions to America, Japan, and various continental partners. But British statesmen believed that the UK still held global naval supremacy with all its logical advantages, while ignoring the changes in the international balance of power. Unlike Venice, Britain did not turn from the sea. It instead was blind to the realities it faced.

Politics has a metaphysical, cyclical quality. At some point, the bill must come due. Unwilling to pay in coin, Britain was forced to settle its debts in blood – the Empire lost over one million soldiers, of whom nearly four in five were British.

**Conclusion – American Power**

Venice and Britain are similar cases insofar as both abandoned sea control. However, each case provides distinct lessons for the United States of America today.

The Venetian experience demonstrates the eternal relevance of the regime. It may be true that, over time, the logic of the international system “socializes” every regime, forcing it to abide by certain political standards, if only rooted in the balance of power. But this socialization process takes longer for some regimes than for others. Regimes confident in their own identity and driven by stern ambition are unlikely to submit to systemic pressures and abide by global norms. This is as true for the Ottomans in the 15th-century as it is for China in the 20th and 21st. Like the Ottoman sultanate, Chinese power has only grown over the past three or more decades of “socialization” attempts. Indeed, a regime as rooted in historical experience, and as confident in its own nature and mission as China’s is, may never divest itself of expansionist, transformational impulses. Resistance, and a tense peace, may be the only option for free polities.

Venetian statesmen can be accused of miscalculation, both in their perception of the Ottoman regime and their understanding of the European balance of power. But they cannot be accused of ignorance. Venice’s leaders examined and confronted the issues they faced, and made decisions that, while wrong, were reasonable given the circumstances.

One cannot absolve Britain’s leaders so easily. The political threat Germany posed was visible for at least 25 years before the Great War. Even
when Britain’s statesmen recognized the threat, they were unable to look past their historical experience, falsely assuming their once-matchless naval power had not been eroded. Once circumstances and money moved the confrontation to land, the strategy bankrupted the country.

States that depend on the seas for their trade and security require not only undiminished attention to maritime strategy, but the good judgment needed to unify politics with strategy. Absent them both, the consequence is bloodily losing primacy. Whether near-future US policy makes the maritime choice remains to be seen.

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The United States Navy is facing numerous challenges today, but the basic test of its continued relevance as a military organization can be summed up in a short statement: To provide, project and sustain superior seapower in an era of renewed and, most likely, prolonged great power rivalry. The service has faced comparable tests in the past, most recently during the Cold War – from which this chapter will attempt to distill some valuable lessons for naval analysis – and the period between the world wars. For the present generation of naval leaders and thinkers, however, a renewed focus on competing successfully against a highly capable opponent marks a significant departure. Certainly, maintaining a steady-state forward naval presence on a global scale, making meaningful contributions to the nation’s wars of choice, training for a broad range of missions often bearing little resemblance to naval warfare, and safeguarding the “organizational essence”\(^1\) of the service in times of strategic confusion all present significant challenges. Over the past 30 years, the U.S. Navy has become proficient at managing the uneasy balance between these conflicting goals. But it has also unlearned other, less “fungible”\(^2\) skills in the process – primarily those relating to serious militarized competition at sea. For all the hard work that is required to run the world’s leading navy during a strategic “interregnum,”\(^3\) primacy comes relatively easily when no one is making a serious attempt to challenge it.

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The environment in which the U.S. Navy finds itself today no longer conforms to this now-familiar paradigm. Unhelpfully, the challenge of reconciling numerous diverging priorities has not gone away. The level of external competitive pressures, however, is now on a different level than at any time since the mid-1980s. The Chief of Naval Operations’ updated Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority is plain-spoken in this regard:

China and Russia are deploying all elements of their national power to achieve their global ambitions. [...] In many cases, they are gaining a competitive advantage and exploiting our vulnerabilities. Their activity suggests that Eurasia could once again be dominated by rivals of the United States, our allies, and partners. China and Russia seek to accumulate power at America’s expense and may imperil the diplomatic, economic, and military bonds that link the United States to its allies and partners. While rarely rising to the level of conflict, Chinese and Russian actions are frequently confrontational. And these actions are not only directed at the United States: China and Russia seek to redefine the norms of the entire international system on terms more favorable to themselves.

While high-level strategy documents coming out of the administration of Donald Trump have made this case with characteristic outspokenness, these are no longer very controversial points. For much of the last decade, both China and Russia have been engaging in what Jakub Grygiel and Wess Mitchell describe as “probing behavior” to test American resolve. At the same time, they have been acquiring military capabilities to offset and erode the United States’ military advantage – not least of all, its ability to project power at and from the sea.

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lenges. The first step in any such effort to maintain maritime superiority, however, should be to *properly understand* them.

It is this crucial first step which the present chapter will seek to address, primarily by leveraging historical insight. It will first try to pin down the task the U.S. Navy currently faces and link it to our desideratum: to *get the opponent right*, from the outset if possible. In the second step, it will outline a narrative, centered roughly on the first decade and a half of the Cold War at sea (1946-1960). In the third and final step, we will attempt to distill from this first phase of the Cold War at sea a number of anchor points for future analysis. As such, this chapter can perhaps be read as a modest supplement to Peter Swartz’s well-received 2013 CNA report on *Understanding an Adversary’s Strategic and Operational Calculus*, a treasure trove of valuable lessons from the latter part of the Cold War story. The basic premise of that report was that we can “gain insights that will help us understand [the strategic and operational calculus of 21st century adversaries] by examining similar cases from the past.” The premise of the present chapter, which I believe the author of the original report would share, is that by examining the past, we can also become better analysts.

Finally, the chapter may perhaps also serve as a reminder of how, even three decades after the passing of the Soviet naval challenge, a surprising amount of work remains to be done to fully understand this past challenge. As one generation of analysts lays down the mantle, as far as the trappings of official status are concerned, this chapter is also meant to provide some small assurance of others’ intention to carry on where they left off.

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9 Ibid., 1.
In October 1992, the U.S. Navy gave itself a capstone document for the post-Cold War era, written to “achieve a new consensus” on what the service’s purpose should be, now that the Soviet Union was gone. If ‘...From the Sea’ did not, in a formal sense, survive for very long among the flurry of service- and national-level defense reviews of the 1990s, its main ideas – the laser focus on the littoral, the elevation of strike warfare and expeditionary operations, and the reduction of sea control to a third-rate concern – became well entrenched over the following two decades. Over time, the Navy continued to deemphasize its more ‘traditional’ missions to the point some had largely turned into folklore. This tendency arguably found its culmination in the ‘postmodern’ grand design of the 2007 Cooperative Strategy for the 21st Century – an intellectually brilliant take on a global maritime system which might have been, had great power relations not taken a definite turn for the worse.

Conversely, James Holmes has described the updated version of A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority as a “bureaucratic sledgehammer” wielded by the then-CNO, Adm. John Richardson, in a determined “effort to repeal ‘... From the Sea’” and, presumably, most of what followed. With potential challengers – one of them clearly a rising power, the other in decline but consistently punching above its weight in recent years – jousting for position, the Navy has turned its back on the debates of the last several decades and reembraced a set of priorities that have a deeply unfamiliar ring to them. As they showed their true colors, the revisionist powers have effectively reminded Western naval thinkers of a truth so basic that the need to restate it at all tells a story in its own right. The most natural task of a navy, according to this recent rediscovery, is not to conduct finely tuned public diplomacy, engage in disaster relief, bomb insurgents in Toyota Hilux trucks, or even to steady the nerves of twitchy allies,

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11 Ibid., 31.
14 Holmes (2018).
but to prepare to wage war at sea. A navy’s value as a political instrument that deters, reassures, and supports others is not an intrinsic property of its being, we learn, nor bestowed upon it by some indiscernible higher power – rather, it hinges on the organization’s credibility as a maritime fighting force. It is ironic that Edward Luttwak should have made the same point in his classic 1974 treatise *The Political Uses of Sea Power*, which has often been cited in support of a self-serving mythology of seapower as an inherently more ‘political’ form of military power:

[T]he *perceived* balance of forces that determines the outcome of “peacetime” confrontations can only be construed [...] in terms of the predicted outcomes of putative battles, and it is such predictions that determine political attitudes and, therefore, decisions. [...] Unless actual fighting erupts, the interplay of potential military power in the conduct of relations between states is resolved only by the interaction of such predictions.15

To take this thought to its logical conclusion, a navy that excels at secondary tasks, but not *visibly* and *credibly* poised to fulfil its original responsibility to the nation, lives in fear of being exposed for what it is: one very expensive paper tiger.

As is evident from *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority* and other recent public pronouncements, the U.S. Navy is now fully aware that it must regain its capacity to “control the high end of maritime conflict.”16 It may not be enough, however, to approach a long-term strategic rivalry – which, by definition, involves an identified ‘other’ – by focusing on generic warfighting capability. Drawn deeper into such a rivalry, the antagonists will find themselves under increasing pressure to adapt their force postures to the specific threats they each face and match their strengths to an opponent’s weaknesses. The U.S. Navy’s observable tendency over the last seventy years or so has been to react to these pressures with the utmost pragmatism, steering well clear of accidentally and unpalatably reinventing itself. As Carl Builder remarks in his merciless study of *The Masks of War*, “[the] Navy does not need analysis to define its requirements; it has always

known what its requirements were.” 17 In turn, this has led the service to focus on solving successive narrow problem sets best described as “technological-tactical”18 in nature. With the big picture largely resolved by sincerely held convictions of what a ‘proper navy’ should look like, the service’s efforts to read its potential adversaries and arrive at an accurate understanding of their capabilities and intentions have frequently taken a back seat. As a result, the Navy has all too often allowed itself to prepare for war against a convenient caricature of its opponent.

This danger exists today, much as in the past. John Hattendorf has written that “[i]n contrast to officers in other branches of service, naval officers, by and large, have tended to ignore the value of and advantages to be found in historical insight.”19 As today’s generation of naval leaders opens a new chapter in developing their organization, they should not hesitate to fully embrace the margin of flexibility that is implied in his formulation. If the service is to steer clear of well-charted but perhaps forgotten shoals at the dawn of this new era of great power rivalry, a look at the map might be the best starting point. The trajectory of the U.S. Navy’s analytical effort during the Cold War era is particularly instructive in this regard.

What ‘Third Battle’? How the Navy got it wrong in 1946-1960

The main premise of this chapter is simple: looking at some of the vexing difficulties of interpretation that analysts faced during a previous period, which also featured rapid technological change and intensifying competitive pressure, can – and should – serve to stimulate debate in our time. Regrettably, however, many of the best treatments of the Cold War at sea have focused on the latter part of the confrontation, when official assessments of the Soviet Navy’s capabilities and intentions improved very considerably.20 Much less attention has been devoted to a more pertinent question: how the U.S. Navy got its opponent wrong in the first place. The re-

18 Haynes (2015), 81.
remainder of the chapter will attempt to partially explain this deficit by ex-
amining why the U.S. Navy’s effort did not accurately understand the Sovi-
et Navy during the first phase of the competition, from 1946-1960, and
how such an outcome might be avoided in the strategic rivalries that are
likely to shape great power relations the coming decades.

The U.S. Navy entered the Cold War very much in a state of transition.
In August 1945, it had stood victorious, at the height of its power. Within
less than a year, the wartime force had been largely dismembered in one of
the most radical demobilizations ever undertaken. Of 6768 ships in the ac-
tive force on V-J-day, roughly 18 per cent remained in the inventory by
mid-1946. By mid-1948, the number of major combatants had fallen to
291 ships, the number of aircraft dropped 76 per cent from the wartime
maximum, and serving naval personnel had been cut by 87 per cent to
475,000. At the same time, the United States’ naval mastery was now
completely uncontested, with no rivals in sight as far as the eye could see.
In turning the tide in the Atlantic and convincingly defeating Imperial
Japan in the Pacific, the Navy had eliminated its own intellectual reason
for being – or so it seemed at that moment. George Baer aptly summarizes
the train of thought that must have featured prominently in naval officers’
anxious dreams during these early Cold War days:

Absent a maritime enemy, and with air-atomic warfare the apparent
mode of the future, the Navy did not have a mission. The Navy’s offen-
sive sea-control doctrine had become irrelevant. The force supporting
the doctrine could be demobilized or transferred. History had passed
the offensive Navy by. The service should return to its pre-Mahanian
task of patrol. […] The [Army Air Forces] should take over carrier air

pers 19 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004), 23-36; Jan S. Breemer, “Es-
timating the Soviet Strategic Submarine Missile Threat: A Critical Examination of
the Soviet Navy’s SSBN Bastion Strategy,” doctoral dissertation (Los Angeles, CA:
University of Southern California, 1987), 163-262.
21 Naval History and Heritage Command, “U.S. Navy Active Ship Force Levels,
force-levels.html#1945.
22 See Jeffrey G. Barlow, Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation,
of carrier aircraft kept declining, eventually to a planned inventory of 1,035 for
1951. See ibid., 224.
and the Army should take over the Marine Corps. [...] In a war of the future the Navy would be a support service.\(^\text{23}\)

In the unhelpful context of the post-war debate about defense unification, wherein the Navy could be reduced to providing sealift and, perhaps, a perfunctory presence on the high seas, this was an existential threat to its organizational essence, at the heart of which stood carrier air power. Against the backdrop of this potentially dire situation, the Navy began to refocus its operational planning for a possible confrontation with the Soviet Union.

By early 1946, the Cold War confrontation was getting into gear, although considerable uncertainties remained at the time as to how the U.S. would approach its fledgling rivalry with the newly instated Communist bloc. There was little doubt, however, that the Soviet Union would be the center of gravity of American national military strategy. On the Eurasian landmass, the implications of the Soviet Union’s post-war activities were unmistakable: While any territorial buffer in Eastern Europe would result in a significant improvement of his strategic situation, Stalin would happily gobble up whatever the Western powers were not prepared to defend. He would do this not because he was seeking world domination at any cost, but because he was “[r]uthless and opportunistic”\(^\text{24}\) in his pursuit of the Soviet Union’s perceived core interests. To ensure the long-term survival of the Soviet experiment, he intended to build a “fortress”\(^\text{25}\) and any addition to the “wide buffer zone of pro-Soviet states”\(^\text{26}\) was welcome. Haunted by what Vladimir Pechatnov calls the “Barbarossa syndrome”\(^\text{27}\) and fully aware of the terrible price their country had paid for letting down its guard, Stalin and his coterie reverted to a defense strategy reminiscent of Imperial Russia and other past continental empires.\(^\text{28}\) For them,


\(^{28}\) Ibid., 92.
no defense could ever be deep enough but, at the same time, no amount of additional depth was worth initiating another great power war. In its pursuit of continental security, the post-war Soviet Union was brutally expansionist and defensive, brazen and prudently self-restrained – all at the same time and without any great dissemblance. Without the insurmountable ideological chasm and the difficulty of stepping outside their incongruous oceanic mindset, U.S. defense planners might have paused their pursuit of a vast military infrastructure for forward defense on a global scale and seen in their opponents’ preoccupations a glimpse of their own “Pearl Harbor syndrome” sensibilities.

While the Soviet approach for territorial security could be readily observed, its implications at sea were inevitably more ambiguous. What role would the Soviet Navy play? Would it be “little more than a faithful handmaiden to the army”\(^\text{29}\), as during the Great Patriotic War? Or would it follow in the wreckage-strewn wake of the German *Kriegsmarine* and challenge the Western maritime powers’ undisputed command of the sea? For the U.S. Navy of the early Cold War, finding the ‘right’ answer to these questions was not primarily a matter of sifting through limited evidence, but about finding a role that would allow it to repossess the sunlit uplands of organizational relevance. Because any attempt to usurp the Air Force’s atomic mission of hitting Soviet ‘strategic’ targets would draw its unqualified wrath, the Navy’s only real chance of crowbarring into the all-important nuclear enterprise was by focusing on naval targets.\(^\text{31}\) Therefore, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that it *had* to be the Soviet Navy and, seeing as its surface force and naval aviation could barely qualify as a speedbump even vis-à-vis the much-diminished U.S. Navy of the late 1940s, it *had* to be the submarine threat that it could potentially pose.\(^\text{32}\)

The man to create an operational concept along those lines was, of course, Chester Nimitz’s brilliant wartime Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, VADM Forrest Sherman. As Deputy CNO for Operations in 1946-47, he

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\(^{31}\) Barlow (1994), 115-117.

held the Navy to the tradition of forward deployment and offensive operations. He preserved the Navy’s diversity of functions and forces. He kept carriers at the core of his planning and proposed that they be given the option of delivering conventional or atomic weapons. All this he presented in the name of sea control and as an alternative to the big-bang plan of air enthusiasts. Deep air strikes, with or without atomic capability, thus became part of a sea-control strategy for a forward deployed, offensive, fleet Navy, a strategy that preserve the centrality of the aircraft carrier.\footnote{Baer (1998), 289.}

The threat to sea control to justify this was the Soviet long-range, high-speed diesel submarine and its infrastructure. The solution, Sherman famously declared, “is high emphasis on attack at the sources of the trouble.”\footnote{Palmer (1990), 33.} By turning submarines primarily into a land-based target set, and strike warfare a means into offensive sea control, the Navy preserved its organizational essence and found itself a nuclear role. There is more than just one bureaucratic lesson from this ‘reframing’ masterclass. The one desirable outcome it did not result in was good analysis of the Soviet submarine problem.

The reasoning behind U.S. estimates

During the late 1940s, the Navy worked itself into a threat inflation frenzy, with analysts outdoing one another in how fast they expected the new long-range diesels to come of the production line. In 1946, Nimitz expected a fleet size of “several hundred”\footnote{Quoted in: Jeffrey G Barlow, \textit{From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945–1955} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 164.} by the early 1950s. The Office of Naval Intelligence expected that the Soviets could build 300 by 1950 – a “conservative estimate”\footnote{CAPT George R. Phelan, quoted in ibid., 165.}. This was again increased to 1,000 boats inside a three-year period, which translates into a monthly build rate that would have left the \textit{Kriegsmarine} green with envy during most of World War II.\footnote{Norman Friedman, \textit{Submarine Design and Development} (Annapolis, MD: The Naval Institute Press, 1984), 101.} When none of this materialized by 1950, the expectation was corrected downward to 200 boats a year, which at this stage could almost pass for...
modesty. We now know that the Soviet Navy did not receive even a single modern, long-range diesel submarine during 1946-1952.

Based on the evidence that has come to light since, the actual build rates of Soviet diesel-electrics with the range to operate against transatlantic convoys west of the GIUK gap were probably as follows: in all of 1953, one, in 1954, four, in 1955, two, in 1956, eight, in 1957, ten, in 1958, three, in 1959, five, in 1960, six. Of those units, five were converted into primitive ballistic missile submarines. The Soviets did build a very large class of medium-range submarines – the Project 613 or Whiskey-class – that CIA analysts, who were less specialized but also more open-minded about the matter, later found “could not be effective against US sea lines of communication to Europe.” The ratio of medium-to long-range types was roughly 10:1.

This is not what a recipe for a Third Battle of the Atlantic should have looked like. But the reasoning that many early analyses of the Soviet submarine problem appear to have used was persuasive enough to allow even a good analyst to fall for it, in the absence of countervailing evidence:

- The Soviet Union’ actions so far had been expansionist, in line with its universalist ideology.
- If the observable behavior had been consistently offensive, probably the motivations behind it were offensive too.
- A nation with an offensive grand strategy would want the instruments for offensive action – including an offensively oriented navy.
- As a power with predominantly continental interests, limited recent naval experience, a backward surface force and facing a far more capable coalition of seapowers, the logical instrument for offensive naval action was the submarine.

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38 Ibid. Breemer, for one, believes that the Soviet shipyards were quite incapable of putting out such numbers. See Jan S. Breemer, *Soviet Submarines: Design, Development and Tactics* (Surrey: Jane’s Information Group, 1989), 80.
Given its offensive strategy and availability of an advanced design (the captured German Type XXI), the main limitation for Soviet submarine construction would be industrial capacity, which could be roughly estimated.

Expected construction equals maximum industrial output.

How the Soviet Union would employ its submarine fleet was not known, but to U.S. planners was self-evident: “We would go for the sea lanes, and going for the sea lanes is what would hurt us most, so they will go for the sea lanes.”\(^\text{41}\)

The result, of course, would be that most frightening scenario: a Third Battle of the Atlantic, much like the one the U.S. Navy had recently fought alongside its Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy allies. A Soviet submarine campaign was the U.S. Navy’s original Cold War fear, later complemented by other, even more awe-inspiring scenarios, but never really resolved until the waning days of the confrontation.\(^\text{42}\) Had such a ‘Third Battle’ along the SLOCs fully materialized, NATO forces along the Central Front might have been starved of equipment, fuel, and personnel and thrown back into the sea. The theory, history and geopolitics of Western seapower all required that the Navy take such an eventuality seriously. In reality, this was a battle only one side was preparing for.

**An alternative analysis**

How do we know that this was the case? Given that submarine operations were then even more difficult to observe than they are today, and access to pertinent archival materials from the former Soviet Union remains difficult, there are two main approaches a naval analyst can rely on to test a superficially plausible argument creating a bad analytical outcome. The first is hardware analysis. In some form or other this is inescapable if we are to correlate theory – ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’ – with capability. The second is “liter-

\(^{41}\) This mirror-imaging logic is often implicit rather than explicit. One can, however, find statements to that effect. See, e.g. Joint Chiefs of Staff, “JSPG 496/10 – 11 May 1948 – Crankshaft,” *From Crankshaft to Halfmoon* vol. 7, ed. by Steven T. Ross and David Alan Rosenberg (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1989), 49. On mirror imaging, see also: Robert B. Bathurst, *Intelligence and the Mirror: On Creating an Enemy* (Oslo, London: Sage/PRIO, 1993).

ary intelligence”\textsuperscript{43}, which reached its apex in the hallowed halls of CNA during the 1970s. Both methods were available to early Cold War analysts, as was much (but not all) of the evidence we have today available to us. The aim here is not to rate the performance of a past generation of analysts, however, but to find out which questions we need to ask to prevent similar outcomes in the future.

Pairing Michael MccGwire’s excellent systematic for making sense of Soviet naval building programs with some other relevant data points, this is what a highly compressed version of an after-the-fact hardware analysis can tell us about Soviet submarine construction during 1946-1960:\textsuperscript{44}

- Assuming a lower-than-average “lead time”\textsuperscript{45} of eight years for diesel submarines, the decisions to build the Zulu-class long-range submarine and the Whiskey-class medium-range submarine would have reflected requirements formulated during the Great Patriotic War.
- From the timeline and their main design features, we can conclude that both submarines reflected conservative Soviet design practices. Neither type was designed as ‘convoy killer’ along the lines of the German Type XXI. The Whiskey-class, in particular, was not designed for oceanic operations far out into the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{46} The Soviet Navy was modernizing, but it certainly was not reinventing itself.
- The Stalin era modernization plan originally called, among other things, for a very large number of submarines.\textsuperscript{47} The planned ratio between medium- and long-range units was 5:1, the observed ratio was 11:1. If the Soviet Navy was to operate against NATO’s lines of communication across the Atlantic, this was a criminally inefficient distribution of resources, even by Soviet standards.
- With only twenty-six units, of which five were converted, the Zulu-class production run was also much smaller than the average Soviet production batch for diesel submarines, which according to MccGwire’s analysis was “unlikely to be much less than 40 to 50.”\textsuperscript{48}
- The Soviet Navy’s ability to operate against the main SLOCs could have improved significantly with the mass production of an improved medi-

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Swartz} Swartz (2013), 37-42.
\bibitem{MccGwire2} Ibid., 180.
\bibitem{CIA} Central Intelligence Agency (2017), 8.
\bibitem{Polmar} Polmar and Noot (1991), 140.
\bibitem{MccGwire3} MccGwire (1973), 182.
\end{thebibliography}
um-range type, the Project 633/Romeo. This program was cancelled in favor of nuclear construction, with only twenty units constructed for the Soviet Navy, many of which we can chalk up to what McCGwire calls “pipeline inertia”\textsuperscript{49}.

- The improved long-range type – Project 641 or Foxtrot-class – was a direct replacement for the Zulu, which was obsolescent even at the time of its introduction. Fifty-eight were built in an extended, fourteen-year production run. Only fourteen of those had been delivered by 1960, by which time construction had shifted to nuclear types that were turned out at a slower rate and in even lower numbers.

- It will be remembered that the Kriegsmarine’s stated requirement for a successful operation against the SLOCs was 300 boats, almost all of which would have been based on the Bay of Biscay with direct access to the operational area.\textsuperscript{50} Based on this more favorable geostrategic situation, the ratio between German medium-range (Type VII) and long-range (Type IX) production runs was roughly 4:1.

In other words, with a long-range SLOC interdiction campaign in mind, the numbers do not add up and neither does the logic. It is easy to see why this was the case, once we accept that Soviet submarine construction during 1946-1960 was geared towards a different end entirely: extended territorial defense at sea. This system of concentric defensive circles, which would eventually extended up to 1,000 nautical miles from the Soviet coast, is actually well documented in the open-source literature.\textsuperscript{51} The CIA’s analysts – decried as blissfully ignorant amateurs by naval intelligence, but relatively free from parochial service-level interests – ultimately arrived at the same conclusion.\textsuperscript{52} While Colonel Penkovsky’s indiscretions helped shape the early debate within the CIA in favor of a defensive interpretation of Soviet naval strategy,\textsuperscript{53} the feared counter-SLOC scenario of 1946-1960 could actually be taken apart simply by looking at numbers, distances, estimated ranges and endurance. ONI disagreed – on what exact basis, we still do not know. But, as of this writing, our conclusion on techni-

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 181.
\textsuperscript{52} Hattendorf (2004), 121-29.
cal and operational grounds should be that the U.S. Navy – and its allies – got it wrong. The fact that the overall narrative of the ‘Third Battle’ has not crumbled completely over the decades has something to tell us about the questions that should have been asked but were not.

Turning briefly to the limitations of ‘literary intelligence’, Soviet writings – which are often far from approachable – are predictably more ambiguous and more easily reinterpreted than hard empirical evidence. Soviet naval officers did at times mention long-range interdiction as a third or fourth priority, once the main missions had been accomplished. Others saw it as an alternative that should be pursued or as a desideratum for the future.54 Once we correlate these statements with other evidence, however, they barely make a difference: Even if orders of priority are reversed, oblique references collected and construed to form a superficially coherent picture, and the intentions of some restated as an organizational grand design, the case for long-range interdiction does not hold water. If the interest of the Soviet leadership had been in cutting the main SLOCs across the Atlantic, it would ultimately both have said so and enshrined this priority in a specialized building program. This is what would later happen with regard to the anti-carrier program and the SSBN “matching force,”55 which can both be traced with some confidence to political decisions reached in the late 1950s.56

To properly throw down the gauntlet, one can even expand this case against the ‘Third Battle’ analogy to encompass subsequent decades as well: There was never a phase of the Cold War at sea during which the Soviet Navy had a primary interest in interdicting NATO’s sea lines of communication west of the GIUK gap. To the extent that interdiction did come into play, it appears that the Soviet Navy fleetingly examined a possible focus on anti-SLOC capabilities in the mid-1970s.57 By that time, however, James McConnell, Bradford Dismukes and others were already tracing the more significant shift towards bastion defense – the same shift that ONI eventually embraced and that figures so prominently in the history of the Maritime Strategy.

54 Herrick, Soviet Naval Doctrine and Policy, vol. 1, 143-146.
The fear that the Soviet Navy might throw its best general-purpose submarines against the sea lanes if it was not given a good reason to keep them close at hand was, of course, plausible enough. In that sense, building submarines for bastion defense also added to the Soviet counter-SLOC potential. But it was never what those Shchukas, Liras and Shchuka-Bs were meant to do. Before a shift to a counter-SLOC concept could take hold, the U.S. Navy had already preempted it by way of the Maritime Strategy. The Soviet submarine force’s single-minded focus on SLOC interdiction had been born not in Moscow, Severomorsk or Vladivostok but in the minds of Western analysts who prudently worst-cased the threat using incomplete information – or who elected not to stir up any cognitive dissonance concerning such a basic matter, lest they leave their superiors in a state of profound irritation. Thus, the early assumption that the Soviet Navy was preparing for an all-out offensive against the SLOCs became “an article of faith”\(^\text{58}\) not just in ONI’s reporting, but also in Western naval thinking more broadly. Over time, it created analytical path dependencies that put mainstream treatments of the Soviet naval challenge off the scent for the best part of three decades.

The full account of the Soviet Navy’s strategic role and operational preferences is still waiting to be unearthed in Russian archives – quite possibly by historians who have not yet been born, given the political direction the country has taken. Ultimately, the innermost logic of this seemingly hermetic organization is perhaps best unlocked not by studying its pronouncements or its artifacts, but the temperament of its commanders. Sergey Georgyevich Gorshkov, despite his ideological orthodoxy and bureaucratic ambition, was not a fanciful man.\(^\text{59}\) Throughout the decades of his tenure, the limiting factors remained the same – distances, numbers, shortcomings of materiel and personnel. As seen from Moscow or the Kola, the central Atlantic is a hostile place and far away. But Gorshkov’s Navy had come to know its customers well and its basic assumptions about the main adversary had been sound all along. If war came and the politicians let it, the U.S. Navy they thought they knew was always going to come for them. And there, under a dreary northern sky, the sharks would be wait-

\(^{58}\) Swartz (2013), 3.
ing– not to win a battle, but to do their worst and take many young Americans to the bottom with them. That day never came, but to many close students of the Soviet Navy, the conjecture will ring true nonetheless.

Understanding the enemy’s calculus: some additional inferences

As things went, the U.S. Navy’s efforts to understand its likely Cold War opponent failed gracefully. Their deficiencies did not explode into the open in the form of an intelligence failure with real operational consequences, and the grim resonance of the term ‘Battle of the Atlantic’ infused the Navy’s ASW undertaking with a degree of urgency it might otherwise have lacked. The Soviets were, after all, building submarines and the creation of an extensive technical infrastructure for ASW and investment in a ‘high-end only’ submarine service were appropriate counters to that. Fortunately for the Navy and NATO, the Soviet approach did not have the makings of a “competitive strategy”\(^60\). Most Western investments in sea control along the Atlantic “lifeline”\(^61\) were fungible enough for use against a Soviet Navy that would patiently lie in wait for a great bloodletting of allied projection forces on their way to assail the \textit{rodina}. Any shortcomings in the U.S. Navy’s adaptation to the challenge were unlikely to be fatal, then. This has served to permanently mask the serious deficiencies which afflicted Western analyses of the Soviet naval threat during much of the Cold War era. However, since we cannot assume graceful failure to be the norm, these intellectual skeletons should nonetheless be dragged from

\(^60\) For Mahnken, the concept of competitive strategies “focuses on the peacetime use of latent military power – that is, the development, acquisition, deployment, and exercising of forces – to shape a competitor’s choices in ways that favor our objectives.” Thomas G. Mahnken (ed.), \textit{Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century: Theory, History, and Practice} (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 7. Rosen explains the logic of competitive strategies as “[getting] competitors to play our game, a game that we are likely to win. This is done by getting them to make the kind of mistakes that they are inclined to make, by getting them to do that which is in their nature, despite the fact that they should not do so, given their resources.” See Stephen P. Rosen, “Competitive Strategies: Theoretical Foundations, Limits, and Extensions,” in \textit{Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century: Theory, History, and Practice}, ed. by Thomas G. Mahnken (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 12.

the closet, so that they may yet serve a useful purpose in the education of a new generation of analysts.

With that goal in mind, we can reaffirm that in terms of analysis the U.S. Navy’s approach to competing with the Soviet Navy left much to be desired. It took the rarest of events – the coincidence of a major windfall of timely, high-fidelity technical and human intelligence with at least a decade of painstaking groundwork by trustworthy outsiders – for the Cold War Navy to eventually start getting inside its opponent’s strategic and operational calculus.

The intelligence breakthrough that made the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s possible can perhaps be thought of as a “grey swan”62 – a highly significant development that we know is possible, but that is in fact likely not to happen (again) and, in any case, is largely beyond our control. In the roughly thirty-five years before that improbable coincidence began to bear fruit, the only group of people to come close to actually understanding the Soviet Navy was a tiny band of analysts, who kept poking the hornet’s nest until something actually happened. They were a crew of proudly nitpicking obsessives, whose inclination was to look very closely at the evidence, repeatedly revise their own judgements, and then look again even more closely. The impression their exchanges leave behind is they mostly wrote for, and talked to, each other. The narratives that underpinned Peter Swartz’s Understanding an Adversary’s Strategic Calculus tell their story well.63 Outside this small circle, however, tired clichés suffused with navalist ideology far too often passed for satisfactory analysis.

Without going so far as to draw any hard and fast ‘lessons’ from what is a very condensed narrative indeed, the following questions can be proposed as intellectual anchor points for analysts who would prefer to make their own mistakes, rather than repeating those of a past generation:

• How much time and effort has gone into understanding the adversary, not in the terms of ‘blue’ theories of naval warfare, but on his own terms? Mirror imaging, whether it is half-conscious or unconscious, is always bad analysis – even when it works. But the problem does not stop there: Even when mirror imaging is avoided, the adversary’s logic is all too often reduced to a convenient caricature or an easily remembered catchphrase. While this is difficult to avoid, the analyst should

62 For lack of an authoritative source on this fairly new concept, see Investopedia, “Grey Swan,” https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/grey-swan.asp.
63 Swartz (2013), 7-36.
not be the one doing the caricaturing, even when pressured to get to the punchline.

- Are the assumptions the analyst has made about the political and strategic level of the competition skewing her assessment of the opponent’s operational calculus, or vice versa? An assessment of operational preferences should be derived from empirical evidence. If insufficient evidence is available, or the evidence gives rise to irresolvable contradictions, judgment should be withheld. The possibility that assessment of the operational calculus cannot be extrapolated to the strategic and political levels should be guarded against equally carefully.

- Once an initial judgement has been made, how well does it hold up as new evidence becomes available? Are there any cracks appearing in the analytical edifice? It is the analyst’s responsibility not to paper over such cracks, but to experimentally revise the initial judgement as soon as contrary or significantly modified patterns begin to emerge. A failure to regularly reflect on what has been learned since the initial assessment constitutes a serious lapse of tradecraft and professional ethics.

- Does the analyst really understand how supporting assessments provided by others have come together? If the process by which a judgement has been arrived at has not been made visible, the inclination should always be to ask probing questions in a friendly but determined fashion.

- Does a change in the evidentiary basis of one judgement affect other judgements that are tied together in a presumed causal chain? If one element in the ‘main line’ of the chain fails, that causal chain has been falsified and is in need of revision.

- Once some of its supporting judgements have been revised, as they eventually will be, does the overall narrative concerning the opponent’s strategic and operational calculus still hold up? The narrative falls with the integrity of the supporting line of argument, no matter how deeply entrenched it has become. If an assumption or supporting assessment is beginning to falter, the analyst’s inclination should not be to sustain it against the odds, but to kick it hard and see what happens.

The main conclusion to be drawn from this chapter, however, is this: once they take hold, the path dependencies resulting from defective analyses can become inordinately difficult to unravel – in fact, some never are. Only historical insight, sound methodology, good training, an ingrained habit of active self-reflection, and the healthy skepticism of likeminded peers can prevent such outcomes from recurring in the future or, at any rate, mitigate their impact. The likelihood of getting it wrong initially will always
remain high. But in this new era of geostrategic competition, as in the one that came before, the cardinal task and systemic responsibility of the naval analyst – civilian or military, inside or outside the rarefied world of secret intelligence – is to chase her every nagging doubt, down the rabbit hole, deeper and then deeper yet, until she gets it right eventually.

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Michael Carl Haas


The U.S. Maritime Strategy in the Pacific during the Cold War

Narushige Michishita

In the renewed Cold War confrontation in the 1980s, the United States adopted an offensive Maritime Strategy in the Pacific, pressured the Soviet Union through active peacetime operations, and courted Japan to play a critical role in the execution of the strategy. The proactive US Maritime Strategy in the Pacific, combined with the Japanese contribution, enhanced deterrence and served Western interests in the Cold War military confrontation. This article identifies rationales for and major components of the Maritime Strategy in the Pacific, and discusses potential wartime outcomes of the strategy by examining the results of some important war games played by the US government during the Cold War.

The Maritime Strategy’s Rationale and Major Operational Components

The US Maritime Strategy had one overarching strategic rationale with three major operational components in the Pacific. Strategically, the United States attempted to develop the capability to open a second front in the Pacific theater, in what was referred to as “horizontal escalation,” readiness to fight effectively there in the event of global war with the Soviet Union. Broader capability beyond Europe and Southwest Asia was expected to strengthen deterrence against the Soviet Union, and if deterrence failed, to pin down and attrite Soviet forces in the Far East.¹

In order to make that strategy credible, the United States developed the operational capability to (a) strike important targets in the Soviet Far East, including destroying the Soviet Pacific Fleet; (b) undertake amphibious landing operations in the Kuril Islands, Sakhalin and, possibly, the Kamchatka Peninsula; and (c) threaten and destroy Soviet nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs).

Another important ingredient of the Maritime Strategy was better utilization of US allies and friends. In the Pacific, Japan played a significant role since its geostrategic position enabled it to control chokepoint straits and its military was capable of meaningful contributions to the execution of US Maritime Strategy.

**Forward Defense and “Horizontal Escalation”**

By 1983, a US strategic option of threatening the Soviet Far East with war had been formalized. National Security Decision Directive No. 75, issued that year, stated, “In the Far East we [the United States] must ensure that the Soviets cannot count on a secure flank in a global war.”

In the background of that political development, the classified first formal publication of the Maritime Strategy (of which then-Commander Peter M. Swartz was a leading author) stated:

> Making the strategic difference by altering the geographical breadth of the conflict means that—with maritime superiority—we can deny the Soviets any advantage through expansion, and permits us, if we choose, to take the conflict to an area or areas where they do not want to fight. The Maritime Strategy is a mobile, forward, flanking strategy of options. While the battle is joined in Central Europe, the Maritime Strategy enables the Western alliance to secure the sea lines of communications, [to] defeat attacks on the European flanks and in the Far East, and to carry the fight to the enemy there.

The Maritime Strategy, revised in 1985, argued that Pacific operations would play a critical role in keeping Japan in the war, in defending Korea, and in encouraging China to at least maintain an “aggressively neutral posture.” Here again the intention was to tie down considerable Soviet forces which could otherwise be redeployed to the Central Front in Europe.

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In terms of defense planning, during the 1980s horizontal escalation gained larger support while the swing strategy applied in the 1970s lost traction. Moreover, in the same period the intrinsic value of defending US allies and friends in Asia increased due to the growth of the military and the economic potential of countries such as China and Japan. In that sense, the fiscal year (FY) 1982 Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, which went into effect for planning and operations in October 1981, was a turning point. The Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan—which provided guidance to combatant commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the accomplishment of tasks and missions based on current military capabilities—required for the first time the European and Atlantic Commands to prepare operation plans (OPLANs) to accomplish their tasks both “with and without PACOM [Pacific Command] augmentation.”5 In other words, now PACOM forces might not be swung to the European theater in the event of war with the Soviet Union.

In 1984, the FY 1986-90 Defense Guidance—guidance on strategy and programs, outlining the broad national security objectives and regulating the Defense Department, the Services, and unified and specified commanders on roles, missions, and capabilities6—updated regional priorities and placed defense of US allies and sea lines of communication in the Pacific on an equal footing with access to oil in Southwest Asia.7 As a result, the top defense priority of the Department of Defense was now North America, including the Caribbean Basin, with the other regional priorities being, in descending order: NATO and its lines of communications; the coequal priorities of access to oil in Southwest Asia, security of US allies in the Pacific, and the security of Pacific and Indian Ocean lines of communications; and the security of US friends in South America and Africa.8

Assessment

How successful was the horizontal escalation strategy, or for that matter, the Maritime Strategy as a whole? It was fortunate that the United States

6 Ibid., 111.
and the Soviet Union did not go to war with each other, but that made it difficult to objectively assess the effectiveness of the Maritime Strategy. In this article, I will use the results of some important war games conducted under realistic assumptions by the US government to arrive at a partial answer to the above question. War games are by no means perfect predictors of complex reality, but they do at least indicate opportunities and challenges that the United States would have faced in the execution of its Maritime Strategy.⁹

In war games, horizontal escalation produced mixed results. The results of the Global War Games conducted at the US Naval War College between 1979 and 1988 suggested that the Pacific front was the most promising scenario for success of the horizontal escalation strategy. However, it was not easy for US forces to reach Soviet targets when considerable strength was already devoted to the Central Front. Strike operations sufficient in scale to cause major concern for the Soviets or to divert Moscow’s focus from Western Europe would have required far larger US forces than those present in the Pacific.¹⁰

In the 1983 Global War Game, the US forces operated aggressively in the Pacific, seriously damaging Soviet Naval Aviation and Air Force, and took several of the Kuril Islands. Although the United States could not mount major offensives against Soviet territory due to distance and the presence of large Soviet forces, American actions successfully induced the Soviets to keep their forces in the theater. However, the United States failed to force the Soviets to shift their focus away from Germany, which was the original goal of the game. Moreover, as part of their response to the aggressive US approach, the Soviets succeeded in encouraging North Korea to invade South Korea. In response, the United States had to divert its forces away from the Kuril Islands to South Korea.

In the 1983 Proud Prophet war game, with Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger participating, horizontal escalation and counterattacks on the Soviet Far East were tested, but the results were disappointing: the So-

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⁹ The Maritime Strategy was also demonstrated and tested at sea, in exercises. See John F. Lehman, Jr., Oceans Ventured: Winning the Cold War at Sea (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2018).

¹⁰ Description of the issues related to the horizontal escalation in the Global War Game in the first five years is based on the following material unless otherwise indicated. Bud Hay and Bob Gile, Global War Game: The First Five Years, Naval War College Newport Papers 4 (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1993), 54-57.
viet leaders seemed unresponsive. In the 1985-1987 Global War Games, a simulation of a protracted conventional war, when the Soviet Union began to send its army divisions from the Far East to Europe, the US government ordered Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC) to transfer F-16s and F-15s from Japan and Korea, and various aircraft from Alaska, to the European theater. Although the US operations in the Far East had been succeeding, CINCPAC was forced to send his forces to Europe. Finally, in the 1988 Global War Game, focused on war termination, while CINCPAC pursued amphibious landings in North Korea and strike operations against Vladivostok, the US president, focused on the Central Front, regarded battles in non-European theaters as “meaningless.”

**Strike Operations**

Reflecting the forward defense strategy embodied in the Maritime Strategy, by the end of the 1980s the United States had established readiness to undertake strike operations against targets in the Soviet Far East with multiple carrier battle forces. The plan was to deploy aircraft carrier battle groups (CVBG) to striking positions in the Northern and Western Pacific in the early stages of war, and undertake offensive operations against Soviet targets including the Soviet Pacific Fleet, air and ground forces in the Kuril Islands, the air force base in Alekseyevka, and naval bases in Vladivostok and Petropavlovsk. To conduct those operations successfully, US CVBGs needed to be capable of transiting safely to the striking positions and undertaking aerial strikes while fending off Soviet bombers and submarines seeking to sink these high-value assets.

In 1981, Admiral Thomas B. Hayward established the Center for Naval Warfare Studies at the US Naval War College and created the Strategic Studies Group (SSG), a small group of best and brightest US naval officers. In 1982—1983, the SSG conducted a study of naval campaigns in

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13 Ibid., 89.
14 Peter M. Swartz, interview by author, Arlington, Virginia, 19 February 2016; and Henry H. Mauz, Jr., E-mail interview by author, received 13 October 2018.
the Pacific theater, and spelled out how naval forces ought to maneuver in the Pacific. First, American forces would simultaneously move west along the Aleutians and north from the Philippines in order to drive Soviet forces away from the Chinese border and/or to establish US air superiority over the battle area. They would then move to seize the Kuril Islands and conduct offensive operations against Soviet naval, ground, and air forces in the Sea of Okhotsk, Sakhalin Island, and the Soviet Far East.\textsuperscript{16}

Successful execution of such operations, the SSG argued, would depend heavily on Japan’s participation. First, land-based air forces would be used to establish air control over the northern Sea of Japan and the Kuril Islands. Then, the United States would use US Marine Corps A-6 attack aircraft\textsuperscript{17} deployed in Japan to destroy opponent air assets including Tu-22M bombers in the Soviet Far East. Carrier air power would later join those US forces. The US Marine forces would attempt to seize the Kuril Islands if the opportunity arose.\textsuperscript{18}

US aircraft carriers would conduct strike operations against Petropavlovsk from locations in the Aleutian Island chain, and against the Soviet Far East including Vladivostok from locations near Hokkaido. The US Navy developed a plan to use as defensive cover land features called “havens” or “near-land operating areas” (NLOAs). The aircraft carriers engaged in strike operations from Haven Charlie and Hook of Hokkaido, NLOAs in the Aleutians and the Northwest Pacific, respectively.\textsuperscript{19}

Despite these developments, strike plans remained largely underdeveloped until 1988. When Vice Admiral Henry H. Mauz, Jr. became commander of the US Seventh Fleet that year, he learned that there was no ef-

\textsuperscript{16} Hattendorf (2004), 60.
\textsuperscript{17} A-6 had an unrefueled combat range of 878 nautical miles, or 1,626 km with maximum payload. “Grumman A-6 Intruder,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grumman_A-6_Intruder.
\textsuperscript{18} Michael McDevitt, interview by author, Arlington, Virginia, 13 May 2016; and John T. Hanley, Jr., E-mail interview by author, received 6 June 2019.
fective plan for attacking the Soviet Union. His staff did not know which targets to attack, nor did they know how to attack them, and in what order. The Seventh Fleet and the Fifth Air Force had two separate, uncoordinated attack plans.\(^{20}\) Mauz obtained detailed targeting information from the US national intelligence commands, and developed a plan to use cruise missiles, decoys, jamming and other means to keep the Soviet air defenses busy.\(^{21}\) He eventually devised a new plan: to destroy Soviet air defenses in the first week or two of engagement, and then attack vital air bases and naval facilities.\(^{22}\)

Improvements in equipment strengthened the plan. Deployment of long-range Tomahawk land-attack missiles (TLAMs) and vertical launch systems on surface vessels and attack submarines greatly increased the range, lethality and number of US Navy strike warfare assets. The cruise missiles could eliminate Soviet command posts and radar installations prior to an attack by carrier-based strike aircraft. Harpoon anti-ship missiles enhanced the surface fleet’s ability to sink enemy surface vessels. The EA-6B electronic countermeasures planes could jam enemy communications and destroy enemy radar installations and missile batteries with high-speed anti-radiation missiles.\(^{23}\) F/A-18 fighters replaced A-4 and A-7 light attack aircraft, and increased the number of Navy strike aircraft.\(^{24}\)

Assessment

In war games, conventional strike operations produced mixed results in terms of pinning down Soviet forces in the Far East, but proved reasonably successful in achieving military objectives in the theater. At the 1982 and 1983 Global War Games it became clear that simply launching air and missile strikes against Vladivostok, the Belkin Coast, Sakhalin, and Petropavlovsk were not certain to prevent the Soviets from transferring their forces to Europe. It was observed in later games, however, that such a result could be achieved in a protracted war by strikes on some targets:

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\(^{21}\) Henry H. Mauz, Jr., E-mail interview by author, received 13 October 2018.

\(^{22}\) Pokrant (2005), 90.


\(^{24}\) Peter M. Swartz, “Characterizing the Navy of the 1980s,” working paper, 22 June 2017, 3.
manufacturing facilities at Komsomolsk-on-Amur, which produced Akula-class submarines and airframes for fourth generation fighters; and metal fabricating facilities at Khabarovsk.25

In the 1983 Global War Game, US CVBGs attacked Soviet forces and installations, and severely damaged the Soviet Naval Aviation and Air Force.26 In the 1985-1987 Global War Games, CINCPAC organized CVBGs and battleship battle groups (BBBG). The Soviets fired an average of 84 missiles per US aircraft carrier, but only one carrier sustained damage. At one point in the game, it was estimated that 50 percent of the air defense in Vladivostok and sortie generation capacity had been eliminated. The United States had deployed three CVBGs near the Aleutians and two more to the southeast of Japan, and CINCPAC was poised to take the offensive against the Soviet Union. By D+50, the United States had degraded Soviet air defenses in the Kamchatka Peninsula by 50 percent, and the kill ratio had increased to four-to-one in favor of the United States, given that half of the Soviet fourth generation aircraft had been sent to Europe.27

Amphibious Landing Operations

The Maritime Strategy called for active use of amphibious landing operations in order to take critical land areas when opportunities arose. Moreover, availability of amphibious landing forces was expected to pin down Soviet forces which could otherwise be redeployed to other theaters of operations.28 In 1985, “Amphibious Warfare Strategy,” issued jointly by Commandant of the Marine Corps General P. X. Kelley and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral James D. Watkins, defined the role of amphibious forces in the Maritime Strategy, calling for the use of amphibious forces for power projection along the Soviet flanks.29

The Amphibious Warfare Strategy spelled out ways in which US Marine Corps (USMC) could be employed in the Pacific in a three-phase construction. In Phase I, operations for deterrence and preparation for general war

26 Hay and Gile (1993), 42.
29 Ibid., 124.
would be conducted simultaneously. In that phase, two Marine Amphibi-
ous Brigades (MAB; some 13,600 personnel each) associated with the Mar-
itime Prepositioning Ship Squadrons could be airlifted to a number of for-
ward locations including Japan to prepare for subsequent operations. US
Pacific Fleet amphibious ships would embark Marines from I Marine Am-
phibious Force, stationed in California, and from III Marine Amphibious
Force, stationed in Okinawa.30

In Phase II, US amphibious forces would heighten the level of uncer-
tainty for the Soviets and start complicating their strategic calculations. At
that point, the USMC could launch limited amphibious raids (committing
a Marine Amphibious Brigade) or more robust amphibious assaults to se-
cure territory adequate for the introduction of follow-on forces or rein-
forcements. In the Pacific, amphibious operations against the southern
Kuril Islands would become an option, depending on US force disposi-
tion.31

Execution of significant amphibious operations would become a realis-
tic option in Phase III, if Soviet forces had been sufficiently attrited. The
objectives of the operations would be to regain lost territory, to keep criti-
cal sea lines of communication open, and to occupy Soviet territories
(which could be used to enhance US position in the process of forcing the
Soviets to terminate the war on terms favorable to the United States).

The Amphibious Warfare Strategy contended that while such forces
were likely insufficient to decisively affect the outcome of a European war,
they could shift the strategic center of gravity against an exhausted Soviet
force. In the later stages of Phase III, amphibious assaults by forces the size
of the Marine Amphibious Force would become realistic. In the Pacific,
amphibious operations against Sakhalin Island would become possible
and, if Sakhalin Island were successfully taken, would contribute to
warfighting objectives in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Sea of Japan.32

Throughout the 1980s the US Navy possessed 60 to 65 vessels – about
11-12 percent of its total battle force – for amphibious operations. The tar-
get amphibious force level under the 1980s 600-ship Navy plan was suffi-
cient for deployment of assault echelons consisting of one Marine Am-
phibious Force and one Marine Amphibious Brigade.33 To facilitate am-
phibious operations, the US Navy recommissioned four Iowa-class battle-

30 Ibid., 127-128.
31 Ibid., 131-132.
32 Ibid., 131-134.
33 Swartz (2017), 4.
ships, each equipped with nine 16-inch guns and twelve 5-inch guns, which could provide massive fire support for landing forces.\textsuperscript{34} The 1980s also saw the beginning of construction of Wasp-class amphibious assault ships, each of which could support almost the full strength of one Marine Expeditionary Unit with some 2,200 troops, transporting them with landing craft or helicopters, and providing air support with AV-8B Harrier II attack aircraft.\textsuperscript{35} The addition of those new capabilities buttressed the amphibious strategy laid out in the Maritime Strategy.\textsuperscript{36}

Assessment

Before the completion of the Amphibious Warfare Strategy in 1985, the US Navy and the USMC had examined possible roles of amphibious forces in the Global War Game in 1984. In that game, the southern Kuril Islands and Sakhalin Island attracted attention, based on the assumption that in a global war with the Soviet Union, Japan would be interested in recovering the Kurils, which the Soviets occupied at the end of World War II. Specialists tested the idea of the United States and Japan working together to preempt a Soviet attack on Hokkaido, and to take and hold Sakhalin Island and the southern Kurils. The results of the gaming suggested that decisive amphibious operations could facilitate US naval operations in the Soviet submarine bastion in the Sea of Okhotsk.\textsuperscript{37}

Strategic Anti-Submarine Warfare

Potentially the most important concept, but also the most controversial, was strategic anti-submarine warfare (ASW) against Soviet SSBNs. In the Pacific, threatening and possibly attacking Soviet SSBNs sortieing out of Petropavlovsk and operating in the Sea of Okhotsk bastion was an option envisioned in the Maritime Strategy.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} Marolda (2012), 92-93.
\textsuperscript{37} Hattendorf (2004), 106-107.
The early forward strategic ASW operations had at least two advantages. First, defeating Soviet SSBNs before they could sortie into the Sea of Okhotsk bastion would be easier than after. Those operations also made sense in terms of the geography of the Western Pacific: Soviet submarines would have to sortie out of the port of Petropavlovsk into the Sea of Okhotsk in the face of US nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) on patrol beyond the port. In the event of war, US Air Force B-52 bombers would lay mines near Petropavlovsk in an attempt to blockade it.39

Second, it was believed that placing high-value SSBNs at risk would force Soviet general-purpose forces to remain on the defensive, deployed close to the Soviet homeland, which would reduce the burden of defending high-value American assets such as aircraft carriers.40 Moreover, by destroying Soviet SSBNs, the United States could significantly alter the wartime strategic military balance between the two superpowers.41

The forward ASW doctrine was supported by US operational and technological advantages over the Soviet Union. For example, since Soviet submarines were noisy and US submarines were quiet, the United States had an edge in detection and tracking them.42 Furthermore, the United States had a reasonably accurate picture of where the Soviet SSBNs operated in the Sea of Okhotsk.43

New intelligence assessments of Soviet strategy made a crucial contribution to the development of anti-SSBN strategy. By the early 1980s, the US intelligence community had become convinced that the Soviets had adopted what was dubbed the “bastion” strategy, i.e. the Soviets had decided to maintain their SSBN forces in well-protected bastions such as the one in the Sea of Okhotsk, and to use them as a strategic reserve for the purpose of influencing peace negotiations and achieving political goals.44 Moreover, in 1984, the United States gained an understanding of the details of crisis-time operation of the SSBNs by analyzing information acquired through a tapping device attached to the Soviet Navy communication ca-

42 Robert L. Thomas, Jr., interview by author, Washington D.C., 7 July 2016.
43 John T. Hanley, Jr., E-mail interview by author, received 6 June 2019.
ble in the Barents Sea. During the highly assertive Able Archer exercise conducted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Western Europe in 1983, the Soviets prioritized the protection of SSBNs and quickly moved some of them into bastions.45

Assessment

The anti-SSBN operations produced mixed results in war games. In the 1979-1983 Global War Games, the United States conducted anti-SSBN operations in the Atlantic and the Pacific. On the positive side, for example, the United States successfully destroyed nearly half of strategic missile submarines in the 1983 Global War Game, and the Soviet Union failed to counter the US anti-SSBN campaign effectively.46 The United States also prompted the Soviet Union to use its SSNs to protect its SSBNs instead of undertaking offensive operations against the Western sea lines of communication.47 In the 1984 Global War Game, the Soviet SSBNs took heavy losses in the initial phase, although losses ceased after the SSBNs were placed in well-protected shallow water bastions in the northern Sea of Okhotsk.48 In the 1985-87 Global War Games, the United States destroyed about half of the Soviet SSBNs by D+64.49

On the negative side, in the 1979 game, US anti-SSBN operations led the Soviet Union to use nuclear weapons against American CVBGs in the Atlantic and the Pacific, sinking two carriers.50 In the 1982 game, the United States actively conducted anti-SSBN operations. However, the results did not affect the calculations of the US National Command Authority or the Soviet Supreme High Command with regard to possible nuclear use, since neither side knew how the strategic nuclear balance had been altered.51

47 Hay and Gile (1993), 40.
49 Ibid., 117.
50 Hay and Gile (1993), 40.
51 Gile (2004), xxvi. Tracking submarine losses was difficult. John T. Hanley, Jr., E-mail interview by author, received 8 August 2019.
Japan’s Role

Japan played a significant role in assisting the United States to execute its Maritime Strategy in the Pacific. Positioned in the center of the Pacific theater of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, Japan undertook two important missions: blockading key chokepoint straits (Soya, Tsugaru, and Tsushima) and defending the sea lines of communication.

Those blockade operations made it difficult for Soviet naval forces to transit between Vladivostok and the Western Pacific. The Maritime Self-Defense Force strengthened ASW capabilities; the Air Self-Defense Force acquired C-130 transport aircraft as a mine-laying platform; and the Ground Self-Defense Force introduced surface-to-ship missiles to attack Soviet surface vessels.

Defense of the sea lines of communication was intended to help US CVBGs transit the Western Pacific safely to striking positions including Hook of Hokkaido. The Maritime Self-Defense Force was tasked with hunting down Soviet submarines and providing safe passage for US CVBGs. The Self-Defense Forces took up those new missions while continuing to provide protection for US bases in Japan, including Misawa, Yokota and Kadena air force bases, Yokosuka, Atsugi and Sasebo navy bases, and Iwakuni and Futenma marine air stations.

According to retired US Navy officer and Japan specialist James E. Auer, no US Navy operator would doubt the importance of US-Japan cooperation for the execution of the Maritime Strategy. It was “unbelievable,” he said, “We tracked every [Soviet] submarine [by the end of the Cold War].”52 Former Soviet Navy leaders agreed. One retired Soviet admiral admitted after the end of the Cold War that the Soviets took the presence of allied navies such as the Japanese in US exercises seriously, going so far as to express his respect for the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force.53

However, there were questions regarding Japan’s role in the Maritime Strategy. The US planners were rightly concerned that Japan might decide to remain neutral in the event of a war between the United States and the Soviet Union. The 1984 Maritime Strategy discussed that US allies’ decision to stay out would weaken capabilities to implement the strategy, and

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52 James E. Auer, interview by author, Tokyo, 19 September 2012.
that the stance assumed by Japan would be “pivotal.” Soviet Military Power, published by the US Department of Defense in 1989, states that Soviet military objectives in the Pacific included “neutralizing Japan and South Korea by military or political means to prevent them from supporting the United States.”

Assessment

Several related scenarios were examined in the Global War Games in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1979 game, the Soviet Union offered France, Israel, Japan, Pakistan, and Algeria incentives to remain neutral. In the 1980 game, the Soviet Union detonated three nuclear weapons east of Japan to intimidate the Japanese government into neutrality. In the 1984 game, the Soviet Union perceived that it would be impossible to keep Japan neutral through diplomatic pressure and military threat alone, and launched a large-scale air attack on Japan.

The scenario in the three-year serial games conducted between 1985 and 1987 was more complicated and sophisticated. In those games, Japan vacillated between support for the United States and broad neutrality. During the first week of hostilities, the United States conducted air operations against the Soviet Union with the involvement of units based in Japan. When the Soviet Union protested that this was not in keeping with Japan’s professed neutrality, the Japanese government condemned US actions and banned the future use of Japanese soil as a base for US attacks on Soviet forces. Then Japan decided to receive two damaged US aircraft carriers in Yokosuka and Osaka ports. Moscow regarded this as a serious violation of Japanese neutrality and attacked Japan. The Japanese government finally made a decision to fully assume its alliance obligations and pledged to use its Self-Defense Forces to protect US forces in Japan. Certainly those were hypothetical scenarios used in war games, but the repeated appearance of that theme clearly indicates that US planners took the issue seriously and examined how best to prevent Japan from being neutralized — and, if it were neutralized, how to fight a global war without Japan’s support.

56 Hay and Gile (1993), 4 and 7.
Nobody knows what Japan would have done in a real war. It might have stayed out in fear of Soviet retaliation; it might have assisted the United States believing that its superpower ally would eventually prevail and that not assisting the United States could produce dire postwar consequences. In any case, the beauty of deterrence is that as long as there was a possibility of Japan entering the war on the side of the United States, the Soviet leaders could not but take that into account.

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Introduction

India faces a host of emerging strategic challenges in the maritime domain—at sea, along its vast coastline, and along the wider Indian Ocean littoral. This domain is unique from the air and land domains for India because it is not primarily focused on defense of the homeland. While the Indian Army and Air Force play important roles beyond national borders such as in peacekeeping and disaster-relief operations, these are not their primary missions. By contrast, naval operations tend to take place in the high seas, far from home. Higher-end navies such as the Indian Navy are often tasked with projecting power, including in peacetime, and ensuring the security of shipping through international waters for national economic interests.2

In the past 15 years, events such as the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004) and the terrorist attacks on Mumbai (2008) have transformed how India thinks about the use of its navy. The Indian Navy’s overall responsibility has expanded to encompass the entire domain of maritime security, including coastal security, which has traditionally been the responsibility of the Indian Coast Guard.3 Yet India faces challenges in executing this vision due to bureaucratic and operational obstacles. Chinese commercial infrastructure

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3 Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), “Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy,” Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1.2 (October 2015), ii. See also Lok Sabha Secretariat, “Coastal Security,” Reference Note No. 29/RN/Ref./November 2013: “The Indian Navy has been designated as the authori-
development projects in the Indian Ocean region have raised additional questions about India’s ability to project power and leadership in its own maritime backyard. These developments have direct implications for the Indian Navy in terms of its planning for China’s use of commercial facilities such as ports for military purposes detrimental to Indian interests. At a minimum, Beijing has already constructed a military base in Djibouti on the Horn of Africa. While commercial port projects are not a responsibility that resides within the Indian Navy, policymakers in New Delhi must wrestle with China’s expansion in this realm and craft policies to build the critical economic dimension of India’s maritime power.

Given the wide range of challenges confronting India in the maritime domain, this chapter will examine issues of concern in the naval, coastal, and commercial infrastructure dimensions. The first section will consider India’s growing naval power by providing a brief overview of some forthcoming platforms. The section will then examine the challenges faced by the Indian Navy, including obstacles to obtaining much-needed platforms and capabilities.

The next section will examine India’s maritime power—a subject that includes, but also goes beyond, the ambit of the Indian Navy. Maritime power encompasses outreach to neighboring and regional countries, including operational cooperation with coast guards and provision of equipment. Next, the chapter will examine challenges to the growth of India’s maritime power. This entails a host of organizational, legal, and operational obstacles to the consolidation of India’s coastal security architecture. This section will then turn to a major challenge for India: building the economic dimension of its maritime power in the Indian Ocean region. This challenge primarily involves the expansion of maritime infrastructure that is not funded by India but by extraregional countries (namely China). The chapter will conclude by offering recommendations for Indian policymakers to address challenges to the growth of the country’s naval and maritime power.

**India’s Naval Power: A Modernizing Navy with Challenges Ahead**

The Indian Navy’s 2015 high-level document, *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, makes clear the service’s wide tasking. In it, the Indian Navy’s duty is described as ensuring overall maritime security which includes coastal security and offshore security.”
Chief of Naval Staff R.K. Dhowan discussed the major geopolitical changes since the previous Indian Navy strategy and doctrine were issued in 2007 and 2009, respectively. At the time, China was just beginning to deploy task forces across the Indian Ocean in support of the multinational counterpiracy effort in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa. At present, the region has witnessed more than 30 task forces deployed by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy. PLA Navy submarines have also conducted deployments, drawing media attention beginning in 2014 through port visits. The Pakistan Navy’s development of greater capabilities, including the planned acquisition of eight submarines from China, has added to the Indian Navy’s planning responsibilities in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.

The Indian Navy’s 2015 strategy defines India’s primary area of operations. This area now includes the entire Indian Ocean, encompassing the waterspace from the Cape of Good Hope to the Indonesian straits. Second, the Indian Navy has pursued the acquisition and development of greater capabilities to support its security interests in this region. For example, India continues to be the world’s largest importer of weapons. The country bought 13% of the world’s arms in the last five years and roughly 10% in the preceding five-year period. The Indian Navy is also increasing its power-projection capabilities. Its pursuit of more aircraft carriers, submarines, anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities and fighter aircraft—including codevelopment cooperation with France, Russia, and the United States, among others—is the hallmark of a modernizing, great naval power.

The Indian Navy has also stepped up its diplomatic efforts with regional navies. The 2015 maritime strategy provides a list of regular, mostly bilateral exercises. In addition to formal exercises, the navy has cultivated a set of vital maritime relationships in the Indian Ocean. According to former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Arun Prakash, “the India[n] Navy has concluded formal agreements whereby its warships, submarines and aircraft can [pull] into about 25-30 friendly ports across the Indo-Pacific for opera-

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4 For a map of India’s primary interests, see Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (2015), 34-35.
Access to all the corners of the Indian Ocean is a critical enabler for its power-projection interests throughout the region and beyond.

These efforts partly can be seen as a response to growing threat perceptions of China and its deployments to the Indian Ocean during the past decade, but they also represent an inevitable expansion of India’s interests in the Indo-Pacific. The following subsections will examine the high-profile platforms that the Indian Navy is planning to use in the region. This section will focus on its pursuit of undersea and surface platforms. In particular, the following discussion will focus on submarines and aircraft carriers.

Submarines

India faces an enduring undersea threat to its west from Pakistan. The countries have fought four wars, including naval battles in 1971 over Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan). Since Pakistan’s surface fleet and naval aviation capabilities cannot compete with those of India, the country has invested in submarines as a key way to diminish India’s overall advantage. In January 2017, Pakistan confirmed the undersea launch of a missile assumed to be the Babur III, which may allow it to gain a second-strike capability. In addition to militant threats emanating from Pakistani territory and Islamabad’s current submarine capability, India faces a compounded challenge: China’s planned submarine sales to Pakistan. Furthermore, Chinese submarine deployments to the Indian Ocean, which began in late 2013, pose a growing concern to the Indian Navy.

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At present, the Indian Navy has 16 submarines in operation. To counter undersea threats, it is pursuing a path of acquiring more of them: diesel-electric (SSK), as well as nuclear-powered attack and ballistic missile submarines. In addition to the need to counter regional threats, this project is important for two reasons. First, accidents in India’s submarine arm have caused the loss of life and attracted embarrassing public attention.\(^{10}\) In 2013, INS Sindhurakshak caught fire and sank in Mumbai, leading to the loss of 18 naval personnel. The following year, two sailors died from smoke inhalation while on INS Sindhuratna off Mumbai. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral D.K. Joshi even resigned in the wake of multiple incidents during his tenure. The current project will help restore a sense of pride to India’s submarine arm after a difficult period. Second, indigenous production of these submarines will contribute to the economy and supports Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Make in India” initiative to increase indigenous production and expand India’s defense industry.

Six Kalvari-class submarines will be built in India at Mazagon Dock Limited in Mumbai. The building of these $4 billion platforms in India, in collaboration with French defense giant Naval Group, supports the “Make in India” initiative. The submarines use the French Scorpène-class design.\(^{11}\) Two ships in this class, INS Kalvari and INS Khanderi, have been commissioned as of late 2019.

While SSKs require the fleet to surface and recharge, nuclear-powered submarines can operate undersea much longer. The Indian Navy currently operates two types of nuclear-powered submarines. The first, INS Chakra, is a nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN) that joined the Indian Navy in 2012. This Akula-class SSN, formerly K-152 Nerpa, was leased to the Indian Navy by Russia for a 10-year period.\(^{12}\) In October 2016, Russia agreed to lease India a second Akula when the lease for INS Chakra runs out in 2022. Because of the opportunity to lease SSNs from the Soviet Union and later Russia, India was able to gain experience operating nuclear-powered submarines rather than only conventional submarines.

\(^{11}\) Of note, this project was challenged in 2016 when a report in The Australian newspaper revealed DCNS’s leak of classified design details about the Indian Navy’s Scorpène-class submarine and its capabilities. Considering the secrecy associated with submarine programs, it is difficult to know the extent of damage to the project.
\(^{12}\) India previously leased an SSN from the Soviet Union in the 1980s.
The second type of nuclear-powered platform that India possesses is a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). INS Arihant is India’s first SSBN. More importantly for India, this was an indigenously built platform. India’s path to becoming a nuclear power has been decades in the making.\(^{13}\) This SSBN was the first to be built outside the recognized five countries with nuclear capabilities—United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China. INS Arihant finally joined the fleet in August 2016. This class of four submarines—when fully operational with missiles\(^ {14}\)—will allow India to achieve its nuclear triad, meaning an ability to deliver nuclear weapons from the land, air, and sea. This would ensure that it has a diversified second-strike capability, if some of its nuclear weapons are first attacked. Given the country’s policy on no first-use of nuclear weapons, this capability is seen as vital for the defense of the nation. As the first in its class, INS Arihant is considered to be mainly used as training for future SSBN crews. INS Arighat is the second in the class of Arihant SSBNs being built and is considered far deadlier than its predecessor.\(^ {15}\)

**Aircraft carriers**

The Indian Navy is also pursuing the indigenous production of surface assets. While there are many types of ships, no surface asset is more powerful than aircraft carriers. After the last sailing of INS Viraat in 2016, the Indian Navy had only one aircraft carrier in operation, INS Vikramaditya. The platform, acquired from Russia, is the refurbished Kiev-class, former Admiral Gorshkov that joined the Indian Navy in 2013 after myriad delays and cost overruns. INS Vikrant will be India’s first indigenously built carrier; however, estimates for how soon it will join the fleet range continue to be delayed.\(^ {16}\) Writing about the launch of China’s first indigenous aircraft car-

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14 INS Arihant’s K-15 submarine-launched ballistic missile is reportedly in production. Moreover, INS Arihant test-fired the K-4 in March 2016. The K-4 submarine-launched ballistic missile is believed to expand the range of the K-15 by a factor of five.


16 Cochin Shipyards claims it will be 2023.
rrier, Gurpreet Khurana of India’s National Maritime Foundation observes: “It stands out rather conspicuously in comparison to India, which has been operating aircraft carriers since 1961, but is yet to commission its first indigenous carrier named Vikrant.” Nevertheless, the carrier is expected to be fully equipped for combat by 2023.

INS Vishal is a second indigenous aircraft carrier project, which will also be built by Cochin Shipyard. This aircraft carrier may be very different from previous ones in that it could be nuclear-powered. Moreover, the carrier may feature the United States’ electromagnetic launch system, which Washington has grown open to sharing. The establishment of the U.S.-India Joint Working Group on Aircraft Carrier Cooperation has promoted the exchange of this technology. Unfortunately, all these proposed changes and possible technological shifts may delay completion of the project until 2030.

Challenges to India’s naval power

While the Indian Navy is undergoing a significant shift toward the acquisition of greater power-projection capabilities, challenges remain to this vision. The list of strategic challenges includes Pakistan’s expanding naval capabilities and nuclear arsenal, as well as the combined, two-front threat of China to augment Pakistan’s ability to challenge India in the naval realm. Meanwhile, increasing deployments by the PLA Navy to the Indian Ocean and China’s construction of its first overseas military base in Djibouti are clear evidence of its expanding presence in India’s maritime backyard. An additional cause of concern is the potential for the development of Gwadar, Pakistan, to function as a second Chinese military base in the Indian Ocean. Other challenges consist of missed opportunities, such as not developing the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) to a level where

it could go beyond its currently limited role to be as capable as military commands on the Indian mainland. However, Indian policymakers have clearly resisted making a decision to advance development of this strategic location, which would be important during disaster-relief operations.

Given the array of challenges that India faces in the naval domain, this section will focus on a handful that are within the purview of Indian policymakers to undertake for action in the near-term horizon.

Indigenous production requirements vs. capability needs

By some estimates, the Indian Navy does not possess even half of the submarines, destroyers, and frigates to meet its requirements. These platform requirements are rooted in a wider discussion of the Modi administration’s push toward a stronger indigenous industry under the “Make in India” initiative. In fact, a point of pride in the Indian Navy has been that all of its forthcoming surface and undersea assets are being built indigenously. However, there may be an emerging tension between adhering to “Make in India” and acquiring the best platforms and systems in a timely manner for the Indian Navy. For example, the Indian Navy had rejected the indigenous industry option for carrier-based fighter aircraft—from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited’s Tejas light combat aircraft—because it did not meet

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20 Anit Mukherjee assesses that “the ANC is more of a coastal protection force than one which can project power.” See Anit Mukherjee, “The Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier: The Andaman and Nicobar Command,” in India’s Naval Strategy and Asian Security, ed. by Anit Mukherjee and C. Raja Mohan (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), 102.


23 At Modi’s meeting at BRICS in 2016, a slight exception to this trend occurred with the news that India will purchase 4 frigates from Russia. One of the ships will be constructed in Russia: Dmitry Gorenburg, “Russia-India Arms Deal,” Russian Military Reform, 19 October 2016, https://russiamil.wordpress.com/2016/10/19/russia-india-arms-deal.
the service’s operational requirements. Moreover, the Indian Navy continues to lack much-needed conventional submarines. Former Minister of Defence Manohar Parrikar publicly estimated the service needs 24 submarines. The issue of the Indian Navy obtaining new capabilities is made even more critical with regard to cutting-edge technology in the realms of cyber and space. Therefore, strong concerns persist about whether the Indian Navy will be able to acquire all the offensive and defensive capabilities that it needs in a timely manner, given current policy and bureaucratic constraints.

State-owned shipyards and obstacles to private-sector growth

Given the added momentum of “Make in India,” Indian shipyards are full of orders. Yet they are struggling to keep up with demand, and the Indian Navy is seeing delays in the fulfillment of its ship orders. Another chal-


25 Describing this challenge, Vice Admiral DM Deshpande, the Indian Navy’s Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition, concluded: “We need those submarines badly, because our [underwater] force levels are depleted. In case the SP model [Ministry of Defence’s Strategic Partnership policy] does not go ahead, for whatever reason, then we will have to look elsewhere” (Rahul Bedi, “Indian Navy Considering Alternative Options for Submarine Procurement,” Jane’s, 27 April 2017, http://www.janes.com/article/69862/indian-navy-considering-alternative-options-for-submarine-procurement).

26 The Indian Navy also faces a critical shortage of multi-role ASW helicopters and has sought to purchase 16 Seahawk helicopters from Sikorsky. The service even submitted a dissent note to the Ministry of Defence, which felt the price was too high. See Rajat Pandit, “Lack of Helicopters Hits Navy’s Operational Capabilities against Enemy Submarines,” The Times of India, 5 March 2017, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/lack-of-helicopters-hits-navys-operational-capabilities-against-enemy-submarines/articleshow/57481765.cms.


28 Shipyards are delayed, including due to contracts for non-Indian recipients and the pursuit of follow-up orders. For example, some projects consist of ships meant for overseas export to Mauritius and Sri Lanka. Goa Shipyard Limited delivered its second fast patrol vessel (MCGS Valiant) to Mauritius ahead of schedule in April 2017. Meanwhile, Mazagon Dock Limited in Mumbai is seeking an order for three additional DCNS-designed submarines.
lenge is that state-owned shipyards receive priority in opportunities to build platforms, while the private sector seeks to compete with these over-tasked shipyards and do its part to advance the country’s indigenous defense industry. For example, Defense News finds that “India’s private shipyards are unhappy with a Ministry of Defense decision to nominate state-owned shipyard Goa Shipyard to build two Russian Krivak-class stealth frigates over two private sector competitors, Larsen & Toubro and Reliance Defence and Engineering.” How Indian policymakers manage the issue of delays in output by shipyards as well as the tension between support for state-owned and private sector shipyards will have long-term implications for the Indian Navy and the growth of the country’s domestic defense industry.

Service equities and resources

Budget concerns persist and may compromise the Indian Navy’s pursuit of greater capability. While it does not face as hefty costs for personnel as does the Indian Army, its budget for new equipment has declined. Moreover, this decline is in the larger context of a drop in the overall defense budget. The Indian Navy has consistently received 16% on average of the overall defense budget since 2013, whereas the Indian Air Force has ranged between 21% and 26% and the Indian Army has averaged 60%. Given the service’s ambitions and the threats in the maritime domain, the Indian Navy will be challenged by these budget constraints. In particular, it has actively pursued an American aircraft carrier launch system which will be quite costly. Generally, bringing acquisition goals in line with budgetary realities will be a serious challenge for the Indian Navy.

Multiple sourcing for equipment

India has attempted to diversify sourcing for defense equipment. This approach made sense given the country’s historical commitment to a non-aligned approach in international affairs. It also makes sense given the national focus on indigenous production and developing technology and knowledge exchange relationships with a variety of suppliers (e.g., Russia, France, and the United States). However, the need to integrate multiple systems that are sourced from different countries may pose a long-term challenge. For example, India is working with the United States on the development of a future aircraft carrier while recently signing a deal with an Israeli company for a naval defense system. Moreover, India’s French-designed submarines may require adjustments to work well with U.S. anti-submarine warfare aircraft. The implications for the interoperability of these platforms and systems may take years for observers to fully understand.

India’s maritime power

The Indian Navy’s 2015 maritime strategy, *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, is a document of dual identities. It makes clear how far the service wants to go in terms of power projection across the Indian Ocean and beyond, but it also reveals how much the navy has done to ensure non-naval, domestic maritime security in recent years. This is elucidated in its Chapter 6: “Strategy for Coastal and Offshore Security.” Since India’s previous maritime strategy, *Freedom to Use the Seas: India’s Maritime Military Strategy*, was issued in 2007, the country has witnessed the terrorist attacks in Mumbai on 26 November 2008 (26/11). The terrorists came via a sea route from Pakistan, and the attacks resulted in 174 deaths and injuries to more than 300 people, adding to the security impetus.

Coastal security

As a result of the 26/11 attacks, the defense of India’s coastal areas became a top priority for the service. India has had its own coast guard service since the 1970s. However, the nature of the asymmetric, enduring threat emanating from Pakistan demanded a reevaluation of India’s entire capabilities to defend the homeland. Therefore, the Indian Navy became the
lead agency responsible for ensuring coastal security.\textsuperscript{32} In fact, the 2015 maritime strategy reveals the extent to which meeting the goal of ensuring coastal and offshore security occupied the attention and resources of this service in the years after the Mumbai attacks. The tasking of coastal security to the navy perhaps was not the priority the service wished for itself, given its high-seas ambitions, yet, the Indian Navy embraced this responsibility.

To meet this responsibility, the Indian Navy made progress on technological advancements to improve coastal security. In particular, this was seen through the creation of India’s National Command Control Communication Intelligence network that expanded the country’s maritime domain awareness by linking 51 radar stations (20 Navy and 31 Coast Guard) with joint operation centers around the country.\textsuperscript{33} Inputs are fused at the Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) in Gurgaon, where in effect the Indian Navy aims to have a wide-ranging operational picture of movements stretching from the Arabian Sea and across the Bay of Bengal.

India’s maritime outreach to neighbors

An emerging component of India’s increasing maritime power is New Delhi’s outreach to Indian Ocean neighbors. Beginning with the 2004 tsunami to the present day, the country has bolstered its international reputation through disaster-relief operations conducted by the military, including the Indian Navy.\textsuperscript{34} In particular, there has been greater recognition of its value as a diplomatic tool.\textsuperscript{35} As mentioned above, a point of emphasis has been expanding on maritime domain awareness in the wider Indian Ocean region with friendly nations. For example, Prime Minister Modi unveiled work done on the Coastal Surveillance Radar System chains in Seychelles when visiting in 2015. When completed, the radar network will extend to Mauritius, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. Similarly, India seeks to sign agree-


\textsuperscript{34} Samaranayake, Lea and Gorenburg (2014), 2 and 59.

\textsuperscript{35} For a discussion of the converging interests of India’s Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Navy, see Limaye (2017), 34-35.
ments with numerous partners in the Indian Ocean region (e.g., Australia and France in 2017) on non-naval ship traffic (so-called “white shipping”) to augment regional MDA and ultimately expand its operating picture of the entire ocean.

In addition to technological cooperation, India is increasing its operational cooperation with regional coast guards. The navy carries out surveillance operations in the large exclusive economic zones of Mauritius, Seychelles, and Maldives. In 2011, the country pursued a maritime security tri-lateral framework with Maldives and Sri Lanka. The grouping has met at the national security advisor–level twice and carries out regular training meetings and exercises between coast guards. India’s bilateral coast guard exercise with Maldives, known as DOSTI, dates back to 1991 and was expanded in 2012 to include the Sri Lanka Coast Guard under this now tri-lateral framework. A new element of regional coast guard cooperation for India was announced during Modi’s visit to Bangladesh in 2015, when the two states concluded a memorandum of understanding between the services. This cooperation was expanded in 2017 through the establishment of standard operating procedures to combat transnational crime.

At the navy-to-navy level, India has conducted longstanding coordinated patrols (CORPAT) with Indonesia and Thailand along their respective international maritime boundary lines (IMBL). Building on this type of interaction, India established its first CORPAT with Myanmar in 2013 and expanded its Bay of Bengal CORPATs with Bangladesh in 2018. At the multilateral level, India conducts the MILAN exercise every two years during which regional navies and coast guards assemble in Port Blair for a series of maneuvers and exchanges.

Finally, the Indian Navy provides retired equipment and platforms to Indian Ocean countries’ maritime forces, while its shipyards have begun building several platforms for export overseas. For example, the offshore patrol vessel MCGS Barracuda was built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. (GRSE) shipyard in Kolkata and the fast attack vessel MCGS Victory was built at Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL). Both were sold to Mauritius’s National Coast Guard on a line of credit that benefited India’s indigenous production efforts as well as the recipient force. India’s GSL is also building two offshore patrol vessels for the Sri Lanka Navy through a line of credit. The first, SLNS Sayurala, arrived in Sri Lanka in July 2017.

India has thus taken a broader view of its role and presence in its maritime neighborhood, beginning with security at the coastline and extending across the seas. In the last 15 years, Indian policymakers have increasingly recognized the importance of the maritime domain for addressing the country’s economic and resource interests as well as demonstrating India’s Naval and Maritime Power.
India’s leadership across the oceanic region. Growing numbers of Indian nationals working overseas sent home an estimated $70 billion in remittances in 2015. The Indian Navy has been called on to protect nationals in unstable locations like the Middle East by conducting non-combatant evacuation operations to ensure their safe return home after the onset of hostilities. India has come far from a time in which naval strategists lamented its “sea blindness” and “inherited continental-mindset” as a result of the country’s more pressing security threats on land from Pakistan.

Challenges to India’s maritime power

Clearly India has emerged as not only a strong naval power but also a regional maritime power with bolstered coastal defenses and relationships across the Indian Ocean. However, challenges remain to its ability to project non-naval, maritime power. These are threat-based and opportunity cost–based challenges rooted in perennial issues of insufficient resources, bureaucratic stove-piping and inefficiencies, and the lack of political will to effect major change.

Threat-based

Domestic

Terrorism emanating from Pakistan continues to pose the primary challenge to India—even in the non-naval, maritime realm. The country has responded to the 26/11 attacks by establishing a more technologically driven approach to addressing coastal defense such as the NC3I network and IMAC fusion capability. Yet questions have emerged about the efficacy of the NC3I network in detecting ships in the Arabian Sea. As recently as February 2017, four Pakistani fishing boats were discovered off the coast of Gujarat, raising the specter of another 26/11 incident. Beyond those serving in senior levels, it is difficult for observers to determine the effectiveness of the network due to the sensitive nature of the subject.

Abroad

India needs to worry about coastal security not only at home but also abroad. It will need to confront and plan for the threat posed by potential terrorist attacks on its overseas maritime infrastructure.41 For instance, in Sittwe, Myanmar, the Indian-built port is located in the unstable Rakhine state where Rohingya refugees reside. Locals there live very close to the port facilities.42 According to the International Crisis Group, a new Rohingya militancy may be emerging in Rakhine State, exacerbated by insecurity over access to food sources.43 Similarly, planned Indian investments in Chabahar port in the restive Baluchistan region in Iran—and less than 100 kilometers from Gwadar in neighboring Pakistan—could also be subject to attacks. Such terrorist activity would raise questions about a potential role for the Indian Navy in safeguarding these ports.

42 Author’s conversation with a Myanmar-based journalist, 2017.
Opportunity cost-based

Economic dimension of maritime power

India faces a long-term cost if it fails to project a comprehensive maritime presence in the Indian Ocean, going beyond solely the naval or military dimension of power. After all, the region has been officially identified as its primary area of interest, and the national diaspora extends throughout it. India needs to build on its diplomatic, military, and cultural presence and expand the economic dimension of its maritime power. China has stood out in recent years for its growing capabilities not only in the naval realm but also in non-naval maritime realms such as the shipbuilding and the fishing industries. Over the past decade, Beijing has financed, constructed, and operated commercial maritime infrastructure in Indian Ocean countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Maldives, and Pakistan. These activities have recently been subsumed under the Belt and Road Initiative. W.P.S. Sidhu contrasts China’s investment of $1 billion in Gwadar, Pakistan, and commitment of another $46 billion as part of this initiative with India’s $85 million investment in Chabahar across the border in Iran. He notes a national willingness to invest up to $20 billion, but acknowledges uncertainty whether India can raise the money. India’s slow entry into the commercial infrastructure development game is hurting its standing in its natural sphere of influence. While this line of effort is certainly not a responsibility of the country’s naval and maritime forces, China’s Belt and Road Initiative is nevertheless a major strategic challenge. Furthermore, this dimension directly affects the Indian Navy, which will need to account for logistical facilities in the Indian Ocean that may support PLA Navy assets.

India typically only minimally invests in ports abroad, through either government-led or public-private partnerships. Obviously, it still has capacity challenges, and the country is still largely focused on upgrading domestic maritime infrastructure rather than investing abroad. The Modi administration’s Sagar Mala project aims to increase the country’s capacity to handle cargo and streamline processing procedures so that less cargo will need to be transshipped in Singapore or Colombo, for example. Despite

46 Sidhu (2016).
offers from neighboring countries to develop foreign ports to enhance regional trade, neither the Indian government nor the private sector has converted opportunity into action. At the same time, extraregional countries such as China and Japan have undertaken ambitious activities to expand maritime infrastructure in the Indian Ocean. As a result, India is not shaping projects in the region of its greatest interest.

Prime Minister Modi launched the concept of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR, meaning “Ocean”) while in Mauritius in 2015. While this concept has the potential to encompass the economic dimension of maritime power, it currently emphasizes military-based events in the region. For example, a spokesperson from the Indian Navy used the #SAGAR Twitter hashtag to describe its ships’ deployments in the southern Indian Ocean. India appears to be relying in the short term on naval diplomacy because this is its strength, whereas commercial maritime investment is not. Meanwhile, Project Mausam debuted early under the Modi administration. This idea, promoted via the Ministry of Culture, seeks to reinforce India’s preeminence in the Indian Ocean through soft-power diplomacy. However, little evidence exists at present that the Indian government or private sector are resourcing these visions to expand the economic dimension of maritime power. Despite frequent media reports that Indian companies will invest in seaports in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, no projects have commenced.

When India has chosen to invest in port projects abroad, its interests have been strategic rather than commercial. India’s Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) through Essar Group developed the Kaladan transport project in Sittwe, Myanmar. The primary goal of this sea and land project was for India to circumvent Bangladesh to connect with its landlocked northeastern states beyond the narrow and hilly Siliguri Corridor in West Bengal. Ties have since improved and have opened up greater access to

49 From Twitter: “SpokespersonNavy@indiannavy #SAGAR INS Shardul on a 2-month long deployment in South Indian Ocean to provide surveillance support in the region @SpokespersonMoD.” 3:50 AM – 5 Apr 2017.
northeastern Indian states across Bangladesh in recent years.\textsuperscript{51} Similarly, the aim of developing Chabahar port in Iran was rooted in finding a way to bypass Pakistan for access to Afghanistan. In more recent discourse, the project has been marketed as a way to connect to the International North-South Transport Corridor, but the strategic rationale for the port project cannot be downplayed. At present, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust and Kandla Port Trust have concluded a joint venture with Iran’s Aria Banader to develop Chabahar, reinjecting life into the idea after international sanctions on Iran challenged viability of the project. Finally, reports exist that India is seeking to build infrastructure (i.e., jetties and airstrips) for strategic reasons in Seychelles and Mauritius. The former appears to be of direct benefit to the Seychelles Coast Guard in Assumption Island; the latter appears to aid the connectivity of Agalega Islands with the national capital in Port Louis. Neither project appears to be driven by commercial reasons; both are in key locations in the southwest Indian Ocean.

Another challenge to Indian initiatives to build commercial maritime infrastructure is the delay in executing and completing planned development projects. For example, the Kaladan project has taken much longer to complete than was planned.\textsuperscript{52} These delays are often associated with Indian construction projects in neighboring countries and pose a long-term challenge for India in the maritime domain.\textsuperscript{53} By contrast, China benefits from state-led development opportunities and can conduct projects in the Indian Ocean region much more swiftly.

Coastal security architecture

A host of organizational, legal, and operational challenges confront India’s development of its coastal security architecture. Assigning responsibilities for local, state, and national authorities is a challenge for any country under a federal system. India is currently trying to harness a multitude of stakeholders—more than 20—at all these levels and create a coherent ar-


\textsuperscript{53} Author’s conversations with officials and experts from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives, 2016-2017.
architecture to secure its long 7,500 km coastline. These are complex bureaucratic tasks. Stakeholders include the Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, and Shipping; Customs and Fisheries Departments; and intelligence community agencies. The need to focus these disparate organizations on the issue of coastal security and outline a clear command structure remain challenges.\textsuperscript{54} Prakash Gopal of India’s National Maritime Foundation observes that the apex coordinating body for coastal security is not even a full-time entity, meeting only twice a year, and is under the chair of too senior an official—the Cabinet Secretary.\textsuperscript{55}

Another challenge to realizing India’s coastal security architecture is legal. A coastal security bill meant for Parliament has lagged at the ministerial level since 2013.\textsuperscript{56} In 2014, the incoming Modi administration asserted its commitment under this bill to establish a National Maritime Authority (NMA) to provide clear legal powers to the various coastal security stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels.\textsuperscript{57} Writing in 2014, Vijay Sakhuja observed that the lack of progress on this bill can negatively impact the country’s maritime security.\textsuperscript{58} At the time of this writing, the NMA has not materialized. The lack of legislative progress continues to limit the powers of the Indian Coast Guard and Navy to act against ships suspected not only of terrorist intent but also other maritime crimes, such as the trafficking of arms, humans, and drugs as well as illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing.

Operational challenges also confront India with regard to coastal security. For example, the responsibility of state-level marine police only spans out to 12 nautical miles, yet they do not have the capabilities to monitor

\begin{footnotes}
\item[56] Ray (2015).
\end{footnotes}
an area of this size. Moreover, even though the Indian Coast Guard is responsible for the area within 12 and 200 nautical miles, while the Indian Navy bears responsibility for the area beyond 200 miles, the navy is the leading authority on the subject of coastal security and even works with the coast guard within the 200 limit. The major complicating factor is the state-level dimension of coastal security in India. Resources for the coastal states’ policing are not as great as needed, creating operational challenges. This level of India’s three-tier coastal security plans is especially crucial when recalling the considerable damage that can be inflicted from 12 nm offshore. An additional operational challenge is linguistic. Abhijit Singh observes that languages differ across Indian states, while the Coast Guard is generally not as proficient in regional languages and dialects as the underresourced state-level police. Regular interaction with fishing communities and knowledge of local customs and language facilitates the collection of actionable intelligence, underscoring the critical role of local police in ensuring coastal security. These operational challenges are of paramount importance because coastal security has clear implications for the defense of the homeland.

Recommendations

This chapter has sought to demonstrate the host of naval and maritime challenges confronting India. From rising strategic challenges emanating from China and enduring threats from Pakistan to threats on the coastline, the Indian Navy has a full plate of issues to confront. Policymakers in New Delhi will need to navigate these challenges to the nation’s overall maritime standing in the Indian Ocean, some of which could complicate the future planning and operations of the navy.

With regard to naval challenges, Indian policymakers will need to carefully manage issues such as indigenous production requirements and multiple sourcing of platforms and systems. On balance, despite the proportion of indigenous production and the need to diversify, improving the Indian Navy’s capabilities should remain the priority. The service is facing more threats and missions in the primary area of responsibility in the Indi-

60 Abhijit Singh in Takshashila Institution (2016).
an Ocean as well as a secondary responsibility in the Pacific. The Indian Navy will need more resources to respond to these issues. As well, defense policymakers should consider removing obstacles to the growth of India’s private defense sector when possible. Again, ensuring the speedy delivery of platforms and systems needed by the Indian Navy should be the focus.

Regarding India’s non-naval, maritime challenges, policymakers should elevate the economic dimension of India’s maritime power. International maritime infrastructure projects are long overdue in the four corners of the Indian Ocean. Options include working with Japan for financing or devising public-private partnerships. These types of activities can help build ports and special economic zones, thereby promoting connectivity under the auspices of Prime Minister Modi’s SAGAR initiative. While India still has capacity challenges in financing maritime infrastructure development, even without this domestic handicap, policymakers should take steps to mitigate delays to the execution of projects, such as in Sittwe, Myanmar.

To address the complex subject of coastal security, the idea of standing up a Central Marine Police Force appears to have backing from the Ministry of Home Affairs and should be further pursued. Moreover, India can draw on its active community of think tanks and their ability to assemble various stakeholders in each of the affected coastal states.

Given the MEA’s example of supporting efforts to showcase India’s maritime diplomacy through events such as the Raisina Dialogue and the Indian Ocean Conference, the Ministry of Home Affairs could bring more attention to coastal security through workshops in all affected states. Another option is for India to explore ways to seek lessons learned from the United States’ experience with improving coastal security under a federal system. A dialogue on coastal security could be one element of the two countries’ existing naval and maritime cooperation.61

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Nilanthi Samaranayake


As the Cold War ended, the U.S. Navy faced an uncertain future. The U.S. Navy’s Maritime Strategy of the 1980s was moot as its enemy of over 40 years rapidly became irrelevant. Furthermore, the Navy’s forces consisted of platforms that were state of the art, but tailored to fight the Soviet Navy rather than handling the regional conflicts, rogue nations, civil wars, and terrorists that were emerging as the primary challenges of the new era. In other words, neither strategy nor force structure fit the strategic circumstances. This development is strikingly similar to the situation facing the Navy in 1945. As Admiral Stansfield Turner put it, “[w]hen the [Second World] War ended […] there was no potential challenger to U.S. sea control. In essence, the U.S. Navy had too much of a monopoly to justify a continuing Sea Control mission. It was a Navy in quest of new missions.”

Even though it can be a contentious and drawn out process, adaptation of stated strategy is relatively simple. Compared to other aspects of military change, the process of writing a strategy is inexpensive and requires few substantial changes to the organisation. The proof of the strategy pudding is in converting a novel strategy into actual organisational change. That includes change in institutional culture; force structure and acquisition; as well as shifts in the attitudes and cultures of stakeholders outside of the organisation. This chapter describes, analyses, and explains the difficulties in changing the U.S. Navy after the Cold War through changes in strategy documents, force structure and culture. It concludes that significant military change depends on a sound strategic and operational rationale, political support and support within the service’s officer corps, and circumstances that are not fleeting in nature.

With the demise of the Soviet Union, there was no challenge to U.S. sea control, which allowed the Navy to shift its emphasis away from this aspect of naval warfare and concentrate on what it considered its most decisive contribution to U.S. foreign policy: power projection. The shift of emphasis in the Navy’s strategic documents was rapid and significant indeed, as the demise of the Soviet Union spurred the Navy to produce a flurry of publications. The most well-known and influential of these was . . . *From the Sea*, published in 1992. The Navy designed . . . *From the Sea* to bring the service into the post-Cold War era and keep it relevant in the eyes of its political masters and the public, as well as providing the Navy with a cohesive strategic approach that gave it a unifying goal. Much like the Cold War *Maritime Strategy*, the major selling point in . . . *From the Sea* was the ability to project power. In the former, the objectives were the flanks of the Soviet Union and, ultimately, the Soviet homeland itself, while . . . *From the Sea* was much less specific in terms of who the potential enemy was, but none the less made clear that it was power projection that was the Navy’s primary contribution.

Although sea control was much more central to the *Maritime Strategy*, its value as a prerequisite was no less appreciated in . . . *From the Sea*. With the Soviet fleet in mind, the U.S. Navy had to attain sea control before it could project any power onto the land. To the U.S. Navy both before and after the fall of the wall, sea control is the backbone that facilitates everything else. However, with no challenger on the high seas, the Navy started assuming to have sea control, barely mentioning it at all or only in passing. As stated in . . . *From the Sea*: “[w]ith the demise of the Soviet Union, the free nations of the world claim preeminent control of the seas and ensure

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freedom of commercial maritime passage.”

The Base Force, which was a strategic and force structure review of the US military as a whole, did not address sea control on the open ocean at all, and the 1991 Gulf War indeed illustrated the absence of any serious challenger to control of the sea—while showing great success for strike warfare and conventional operations. The operations in the Balkans provided similar lessons, as NATO and the U.S. successfully used strike warfare to end hostilities in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Even though the Navy acknowledged the challenges of operating in the littorals referring to issues such as mines, cruise missiles and tactical ballistic missiles—threats that had been a significant part of countering the bastion defences of the Soviet Union—these concerns were not acute. Nevertheless, the Navy understood the necessity of having sea control, it just did not need to emphasise it. Thus, . . . From the Sea differed quite significantly from its Cold War predecessor, with a different set of priorities. However, the changes were far from revolutionary, as they represented a significant shift in priorities between the Navy’s traditional core missions, rather than an introduction of new ones. Indeed, officers central in developing . . . From the Sea were expecting that, in the relative near future (15-20 years), another great power would attempt to fill the void that the demise of the Soviet Union had left. With such expectations, there were few incentives to radically change the Navy’s strategic thinking.

Thus, both Navy and Department of Defense documents, as well as the Navy’s operational experience in the early 1990s, reinforced the trend towards emphasising power projection over sea control. The Gulf War, the operations in the Balkans and those in Somalia were indeed indicative of

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5 To the US, the primary factor limiting operational efficiency in the Kosovo operation was thought to be NATO and the “war by committee” that NATO operations entailed. Ellen Hallams, The United States and NATO since 9/11: the transatlantic alliance renewed (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 44-45.

6 “… From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century,” 93.

the operating environment that the U.S. Navy engaged in over the course of the 1990s. None of these campaigns confronted the U.S. or its allies and coalition partners with significant challenges to sea control, so all consisted of a primary role of strike warfare, complemented by sanctions control and constabulary missions. To the Navy, the above missions confirmed the validity of the post-Cold War shift of emphasis away from the combination of aggressive sea control and power projection from the 1980s, and onto a singular emphasis on power projection.

As the Navy’s strategic thinking changed to keep up with the times, it started adapting its force structure. However, these adaptations were of a much shallower nature than the changes in strategy. The Base Force mandated a 25 per cent cut in US force levels, and for the Navy, that meant a reduction from 530 to 450 ships within 1995. The majority of these cuts affected the Knox-class frigates, a predominantly anti-submarine platform. All Knox-class vessels, 46 in total, were taken out of service, and the Navy had no plans to build a new class of frigates. Furthermore, the Navy started adapting its existing force structure to emphasise power projection over sea control. For example, the Navy cancelled the Seawolf-class of attack submarines, which was very expensive and had very limited capacity for missiles. Instead, it started developing what eventually became the Virginia-class, which has vertical launch system (VLS) tubes for cruise missiles. On the topic of cruise missiles, the Navy was introducing the Tomahawk at the time, and generally increasing the proportion of its ships with VLS capabilities. The Navy also shifted its inventory of carrier-based aircraft, planning to replace all air superiority F-14s, and its longer-ranged A-7s, with the multi-role F/A-18. With the exception of the Virginia-class submarines, the Navy developed all of the above programmes during the Cold War, so their existence was not due to a sudden shift in strategy. The fact that the Navy continued these programmes while the Seawolf programme was cancelled is testament to the importance of power projection. But most importantly, it makes it clear that the direction the Navy took after the collapse of the Soviet Union was largely a continuation of the Cold War force in a reduced format and somewhat emphasising power projection over sea control.

Challenges in the Littorals

The next shift in the U.S. Navy’s strategic statements occurred in 1997, the year after the Taiwan Strait Crisis. The tensions of 1995-96 were a watershed moment, both for China and for the United States. The virtual impurity of the U.S. Navy’s ships sent to the Taiwan Strait during that crisis sent alarm bells ringing in China, and the nation consequently set out on a path that led to heavy investments in what we know today as Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) defences.9 The crisis prompted the U.S. Navy to increase its emphasis on A2/AD challenges in Anytime, Anywhere.10 The source of this concern was the proliferation of advanced weapons and information technologies among potential U.S. enemies, and the perceived severity of this challenge was considerable. As the authors stated, “This is more than a sea-denial threat or a Navy problem; it is an area-denial threat whose defeat or negation will become the single most crucial element in projecting and sustaining U.S. military power where it is needed.”11 The Soviet Union presented a very similar challenge during the Cold War, so it represented a sudden reintroduction of these concerns.

In addition to A2/AD concerns, the U.S. Navy also reintroduced sea control in Anytime, Anywhere, stating that Mahan was right: navies are about more than just fighting other navies; they are powerful instruments of national policy whose special strength stems from their ability to command the seas. In fact, at the core of U.S. security requirements lies one prerequisite—sea control.12

The reference to Alfred Thayer Mahan and reintroduction of sea control was a clear recognition that the pre-eminence on the high seas that the U.S. Navy had enjoyed since 1991 would not be a permanent state.

However, any burgeoning attention to sea control met its end in the “Global War on Terrorism” after 9/11. The associated conflicts occupied the attention of not only the Navy, but the entire U.S. military for many years. Although sea control was the prerequisite for conducting these wars, it was not contested in any serious way, which did not provide an incentive for the Navy to emphasise it. Subsequent documents—primarily the Sea

12 Ibid.
Power 21 series published in late 2002 and early 2003—reflect this, as they did not address open ocean sea control in any comprehensive way. The authors assumed sea control, in much the same way as it had been for the entire post-Cold War era. The zig-zagging regarding sea control shows how easily the Navy changed central aspects of its strategic statements.

As the strategic statements further emphasised power projection, the force structure changed as well. However, the changes in force structure did not follow the shifts in the strategic documents. The force structure largely remained a smaller version of its Cold War incarnation, although with an emphasis on power projection. Projects that really pushed the boundaries faltered at some point, and the prime example of this is the Arsenal Ship. Designed to be a large, relatively simple platform, the Arsenal Ship was equipped with 512 VLS cells for firing Tomahawk cruise missiles and other land-attack weapons and was thus “unique and defied normal ship classification.”¹³ In essence, it would be a large “missile barge”¹⁴ designed “to provide U.S. regional military commanders with substantial additional in-theater or early-arriving firepower for use in the early phases of regional crises and conflicts.”¹⁵ There were two other programmes that successfully challenged the orthodoxy, however: the Zumwalt-class destroyer and the Littoral Combat ship (LCS).

As the LCS’s name suggests, the Navy wanted a ship designed for the contested operating environment of the littorals. However, in the Defense Planning Guidance for Fiscal Years 2003-2007, the Office of the Secretary of Defence instructed the Navy to develop a ship implicitly designed for contested environments in the context of terrorism, and failed and rogue states.¹⁶ Consequently, the Navy did not design the LCS type of warship to operate in conventional naval battles. The Navy had designed all other major combat vessels with a peer competitor in mind, and the LCS plans thus ran counter to the Navy’s culture. Consequently, the ship is perhaps the most controversial in the service’s recent history. The LCS class was initially planned to consist of 52 ships, however, the Navy currently wishes to

13 Ronald O’Rourke, “Navy DD(X) and LCS Ship Acquisition Programs: Oversight Issues and Options for Congress,” CRS Report for Congress (28 October 2004), 9.
14 Robert O. Work, conversation with Amund Lundesgaard, 19 September 2013.
15 O’Rourke (2004), 9.
shift procurement to a more traditional frigate after the 34th LCS, slowly replacing the LCS over time.\textsuperscript{17}

Together with LCS, the Zumwalt-class of destroyers made up the Navy’s future littoral surface combatants. It was to replace the void left by the retirement of the battleships in the early 1990s, providing Marines much needed fire support.\textsuperscript{18} Although not as controversial as the LCS, the Zumwalt still was contentious. Among other things, it lacked capabilities for ballistic missile and air defence, as well as significant anti-submarine capabilities, all of which are traditionally vital on multi-mission US Navy destroyers. At 14,000 tons, it was also large and costly. Thus, citing these issues in a congressional hearing in 2008, the Navy truncated the Zumwalt at three ships and restarted its Arleigh Burke destroyer programme instead. Although the Navy was not referring to near-peer competitors explicitly, the implications of those priorities clearly allude to its facing such challenges.

The cases of the Arsenal Ship, the LCS, and the Zumwalt-classes demonstrate the orthodoxy of the Navy, and the difficulty of introducing ships that run counter to its culture. Adapting the “conventional” force structure by emphasising aircraft and weapons that addressed the new situation after the Cold War was relatively uncontroversial. However, altering the basic capabilities of new generations of major surface combatants proved a bridge too far, and so the Navy merely made adaptations to their legacy platforms. Thus, the changes in the Navy force structure were quite modest, as the changes primarily affected weapons and aircraft, and not the ship mix.

However, there were quite significant changes in strategy and culture coming soon. As Robert C. Rubel, who was the Dean of Naval Warfare Studies at the Naval War College in 2010, stated: “In the two decades since [the Cold War], the U.S. Navy has enjoyed total command of the sea, so much so that it has stopped talking about sea control, even to the extent of forgetting how to.”\textsuperscript{19} Therefore, the greatest attempt at organisational change had yet to come.

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\textsuperscript{17} Ronald O’Rourke, “Navy Frigate (FFG[X]) Program: Background and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service R44972, 10 October 2019, 1.

\textsuperscript{18} The Navy also planned a new cruiser, which it cancelled in 2011.

The 2007 *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* (CS 21) was the first bona fide *strategy* document since the *Maritime Strategy* from the 1980s, and the document arguably broke entirely new intellectual and strategic ground within the Navy. The major shift was the transition to a systemic approach to naval and maritime affairs, as the Navy for the first time saw its role in light of protecting the liberal international system rather than in relation to a specific threat. In other words, CS 21 took a more holistic view of the strategic challenges facing the Navy. Grounded in this holistic view, the authors emphasised the *prevention* of conflict rather than just responding to them, as well as the joining of the world’s maritime forces in a Global Maritime Partnership, whose purpose was to defend the established maritime system. As it was stated, “[n]o one nation has the resources required to provide safety and security throughout the entire maritime domain.”

This cooperation had to become a permanent feature of the Navy’s approach to maritime security issues in general, as the authors stated that “[a]lthough our forces can surge when necessary to respond to crises, trust and cooperation cannot be surged.”

Even though the ideas in CS 21 were novel in terms of stated strategy, they were not new in terms of US Navy operations. HA/DR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief) and commerce protection operations had been part of the Navy’s repertoire for a long time on an ad hoc basis; they had just not been seen as a significant part of a coherent strategy. A set of special circumstances brought the holistic approach out of the strategic woodwork and into the limelight. Firstly, the War on Terror and associated conflicts and operations had highlighted the need for cooperation with

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23 Italics in original. Ibid., Maritime Strategic Concept.

other navies. 25 Furthermore, the 2004 tsunami in South-East Asia had a strong impact on the Navy’s priorities, as the goodwill effects of Operation Unified Assistance were very noticeable in the afflicted areas. This prompted the Navy to increase its attention to, and adopt a more proactive attitude towards, humanitarian assistance and disaster response. 26 Furthermore, the economic consequences of U.S. Gulf coast Hurricane Katrina in 2005 "highlighted the need to protect the world’s seventeen megaport complexes from terrorist attacks, an inference that further strengthened the conceptual tie between the Navy and the international economy." 27

Thus, CS 21 was in many ways ground-breaking, as it addressed topics that had long been a part of the Navy’s repertoire, but ignored as components of a wider strategy and thus previously relegated to a secondary status. The path from idea to strategy was not easy, however, as the proponents and critics of the approach waged an intellectual battle. Very simplified, the critics saw it as a dangerous diversion from the core task of the Navy: fighting and winning wars. All other missions were secondary in nature and should not guide strategic thinking or programmatic priorities. 28 The pushback against the concepts of the strategy was fierce indeed, and the substance of the opposition’s arguments suggests that the strategy was challenging the boundaries of the Navy’s culture. Previous shifts had not pushed the service’s limits by introducing new concepts, but rather shifted the emphasis within the traditional sea control-power projection dichotomy.

Regardless of how innovative CS 21 was, the particular circumstances that facilitated its development did not last for very long. Thus, plans to develop a new strategy emerged quite soon. Several factors contributed to the strategy’s demise, and in particular, the lack of support from Congress was decisive. 29 Furthermore, as the disagreements between proponents and critics of the CS 21 during its development showed, the strategy was highly controversial within the Navy, as it was counter to central tenets of the ser-

25 Ibid., 194-195, 210-212.
28 For a deep dive into this battle, see ibid., 172-238.
vice culture. Furthermore, China had been on the rise for quite a few years, and with the War on Terror and associated political priorities winding down, great power rivalry in Asia was starting to command significant political attention. The confluence of these developments provided the Navy with an opportunity to revert to the Cold War orthodoxy.

The result was the *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower R* (R for refresh or revision), which arguably laid the most innovative aspects of its predecessor to rest, and instead reverted to an approach strikingly similar to the Navy’s Cold War thinking. Granted, the authors do address undergoverned areas in the Middle East and Africa, which according to them are creating “conditions for regional instability ranging from piracy and illicit waterborne trafficking to support for terrorist activity.”

These references nevertheless come across as formalities, as the main challenges clearly are China, and to a lesser degree, Russia.

There are five traits that stand out in CS21R, and four of these set it apart from its 2007 predecessor. Firstly, the concerns about sea control were significantly more emphasised in 2015, taking a much more central place in the Navy’s strategic document than it had since the Cold War. Indeed, this ties in with the threat to access to the littorals, which was also elevated when compared to previous documents, and the 2015 threat was not just limited to the littorals, but to whole maritime regions. Secondly, there was a revamped focus on conventional operations. The reemphasis on conventional operations tied in with the Navy’s attitude to other operations, which is the third trait. Although it had not been discarded, HA/DR no longer was a central part of the Navy’s justification, as it had been demoted to a function of power projection, and furthermore, the Navy clearly preferred the Coast Guard to take the lead on maritime security issues. And the attitude toward maritime security was evident in the fact that the authors had removed the systemic justification, where the Navy’s rationale was in large part based on being the protector of the international system. Lastly, the major continuity from previous post-Cold War publications was the status of power projection. The emergence of potential challengers to sea control did not distract the Navy from its emphasis on the former, as the utility of sea control was still to facilitate the projection of power.

Navy force structure, shipbuilding plans and weapons acquisition have also changed direction. The most obvious case in point is the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS). As was mentioned above, the Navy truncated the LCS at 34 ships and the service is now looking for a heavier frigate design to replace the remaining 18 LCS. The reason for shifting the production to frigates was that the corvette-like warship was developed for a more benign operating environment than the one it would face in the contested environments where China is the potential adversary.31 The new frigate will be more heavily armed and have increased survivability compared to the LCS. Additionally, the Navy is currently acquiring new ship-borne anti-ship missiles to replace its aging Harpoon missile, which is outdated and outranged by those of potential adversaries.32 Alongside the efforts that the service is putting into directed energy, railguns and gun-launched guided projectiles, it is clear the Navy is gearing up for a conventional fight very similar to the one it planned during the Cold War. Combined with the return to Cold War style strategic thinking, the Navy has in many ways gone full circle.

The US Navy after the Cold War: Lessons for Military Change

Despite what are arguably revolutionary changes in the security situation after the Cold War, the Navy did not change significantly. The one major effort, in the form of Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower from 2007, petered out without having much of an impact on the Navy. The U.S. Navy’s experience with change after the Cold War teaches some lessons regarding the requirements for significant, successful and lasting change. Rather obviously, it is not enough that the security environment changes. The strategic and operational consequences of the changes in the security environment must be perceived as significant enough to make the organisation receptive to such changes, and not just relatively modest adaptations of the current organisation. The Navy shifted its strategic emphasis towards power projection and de-emphasised sea control in a rela-

tively significant manner in reaction to the revolutionary changes in the security environment in the first 15 years after the end of the Cold War. However, it did not change its strategic thinking or culture in a radical way. In terms of force structure, the service adapted a scaled-down version of its Cold War forces, with some relatively minor adaptations. The Navy thus perceived the end of the Cold War as having relatively limited impact on its core missions. Indeed, the expectation that a great power eventually would rise to challenge the U.S. seems to have permeated the Navy through most of the post-Cold War era, providing few incentives to change the Navy in any radical way.

When attempting to change a military organisation significantly, it is not enough to just write and publish a strategy. The Navy’s Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower from 2007 is a case in point. Firstly, the strategy lacked political support, as Congress was deeply critical to the new approach to seapower. Since Congress funds the Navy, its support is essential. Furthermore, the internal opposition to the strategy as the Navy was developing it suggests that many top officers, who are essential in ensuring that a new strategy is implemented throughout the service, were as sceptical as Congress. Lastly, the very special circumstances that led to CS 21, a confluence of the military operations associated with the War on Terror, humanitarian missions and Navy leaders that wanted to change the service’s strategic approach, led to a very weak base for such a radical change. Consequently, when circumstances changed somewhat, the strategy became a liability and the Navy reverted to orthodoxy. Therefore, based on the U.S. Navy’s experiences after the Cold War, changing a military organisation on a deeper and more fundamental level depends on a sound strategic and operational rationale, political support and support within the service’s officer corps, and circumstances that are not fleeting in nature.

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The Tsunami in South-East Asia in 2004 prompted the largest military disaster response in history. Encouraged by the success, increasing attention has been paid to the various humanitarian assistance and disaster relief activities conducted by US armed forces. Since 2006, the US Navy has deployed one of its two large hospital ships regularly to either Central and South America or the Asia–Pacific region to provide people in need with free care. These missions offer many opportunities to increase the soft power capital of the United States by forging ties with host nation governments and improving the image of the United States within the local population.

“What better way to knock down the hatred, the barriers of ethnic and religious groups that are afraid of America, and hate America, than to offer good medical policy and good health to these countries?” (Thompson 2004)

Introduction

The maritime strategy “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower” (United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard 2007) lists humanitarian assistance (HA) and disaster relief (DR) among the core competencies of US maritime forces. While in prior years, these tasks were treated as an “extra,” they have since been promoted to being equally as important as the four traditional naval missions of sea control, presence, deterrence, and power projection².


2 In recent years, the focus has shifted again more towards great power competition and fighting and winning wars. The document A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Navy, 2018) describes the USN as “a key enabler of the Joint Force’s ability to prevent China and
The US military has a long tradition of providing such humanitarian aid. During World War I, for example, President Woodrow Wilson used food supply as a form of disaster relief to counter the spread of Bolshevism and civil unrest (Zajtchuck 2003). A Center for Naval Analyses (Cobble, Gaffney, and Gorenburg 2005) study on US military responses to international situations between 1970 and 2003 identified only 22 combat operations compared with 366 HA/DR missions. These numbers show the importance and frequency of HA and DR, yet little has been written about the role and experience of military forces in these domains. With the unprecedented use of military assets during the Tsunami 2004 relief efforts, a new level of military involvement had been reached and continues to influence all future humanitarian operations. The often-cited success of US aid provided the impetus for more regular, scheduled, proactive humanitarian medical missions with US naval hospital ships as a platform. While traditional naval missions advance US interest, the contribution of HA/DR is still contested and needs to be more thoroughly evaluated. This article aims to explore the theoretical usefulness of military forces in the humanitarian arena by placing hospital ship missions in the context of the concept of soft power.  

**Defining the Concepts**

**Hard Power and Soft Power: Coercion versus Attraction**

The term “soft power” was coined by Joseph Nye in *Bound to Lead* (1990) who offers the following definition: “soft power is the ability to affect others through the cooptic means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcomes” (Nye 2011). Unlike hard power, which influences through coercion, soft power exerts a subtle influence. According to Nye (2004, 2011), the goal is to get others to want what you want without coercing them. Vuving (2009) suggests instead that getting others to accept what you want can be enough. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the United States had pursued a unilateral foreign policy and relied heavily on military means to resolve all security

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Russia from controlling the Eurasian rimland and its adjacent seas.” Nevertheless, military diplomacy remains an important contributor to advancing US interests.

3 For a more detailed discussion of important areas of research to actually measure the effectiveness of HA/DR missions see Forster (2015).
problems (Feste 2003; Nye 2011). The preemption doctrine of that time had removed any distinction between imminent and potential future threats. It assumed that grave threats were now always imminent. This thought process led to the devaluation of diplomacy and negotiation and shifted the emphasis to the use of immediate force, thereby failing to distinguish between short- and long-term threats and different adversaries. After many years of neglecting soft power approaches, a policy shift became visible with the release of the National Security Strategy (NSS) 2010 and the Quadrennial Defense Report (QDR) 2010. Both strategic documents emphasized a renewed US interest to invest in soft power. “As a global power, the United States has a broad range of tools for advancing its national interests (...). Whenever possible, we seek to pursue those interests through cooperation, diplomacy, economic development and engagement, and the power of America’s ideas and values” (QDR 2010).

Nye (2011) argues that while hard power is and will remain important, alone it is not sufficient. Power has different aspects and faces (Dahl 1961). The first face uses coercion or incentives to reach the desired outcome. The second controls actions to limit possible choices. The third face—soft power—creates and shapes beliefs, perceptions, and preferences. Only the first face of power is directly felt, while the two other faces exert a more subtle influence on their target but are allegedly nevertheless effective. More recently, Nye (2004) defined the combination of the hard power of coercion and payment with the soft power of persuasion and attraction as “smart power.” With their capability to exercise both soft and hard power, naval forces are a unique tool of smart power. This is also reflected in the 2007 naval strategy (United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard 2007). According to Elleman (2007, quoted in United States Navy 2010), “during the nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, the very thought that sea powers might regularly use naval platforms to deliver humanitarian aid, as opposed to cutting off and starving an enemy’s supply lines, would have seemed alien. In the twenty-first century, however, na-

4 The unclassified National Defense Strategy Summary (United States Department of Defense, National Defense Strategy Summary, Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2018) describes inter-state strategic competition as the primary challenge to US prosperity and security with the competitive military advantage of the United States as eroding. In this increasingly complex security environment, soft power and diplomacy remain important to sustain influence and power.

5 Incentives can come in the form of payments or inducements. Another form is negative sanctions, for example, taking away economic assistance previously provided.
tional power and prestige are more and more characterized by soft power. UNIFIED ASSISTANCE [the Tsunami relief operation in South-East Asia] showed that hard power assets like aircraft carriers can also be the best providers of soft power.”

Soft power has also attracted much criticism. Joffe (2006) cautions that soft power is still a form of power and “does not necessarily increase the world’s love for America.” And like all forms of power, it can still create enemies. Another weakness of soft power is that it lies within the people to decide how much influence it will have, and there is little to no control over how the actions will be perceived by the target population. Gray (2011:vi–viii) argues that “an important inherent weakness of soft power as an instrument of policy is that it utterly depends upon the uncoerced choices of foreigners. Sometimes their preferences will be compatible with ours, but scarcely less often they will not be.” In general, the concepts of attraction and persuasion and their translation into soft power are difficult to measure. But when trying to convince others to pursue soft power approaches, it is important to be able to demonstrate their effectiveness.

Peacetime Deployments of Naval Forces

The US Navy (USN) has been the predominant American military instrument of diplomacy, due largely to its greater mobility and flexibility compared to the other services (Turner 1974; Till 2009). Army and Air Force are more likely associated with posing a greater threat and destruction. Naval forces are less intrusive and offer a more subtle influence. This offers unique opportunities to create soft power. The diplomatic potential of navies has long been recognized by nations and can be traced back to the heritage of colonial powers that would dispatch their fleets to boost their prestige and to influence events ashore (Davidson 2009). While some argue that the use of coercive diplomacy is a thing of the past, others see an increasing need in an era in which the focus of the USN is shifting away from large-scale conflicts (Nailor 1984; Booth 1985; Ghosh 2001; Le Mi’ère 2011).

Naval diplomacy acts as a signal demonstrating US interest and concern in particular regions and countries; any naval deployment demonstrates US commitment and capabilities (Sanders 2007). At the lower end of the diplomatic spectrum are measures such as goodwill visits, exercises, and other confidence-building activities. At the higher end, armed suasion is the most forceful aspect of coercive diplomacy (Stocker 1998). Further traditional diplomatic peacetime activities center on cooperation and exercis-
es, military-to-military contacts, officer training, and access agreements as means of demonstrating and building positive relationships. All these activities can contribute to US soft power capital. During port calls, deployed sailors frequently help communities on land. Examples include volunteer work such as supporting school construction and maintenance, helping to build hospitals, and inviting foreign nationals aboard a US Navy ship. While such assistance activities are the by-product of routine port calls, humanitarian operations are sometimes deployed for the sole purpose of delivering assistance. By delivering aid, the United States demonstrate goodwill, reassure support, shape perceptions, build relations, and thus generate soft power.

For example, the disaster relief aid delivered in response to the Tsunami in South-East Asia resulted in a more positive attitude toward the United States, suggesting a positive effect of this display of soft power, as opposed to the traditional hard power use of military assets. After realizing the potential of health diplomacy, the United States decided to deploy the hospital ships USNS Mercy and USNS Comfort in regular missions to countries of interest in the Pacific Commands (PACOM) and Southern Commands (SOUTHCOM) areas of responsibility (AOR). In addition to “winning hearts and minds,” these missions serve as a training and relationship building opportunity for US and foreign forces as well as engage in capacity building for future disasters.

These ambitions beyond improving the health of the target population make humanitarian assistance a tool for politics. This has triggered much criticism and remains controversial.

US Hospital Ships

Today the USN operates two hospital ships. The USNS Comfort and the USNS Mercy are both converted San Clemente-class supertankers re-fitted into floating trauma centers. Both vessels are commanded by the US Military Sealift Command (MSC); one is maintained on each coast (Mercy is stationed in San Diego, CA, Comfort in Norfolk, VA) with a small civilian crew and an embarked core naval medical team. The ships are 894 feet long and when fully operational have 63 civilians, 956 naval hospital staff, and 258 naval support staff. Both hospital ships are equipped with a 1,000-bed hospital facility, 12 operating rooms, and a helicopter deck and side ports to take on patients when at sea. This is important as many ports lack infrastructure for the docking of such large vessels, which often have to an-
chor off the coast. Thus, the majority of patients arrive by helicopter and a smaller number by boat.


US Navy hospital ship missions are organized by PACOM and SOUTHCOM, respectively, but many different actors are involved in the planning phase and the mission itself. The country choice is based on a complex decision-making process and is heavily supported by the US ambassadors to the countries in the region. While cooperation between all actors needs to be improved in the future, the visits are increasingly characterized as “whole-of-government interagency missions” (United States Department of Defense 2012). As part of every mission, medical staff from foreign countries and an increasing number of NGOs join the crew. Both the US government and NGOs benefit from this collaboration. The hospital ship provides the latter with transportation and housing, and NGOs are often better informed about the needs of the populations, as well as local customs and traditions, and might even have worked on the ground before. However, despite this increased collaboration, civilian agencies remain critical of these missions, and support does not extend far beyond the involved NGOs. Concerns such as the short-term focus, militarization of aid[?] and lack of integration with other HA programs remain.

While the disaster relief after the Tsunami came in the form of an aircraft carrier, hospital ships are not warships. They are white hulls with a red cross, recognized as protected platforms in whatever capacity they serve (Grunawalt 2005). Whereas the use of aircraft carriers for disaster relief shows a hard power tool fulfill a soft power function, health diplomacy by US Navy hospital ships does not involve hard power warships. Yet hospital ships convey US military might and power. A Navy capable of

\(^6\) In addition to these regular deployments the two hospital ships have responded to natural disasters (USNS Comfort 2017 hurricane Marina in Puerto Rico) and the USNS Mercy engaged in a subject matter expert exchange with personnel from the Chinese hospital ship Peace Ark during the military exercise “RIMPAC” 2014.
maintaining a hospital ship of this size is no doubt capable of large-scale operations. The size of the ship can both demonstrate a larger commitment to politicians and trigger admiration by the patients and observers. This argument also helps to underline the signaling power these large vessels convey that individual Department of State initiatives cannot provide.

The Soft Power Potential of Hospital Ship Missions

Soft Power Currencies

There are different ways to measure the soft power potential of military humanitarian assistance. Vuving (2009) suggested replacing the question, “What constitutes soft power?” with “What generates attraction?” thereby focusing on the attraction component of the definition. He defines three power currencies that generate attraction and thus soft power: gratitude, admiration, and shared ideals, values, causes, and visions. The first form of soft power currency is created through the positive attitude of agents when engaging with the clients. Soft power is generated by gaining gratitude and sympathy. The second soft power currency is concerned with the actual work done to create soft power, where the client learns from the success of the agent resulting in the power of admiration. The third soft power currency is represented by the shared ideals, values, causes, and visions of the agent. The need for moral support and the tendency to join forces with those who pursue the same goal are thought to work toward generating this currency of soft power. Thus, for this currency, the power lies in inspiring the client. These three elements can be applied to hospital ship visits to better understand their value to the United States.

The power of being benign can take many forms but mostly lies in “doing good to others.” The service recruiting slogan already presents the US Navy as “A Global Force For Good.” The mission of hospital ship visits in particular is to do good and offer free help and care to people in need. Ad-

7 The United States is not the only country to deploy military hospital ships. China has also recognized the power of health diplomacy and the soft power potential of humanitarian assistance. The first deployment of the Chinese hospital ship Peace Ark to the Gulf of Aden in 2010 underscored the Chinese soft power interests in Africa (Peter Mackenzie, Red Crosses, Blue Water: Hospital Ships and China’s Expanding Naval Presence, Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 2011). Since then, the Peace Ark, in almost yearly deployments named “Harmonious Mission,” has visited various countries in Latin and South America, Asia and Africa.
mirmal Jim Stavridis (2010), former commander of the US Southern Command, observed the positive influence US naval forces exerted in Latin America and the Caribbean and the capability of military humanitarian assistance to improve the national image of the United States and its military forces in particular. He found that initiatives to improve health security demonstrate that the nation cares and is willing to help the people in the region, whereas counter-narcotics and terrorism activities are largely perceived as focusing on narrow US interests. Bonventre et al. (2009) conclude that “hospital ships’ visits to Central and South America have paid dividends not only for the skills of military medics but also in influencing both populations and government leaders to view the United States and its military in a more favorable light.”

The presence of US NGOs and civilian actors in addition to the military can possibly help to further enhance the perceived benignity of these missions. Another important factor is the level of global attention. Hospital ship missions are planned months in advance and are not “dependent” on natural or artificial disasters and are thus less under the watch of global community. After a large natural disaster or war, the global community expects US support and aid. Hospital ship missions, while still helping people in need, seldom make a difference between life and death. Because only limited attention is paid to these visits, it can be argued that the level of goodwill is even higher because the United States is less likely to receive any of the benefits from the positive global recognition generally associated with disaster response. Yet the population and government may interpret proactive humanitarian assistance as indicative of a stronger commitment and sign of goodwill.

Admiration can be triggered by a variety of attributes, among them a strong military, a wealthy economy, advanced science and technology, or success. The fact that the United States can deploy large vessels to help people in need demonstrates capability, an important indicator for the potential to elicit admiration. Similarly, only a wealthy economy can afford to undertake proactive humanitarian assistance. This show of capability and goodwill can generate admiration which positively translates into imitation and respect. Vuving (2009) also argues that admiration can help to overcome suspicion and hostility, while working toward cooperation and understanding. Ideally, clients would seek US advice in other matters and show respect for other American decisions by their support of them. Of course, it is difficult to determine in practice how this support should manifest itself as it becomes manifest on different levels and venues. Activities can range from backing of small-scale US diplomatic initiatives in the host country or region to United Nations voting. Depending on the de-
sired outcome, an increase in bilateral diplomatic activities may be enough. Imitation is even more difficult to measure, and certainly respect does not have to translate into support for US policies.

Shared ideals, values, causes, and visions are very important in international relations. Striving for a common goal is said to encourage cooperation and friendship. It builds confidence in moral authority and legitimacy of the agent. By caring for the health of the local population, the US and the host nation government share a common goal. This again can translate into stronger relations and support for the United States and a more favorable attitude toward the country overall. Ideally, cooperation during the mission translates into cooperation in other matters and shared ideals, values, causes, and visions encourage understanding and foster trust for future interactions.

Hospital Ship Mission Challenges

Hospital ship missions carry some of the risks described above. As mentioned earlier, one of the weaknesses of soft power is that it lies within the recipient people to decide how much power it will have, and there are limits on how the actions will be perceived by the target population and host government. Because payoffs are not immediate and are rather manifested in “storing up political capital” (Nye 2004), it is difficult to attribute favorable outcomes to specific missions as results may be years away. “Nonetheless,” Nye (2004) argues, “the indirect effects of attraction and a diffuse influence can make a significant difference in obtaining favorable outcomes in bargaining situations. Otherwise leaders would insist only on immediate payoffs and specific reciprocity, and we know that is not always the way they behave.” The United States, Nye says (2004), effectively used soft power after the Second World War to form alliances and institutions with common goals. Gratitude, admiration, and shared ideals, values, causes, and visions all helped to forge these coalitions. These developments take time, and similarly it might take time before hospital ship missions to translate into soft power. Conversely, however, it is also possible that host nations reciprocate favors immediately after the visit, rather than storing political capital, resulting in only short-term influence.

The problem of perception is very relevant to humanitarian assistance. While hospital ship missions offer many opportunities to attract and persuade, the potential negative effects should not be overlooked. Problems
include the limited time spent in each country\textsuperscript{8}, the resulting restricted number of patients receiving treatment, and unavailability of necessary follow-up care, which, in the worst case, may worsen health problems. Additionally, unrealistic expectations can trigger dissatisfaction with US efforts and consequently negatively affect public opinion. Furthermore, the population could be frustrated that the United States might not come back to the same place, meaning after a few days of top-level care, they have to rely on the local capacities again. Such considerations might turn the gained trust into anger. From a government’s perspective, problems can arise when the population becomes dissatisfied with the current health services prompted by the high-level care during the hospital ship visits. For example, while Bonventre et al. (2009:18) found positive effects of the deployments to Central and South America, they also observed that “the Mercy’s visit to Indonesia was more problematic, because the standard of care delivered far exceeded what the Indonesian government was able to provide after the ship departed, and Indonesia claimed that this had undermined its legitimacy and authority.” Similarly an article in the Tico Times (Williams 2011) from Costa Rica described how many patients had voiced complaints about inattentive national hospitals. While they often have to wait for years to get appointments at the local hospital, one woman is cited saying “The gringos come here and give me a check-up in 2 days.” Such considerations might reverse the positive effect of gratitude from a government’s perspective.

As it is argued that soft power currencies take time to develop and even more time to translate into power, one single hospital ship visit is not likely to trigger host nation support for US policies or long-lasting positive attitudes toward the United States in the host population. Gratitude and admiration for example can still be felt but may fade after a few weeks. It may thus be important to provide a certain continuity of aid and consider a return of the hospital ship during the next deployment. If, however, the United States wants more immediate payoffs, continuity is not as important and “renting” current influence can be sufficient.

Up to now, the United States largely has relied on measuring efforts rather than using effectiveness to evaluate hospital ship missions. Success is measured by counting the numbers of surgeries or treated patients. While

\textsuperscript{8} This issue was addressed in the 2012 PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP mission. Unlike in earlier years, the vessel spent almost two weeks in every port. Thus, instead of visiting as many countries as possible, the focus lay on extending each stay for as long as possible (see PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP 2012, \url{http://www.cpf.navy.mil/pacific-partnership/2012/}).
these numbers are certainly important, they fail to capture the bigger picture about enduring impacts and how these missions can increase US soft power and support national security objectives. Thus, if one wants to answer the question whether, in a fiscally constrained environment, military humanitarian assistance should be continued, more measures of effectiveness have to be defined and evaluated.

**Conclusion**

My goal has been to position hospital ship missions in the context of soft power. Hospital ship visits are a good tool for signaling that the United States cares about the well-being of a specific group or of people in need and attaches importance to the forging of partnerships. Such operations have the power to influence both populations and governments and offer soft power benefits to the United States in addition to providing medical aid to people in need. Given the increasing importance of global health, this is a timely approach to advance cooperation and security. In theory, these visits offer the possibility to increase US soft power capital with the help of the currencies of gratitude, admiration and shared ideals, values, causes, and visions. In the future, more research should focus on supporting these theoretical conclusions in form of data measuring the actual effectiveness of these missions.

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Regional Conflict, Hydrocarbon Dreams, and Great Power Competition: Considerations for U.S. Naval Strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean

Eric V. Thompson & Sarah Vogler

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 ushered in a geopolitical era during which the United States and its maritime forces maintained unrivaled superiority at sea. In the nearly three decades since, the U.S. Navy (USN) has carried out a range of activities at and from the sea in support of American security, diplomatic, and economic interests around the globe. These include, advancing and maintaining freedom of navigation, combatting terrorists, projecting power ashore and responding to a range of crises and conflicts. During this period, no adversary or competitor could match or effectively counter the capabilities which the USN could bring to bear at or from the sea.

The global security environment is now in the midst of another shift wherein two significant nuclear-armed countries are expanding their maritime power at a time when their respective relationships with Washington have become competitive, or even adversarial. This shift in the international security environment has introduced what the U.S. National Defense Strategy calls an era of “Inter-state strategic competition,” more commonly referred to as “Great Power Competition” (GPC).¹ Both the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China are developing the means to compete with and counter the United States diplomatically, informationally, militarily, and economically both proximate to their territory and in regions farther afield. Russia has rebuilt, redesigned, and reorganized its armed forces and China continues to grow its military strength, with a particular focus on expanding and extending its maritime power. Where the U.S. Navy was once able to sail, operate, and influence relatively unconcerned of, and uncontested by the actions of others, it now must contend with competitors who have means to undermine American interests and impact USN activities and objectives.

Against this evolving GPC backdrop, the Eastern Mediterranean continues to be a region of strategic importance to the United States. American security commitments in the region, both to its NATO allies and other regional states such as Israel and Egypt, have driven a near constant naval presence in those waters during the three decades of U.S. naval primacy. A primary reason for this is that in addition to being the home of many American friends and allies, the region is site of several potential flashpoints\(^2\) that may erupt in, or spill into, the maritime domain. Crises could develop at sea or be triggered by the outbreak of a conflict ashore that has a direct manifestation in the maritime domain. In addition to longstanding disputes among regional countries, competition between the United States, Russia, and China in this part of the Mediterranean could lead to new tensions and/or exacerbate any emergent crisis.

This chapter examines the drivers and manifestations of increasing Russian and Chinese activity in the Eastern Mediterranean and their resulting increase in naval activity in the region. It considers what the growing Russian and Chinese naval activity in the region might mean for U.S. interests, the USN, and security more broadly in the region. The chapter then looks closely at two of the most important sources of conflict and regional competition in the Eastern Mediterranean—the Syrian civil war, and the race to develop offshore gas fields and related infrastructure—and considers how the expansion of Russian and Chinese interests and the resultant increasing naval presence may affect those dynamics.

**Key External Interests in the Eastern Mediterranean at the Dawn of Great Power Competition**

**United States**

In the most basic sense, the U.S. is a *status quo* power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Political stability, a peaceful security environment, free and open markets, and the primacy of American influence have been the predominant trends (with a few notable exceptions) in the region for the last thirty years. U.S. interests are well-served by a stable, peaceful, democratic and cooperative Europe, a robust NATO alliance, peace and security

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\(^2\) For the purposes of the chapter, “flashpoints” are defined as sources of tension between regional actors that could lead to a conflict.
for Israel and Egypt, and stability in Lebanon while playing the role of favored, if not indispensable, partner to nearly every state in the region.

Forward deployed naval presence has been a staple of U.S. maritime strategy in the Mediterranean. According to the Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority 2.0 (January 2019), the mission of the Navy is to “be ready to conduct prompt and sustained combat incident to operations at sea.” Furthermore, it “will protect America from attack, promote American prosperity, and preserve America’s strategic influence.” However, with the simultaneous emergence of both Russia and China as strategic competitors to the U.S., the national rebalance of military presence and posture to the Pacific, the continuing demands for forces in around the Arabian Gulf, the military—in particular the Navy—does not have the option of sizable increases in sustained military presence in the Mediterranean without major consequences for other theaters.

The United States has sought to mitigate the challenges posed by the emerging global strategic order—and the pressures it puts on overall force availability—by seeking to implement a more flexible and dynamic manner of deploying and employing its forces. The concept of “Dynamic Force Employment” (DFE), introduced in the 2018 National Defense Strategy, seeks to maximize the nation’s military ability to impact adversary decision-making by being less operationally predictable, while retaining strategic predictability.

As then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford explained in testimony to Congress,

The National Defense Strategy directs the Joint Force to ‘introduce unpredictability to adversary decision-makers through Dynamic Force Employment.’ Dynamic Force Employment allows us to develop a wide range of proactive, scalable options and quickly deploy forces for emerging requirements while maintaining readiness to respond to contingencies.4


In other words, the United States intends to influence adversary decision-making by varying operational patterns and timelines, but do so in a way that conveys consistent strategic intent – namely, deterring adversaries and assuring partners and allies.\(^5\)

Under America’s current forward deployed posture for forces in the Mediterranean, United States Naval Forces Europe (USNAVEUR) has four Arleigh-Burke-class destroyers permanently based in the European theater, augmented by other naval platforms on a rotational basis. This current posture provides a limited number of platforms to conduct operational and other activities in peacetime or in response to a crisis. Given ongoing mission requirements for these destroyers in the region, especially for ballistic missile defense, there is not much additional U.S. Navy capacity continually available to address increasing competition with other maritime powers.\(^6\)

As such, the US Navy’s ability to promote status quo outcomes in the Eastern Mediterranean can most likely only come through use of both the force homeported in the region and other elements of the Navy that come forward under DFE deployments, not via any major increase in steady-state homeported or permanently assigned forces. These likely force limitations provide the backdrop for a region in which competitors and adversaries seek to exploit the region’s economic potential, displace U.S. influence, and at times foment political instability. If the United States continues to value a visible American naval presence and a robust array of unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral activities and operations in the Mediterranean, it will have to find ways to do this without major sustained force increases.\(^7\)

While such an approach may require some creative thinking, planning and execution, it is not beyond the reach of naval planners and strategists. Then-Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson noted that “the Navy, by its nature, is predisposed to being dynamic and moving around.”\(^8\) He offered the 2018 deployment of the \textit{USS Harry S. Truman} \(^5\) Megan Eckstein, “CNO: ‘Dynamic Force Employment’ Could Allow More High-End Training for Strike Groups,” \textit{USNI News}, 16 May 2018, https://news.usni.org/2018/05/16/cno-dynamic-force-employment-allow-high-end-training-strike-groups.
\(^7\) Ibid.

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Carrier Strike Group, as an early example of operationalizing the concept of Dynamic Force Employment in support of U.S. interests in the region. During that deployment, the USS Harry S. Truman Strike Group conducted operations north of the Arctic Circle for the first time in 30 years, as well as flying missions against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), conducting high-end training with the Royal Navy and French Navy, and participating in the largest iteration of NATO’s Trident Juncture exercise to date.

Since this inaugural DFE deployment, the U.S. Navy has continued to execute periodic highly visible carrier operations to reinforce the capability and scalability of U.S. naval power in the European theater. In April 2019, the U.S. Navy had two carrier strike groups operating together with NATO allies in the Mediterranean. This was only the second time in twenty years that two U.S. aircraft carriers operated together there at the same time. “In the era of great power competition, particularly in the maritime domain, one carrier strike group provides tremendous operational flexibility and agility,” commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe Admiral James Foggo noted at the time. “Two carrier strike groups operating simultaneously ... provides an unprecedented deterrent against unilateral aggression, as well as combined lethality,” Foggo said. “It also should leave no doubt to our nations’ shared commitment to security and stability in the region.” U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Huntsman noted, “When you have 200,000 tons of diplomacy that is cruising in the Mediterranean — this is what I call diplomacy. This is forward-operating diplomacy, nothing else needs to be said.” Vice Admiral Lisa Franchetti added “Dual-carrier operations here in the Mediterranean showcase the inherent flexibility and scalability maritime forces provide to the joint force, while demonstrating our ironclad commitment to the stability and security of the region.”

Despite these occasional surges, in this era of limited force availability in European waters, the U.S. Navy seems likely to continue to grapple with how it can best plan and execute naval operations in the Eastern Mediterranean to advance national strategic objectives. Unless things change significantly in the U.S. approach to global naval force allocation and employment, presence operations, port calls, demonstrations of combat capability, and joint and cooperative deployments and exercises with regional navies—the traditional tools that the U.S. Navy can use to reinforce its role

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in regional affairs—will need to be executed creatively given limited permanent forces and a somewhat unpredictable DFE toolkit.

Russia

Russia’s increasing interest and naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean is not by chance. According to Michael Kofman, one of the United States’ leading subject matter experts, Moscow fully embraces a burgeoning roll in Great Power Competition. He notes that,

The Russian strategy for great power competition begins with a decision to establish credible conventional and nuclear deterrence, positively shaping the military balance, which paradoxically grants Moscow confidence to engage in indirect competition against the United States. This is a strategy of cost imposition and erosion, an indirect approach which could be considered a form of raiding. As long as conventional and nuclear deterrence holds, it makes various form of competition below the threshold of war not only viable, but highly attractive.10

After years of relative absence, Russia has become increasingly present and assertive in the Mediterranean Sea. According to Dmitry Gorenburg, another leading expert on its military affairs, “For Russia, the Mediterranean symbolizes the larger competition between Moscow and Washington.”11 The country’s strategy in the Mediterranean is focused on three key goals:12

1. Taking advantage of the Mediterranean’s geographical position to improve Russia’s security,
2. Using Russia’s position in the Mediterranean to increase its status as an alternative world power to the United States, and
3. Providing support for the Syrian regime.

12 Ibid.
Central to this strategy is the re-establishment of continual naval presence in the Mediterranean. In January 2013, Russia conducted its largest naval maneuvers there since the end of the Cold War. During his visit to the Black Sea Fleet in February of that year, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stressed that the “Mediterranean region was the core of all essential dangers to Russia’s national interests” and that continued fallout from the Arab Spring increased the importance of this region. Shortly thereafter, he showcased a new Russian naval policy by announcing the decision to establish a Navy Department task force in the Mediterranean “on a permanent basis.”

Following Shoigu’s remarks, the Russian Federation Navy stood up a permanent naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Syrian port of Tartus, with a rotating squadron of ships sourced largely from the Black Sea Fleet. The re-emergence of the Soviet-era 5th Squadron, now termed the Mediterranean Task Force (MTF) signaled a sort of return of the Russian Navy’s ability to project power and operate in areas farther afield from home. The MTF supports Russian ground forces in Syria and projects national power in NATO’s southern flank.

Initially cobbled together with the few older surface vessels capable of sustaining operations away from their homeports, the MTF now comprises the RFN’s newest surface combatants, which are equipped with Kalibr-class land-attack, antisurface, and antisubmarine missiles. An agreement with Syria has allowed the MTF to be reinforced with two of the RFN’s newest Project 636 “improved Kilo-class” attack submarines, which have been permanently stationed at Tartus since 2017. Submarines from the Northern Fleet have also been reported as deploying to the Mediterranean, sometimes as part of the MTF but occasionally for independent operations.

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14 Ibid.
Two major developments have facilitated Russia’s ability to stand up a significantly more capable MTF. Since 2011, Russia has been conducting a modernization and reinvestment effort in its military forces and capabilities via the State Armaments Program (SAP). As part of SAP-2020, Russia poured the largest share of its military spending into reviving its naval forces, which allowed the state to conduct major upgrades to its older platforms and build new classes of surface and subsurface vessels. The Russian military industrial complex has also been focused on developing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and electronic warfare (EW) capabilities.\footnote{Roger McDermott, “Russia’s Advances in Electronic Warfare Capability,” \textit{Real Clear Defense}, 4 October 2019, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2019/10/04/russias_advances_in_electronic_warfare_capability_114786.html.}

Although Russia faced challenges in fulfilling the initial plan for the numbers of ships to be built, the first phase of SAP has been modestly successful. The fleets of the RFN have been significantly reinforced with new and modernized platforms that have upgraded weapons systems and capabilities. The second phase of SAP (2018–2027) is focused on serial production of the new classes of ships developed in the first phase, making it likely that the RFN order of battle will continue to expand in the next 10 to 15 years.\footnote{Gorenburg (2019).}

The second development was Russia’s 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Russia’s Black Sea Fleet had been leasing its home port at Sevastopol from Ukraine, the terms of which had restricted the number and types of ships it could keep there and prohibited the deployment of air platforms and air defense batteries. The annexation effectively removed those restrictions, allowing the Russian Navy to build out the capabilities of its military forces in Crimea. Russia has since leveraged the territory as a base for power projection into the Mediterranean and beyond.\footnote{Igor Delanoe, “Russia’s Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force,” \textit{CNA Analysis & Solutions}, IOP-2019-U-020190-Final (June 2019), https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/IOP-2019-U-020190-Final.pdf.}

While most of the naval units deployed to the Eastern Mediterranean are light vessels, they can patrol the Levant on a continuing basis, thanks to Russia’s growing support infrastructure in the region including the naval support facility in Tartus, a naval facility in Latakia, and bilateral agreements with Cyprus (Limassol) and Malta (Valetta) authorizing warships to visit these ports for logistical operations. Furthermore, the Mediterranean Task Force benefits from air cover provided by Russian air-
craft and air defense assets in Syria. As a result, the Eastern Mediterranean has become a relatively safe environment for the Russian Navy despite being outside of contiguous maritime spaces.\textsuperscript{20}

Russia’s increased submarine operations in the Mediterranean, including its permanent presence off the coast of Syria, create a significant increased demand for U.S. and allied anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and reconnaissance resources. Russian media has claimed that the Russian Navy has tracked a U.S. \textit{Ohio}-class submarine.\textsuperscript{21} In 2018, British media reported that two Russian submarines (presumably \textit{Kilos}) chased one of its \textit{Astute}-class nuclear attack submarines off the coast of Syria. The Royal Navy boat was in the area to participate in allied missile strikes in response to the Syrian government’s use of chemical weapons. The alleged shadowing by the \textit{Kilos} may have prevented the British submarine from firing its Tomahawks, though there is reason for skepticism about these open source accounts.\textsuperscript{22}

Gorenburg notes that,

Although the Russian Navy’s missions in the Mediterranean are primarily related to [Syria]… conventional deterrence has come to play an increasingly important role since the development of a ship-based cruise missile capability. The Russian Navy has sought to establish credible maritime conventional deterrence versus NATO through the combination of air defenses and cruise missile–equipped ships, which work together to signal that any use of NATO naval forces against Russian ships and facilities would be highly costly for the adversary.\textsuperscript{23}

The RFN has demonstrated its ability to rapidly deploy additional ships to augment the MTF and guard strategic equities. In August 2018, the MTF was augmented with ten surface combatants from the Baltic Fleet, Northern Fleet, and Caspian Flotilla and a tanker, ostensibly in order to dissuade

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
U.S. naval forces from potentially conducting strikes against Syrian government sites.\textsuperscript{24} This was the largest composition of the MTF since Russia’s military operations in Syria began in 2015. The ships were reinforced with airpower, Tu-160 bombers and Su-33 and Su-30SM fighter jets, in addition to other aircraft deployed to Khmeimim Air Base near Damascus.\textsuperscript{25} The enlarged task force remained off the coast of Syria for several weeks, and held antiair and antisubmarine warfare maneuvers and mine countermeasure operations in early September. Of note, these drills coincided with Russia’s annual large-scale strategic operational exercise, \textit{Vostok}-2018, and so while there was an operational demand for the build-up, it also demonstrated Russia’s ability to support two major military activities concurrently.\textsuperscript{26}

Perhaps just as significantly for Russia, its MTF has allowed it to engage with Mediterranean allies and demonstrate its shipbuilding and weapons development. The MTF has conducted port visits and exercises with Cyprus, Egypt, and Turkey, as well as joint exercises with China. In the press, Russian officials have underscored that they are a maritime force to be reckoned with, which will defend itself and its allies from Western aggression. When the US Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, referenced a potential maritime blockade to constrain Russian energy activities in the Middle East, a former RFN chief and past Black Sea Fleet commander, Admiral Viktor Komoyedev, countered by saying that the country could (and would) introduce a convoy to accompany every vessel going to and from Syria.\textsuperscript{27} This language is reminiscent of the 5\textsuperscript{th} Squadron’s appointed role of protecting the Soviet Union’s Arab allies from the United States and Israel, especially as Komoyedev explicitly referred to Israel’s cooperation and support of the United States.\textsuperscript{28}

Over the longer term, given future shipbuilding plans, Russia will continue to be able to maintain a Mediterranean Task Force of 10 to 15

\textsuperscript{24} “Russian Navy deploys biggest task force in recent time to Mediterranean – military expert,” \textit{Interfax} in English, 28 August 2018.
\textsuperscript{26} Of note, during Russia’s 2017 major strategic operational exercise, Zapad, Russian forces in Syria were attacked by jihadists in Idlib, who “threatened to encircle and overrun Russian positions.” Michael Kofman, cited in Iddon (2018).
\textsuperscript{27} “Russia will not let U.S. organize naval blockade – Russian admirals,” \textit{Interfax} in English, 1 October 2018.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
ships. Similarly, it will likely be able to maintain a larger contingent of submarines in the Mediterranean than it did before 2014. Some caveats are necessary, in that this assumes that Russia’s ship building industry is able to continue to repair, modernize, and build new platforms with at least the present level of success. The Mediterranean will likely continue to play a key role in Russian naval strategy because of its strategic significance as an access point to southern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. As Gorenburg notes, “By building up its naval forces, Russia is hoping to circumscribe NATO access to the region, protect Russia’s southern flank, and assist its current and potential future client states in the region.”

China

While Russia may pose a more immediate military challenge to American activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, China is also proving that it too considers the region to be promising venue for advancing its interests and decreasing U.S. influence. By almost every economic metric, Chinese investment and involvement in the countries that comprise the wider Mediterranean has surged since the early 2000s. As Magnus Nordenman notes,

For China, the broader Mediterranean region is of real interest in terms of both energy security and trade. The broader Mediterranean region, North Africa and extending down to the Gulf in particular, is also an important source for China’s supply of energy. It is far from unusual that commercial and energy interests are usually followed by a military presence, at least on a rotating basis. . . . The Mediterranean

29 Gorenburg (2019).
30 Ibid.
31 Alice Ekman, Director of China Research and IFRI’s division of Asian Studies notes that Chinese officials, ministries, and academic researchers rarely use the term “Mediterranean.” Instead, they are more likely to refer to sub-regions, i.e. “southern Europe” or “northern Africa” and consider them depending on the geographical division of their institution. Ekman notes that this context and bureaucratic compartmentalization suggests Chinese diplomacy does not address the Mediterranean region in its entirety. As such, it is difficult to speak of a “Mediterranean strategy” in Chinese diplomatic discourse (Alice Ekman, “China in the Mediterranean: An Emerging Presence,” Notes de l’IFRI, 23 February 2018, 7, https://www.ifri.org/en/publications/notes-de-lifri/china-mediterranean-emerging-presence).
constitutes the western end of the “New Silk Road,” the Chinese project to link China with markets and producers across Central Asia and into Europe and the Middle East.32

China’s investment in the region appears to seek to position it to be able to lay the foundation for the expansion of the maritime Silk Road and access farther into Europe.33

Indeed, China has steadily become one of the top trade partners for all the countries in South Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Although compared to Europe and other advanced economies most of the Middle Eastern and North Africa countries are not (yet) important markets for Chinese products, China aims at integrating them in its global chains of production within the framework of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) and make them example of a new, modern, and efficient, “made in China” brand. Consistently, the number of engineering contracts awarded to Chinese companies and of Chinese workers in the region have been surging.34

China’s foreign direct investment (FDI) in Mediterranean countries has risen from less than five billion USD in 2009 to over 35 billion in 2017.35 Cooperation between China and these countries forms the “European extension” of the maritime route and creates a “China-Indian Ocean-Africa-Mediterranean Sea Blue Economic Passage.”36 As it has in other regions, China is investing heavily in Mediterranean ports: Piraeus in Greece, Cherchell in Algeria, Port Said and Alexandria in Egypt, the ports of Ashdod and Haifa in Israel, the ports of Savona, Triest, Genoa, and Naples in Italy, the Kumport terminal at Turkey’s Ambarli,37 and the Sines port in Portugal.38

33 Ekman (2018), 14.
37 Ibid., 14.
38 Zhen Liu, “Portugal signs agreement with China on Belt and Road Initiative,” South China Morning Post, 5 December 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/
China’s growing interests in the region are also reflected in diplomatic efforts. Beginning in the early 2000s, China established sub-regional cooperation forums with Africa (2000), the Arab world (2004), and Southern Europe (2012). Included in the China-Southern Europe forum are Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, and Malta. These links cover areas of maritime and agricultural cooperation but provide the foundation for strengthened economic and political cooperation and, per Ekman, create the conditions necessary for expanding cooperation to additional sectors, such as transport and new technologies, and potentially, to other countries in the sub-regions.39

Since the early 2000s, China’s economic modernization has fed the country’s military modernization. The 2013 Defense White Paper announced its intent “to accelerate the modernization of its forces for comprehensive offshore operations, develop advanced submarines, destroyers and frigates.” Like Russia, China is accelerating its naval shipbuilding program, including aircraft carrier capabilities.40 China has also increased its naval activities around the globe including conducting counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, opening a naval base in Djibouti, conducting non-combatant evacuation operations from Libya and Lebanon, participating in exercises with the Russian Navy in the Black Sea, sending a task force into the Baltic, and conducting port calls across Europe.41

China has also sought to buttress its military-to-military relationships in the Mediterranean region. Chinese warships detailed to the counter-piracy effort off the Horn of Africa have on numerous occasions ventured into the Mediterranean for port visits in both European and North African countries.42 Through these activities, China is demonstrating blue water capabilities in line with its stated maritime objectives, but also a sending a subtler message meant to accustom Europe to its presence and emerging maritime interests in the Mediterranean.43

42 Nordenman (2015).
In the summer of 2017, a task group the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) conducted a live-fire drill in the Mediterranean Sea, which according to the Chinese Ministry of Defense (MoD) was for “honing their combat skills” en route to a joint exercise with the Russian Navy in the Baltic Sea. There are clearly some early indications that China is intending to use its naval forces in the region to advance global political, diplomatic, and economic interests, expand influence, compete for access, and perhaps one day project naval power at and from the sea in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Potential Maritime Regional Flashpoints in the Era of Great Power Competition

The Syrian Civil War

Soon after the outbreak of the civil war in Syria in 2011, regional countries including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, and Turkey began picking sides to support in the quickly fragmenting country. What started as an internal uprising on the tail end of the Arab Spring quickly transitioned from an internal security problem for the Assad regime into something much bigger. The rapid seizure of territory by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2013-2014 brought the U.S. and a growing coalition that would soon include Britain, France, Australia, and Jordan in to air patrols over Syria, and air strikes against ISIS positions on the ground.

In 2015, Russia augmented diplomatic and financial support to the Syrian government and began providing direct military support to the Assad regime. The Russian Air Force began strike missions in October and shortly thereafter Moscow confirmed that its special forces were assisting in ground combat operations near Palmyra, and that the Navy and Naval Infantry were expanding activities in and around the port of Tartus on Syria’s Mediterranean coast. Since then Russia signed a 49-year agreement with Damascus giving the Russian Navy rights to station up to 11 ships and submarines on an ongoing basis at Tartus, as well as establish a repair and maintenance facility to support these Syrian-based forces. By 2019, Capt. Sergei Tronev, the chief of the navy command in the area, noted that in

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45 Gibbons-Neff (2016a).

The buildup of Russian maritime power in and around Tartus is not solely relevant to Moscow’s deep support of the Assad regime during the civil war or to the pace of combat on the ground as Damascus seeks to reestablish control over the entire country. It also enables the Russian Navy to compete with the American regional and maritime interests in three ways.

First, it enables the Navy to demonstrate that it can influence operations on the ground in Syria from the sea as part of the growing Russian joint power projection capability. In 2015, Russian Naval forces operating in the Mediterranean\footnote{Christopher Cavas, “Russian Submarine Hits Targets in Syria,” \textit{Defense News}, 8 December 2015, https://www.defensewe...targets-in-syria/; } and in the Caspian Sea\footnote{“Russian Missiles hit IS in Syria from the Caspian Sea,” \textit{BBC News}, 7 October 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34465425, accessed on 3 November 2019.} fired Kaliber land attack missiles into Syria, the former notably including the launch of missiles from submerged submarines. While power projection ashore from the sea is a significant high-end naval capability, perhaps more importantly in terms of Great Power Competition, the demonstration of precision land attack capability from forces stationed at sea hundreds of miles from the launch point used to be the sole dominion of the U.S. Navy and its top end NATO counterparts. Russia’s one working aircraft carrier, the \textit{Admiral Kuznetsov} also sailed, transferring airplanes to an airbase in Syria to integrate into Russian air operations. While arguably not on par with USN operations of a similar nature, these operations demonstrated the visible attributes of a modern, power projection Navy with able to influence events ashore far from Russia’s land borders and territorial waters.


activities in the region, and potentially disrupt operations or hold these forces at risk in times of tension or conflict. Beyond the ships and submarines forward stationed at Tartus, Russian units from other fleets regularly deploy in the Eastern Mediterranean. For example, by the autumn of 2019 the navy’s force there included the guided-missile cruiser Marshal Ustinov, which had sailed from its Arctic base of Severomorsk, and the guided-missile frigate Admiral Makarov detached from the Black Sea Fleet.50

In addition, the Russian military has provided Syria with long-range anti-ship coastal defense cruise missiles. According to senior US officials, the presence of Yakhont antiship cruise missiles (ASCMs) in Syria alone has been enough to “create a surface naval A2/AD zone in the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean.”51 Combined with upgraded air defense systems, and the reported gradual replacement of the Russian combat air wing in Hmeimim with more interdiction asset, Keir Giles and Mathieu Boulegue have noted, “these out-of-area assets are not formidable, yet they are sufficiently capable of complicating the entry of US and allied forces into the region.”52

Third, with continuous naval presence in the region, a growing diplomatic push to build new relationships and access across the Middle East and North Africa, burgeoning arms sales, increasing exercises and port visits in the Mediterranean, and the alignment of naval activities at sea with other instruments of Moscow’s power (diplomatic, economic, and informational), Russia is pursuing a direct counter to decades of overwhelming U.S. influence in the region. As Jonathan Altman has observed, “although the United States does have regional allies with credible maritime combat power, the Russians are working to drive wedges into these relationships” and “decouple” the U.S. from its long-standing allies such as Greece, Turkey, and Egypt.53 Not only does the presence of the Russian Naval forces in the Eastern Mediterranean provide them opportunities for greater influence in the region, it also contributes to combat readiness and effec-

50 Karmanau (2019).
53 Altman (2016), 73.
tiveness. Tom Fedyzin notes that the Russian Navy should “be able to increase its readiness and develop more sophisticated training by operating in the Mediterranean during the winter months.”

Competition for Hydrocarbon Resources

A 2010 assessment of undiscovered gas and oil reserves in the Levant Basin—essentially the geological underpinnings of most of the Eastern Mediterranean—by the U.S. Geological Survey estimated that there are approximately 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 122 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of recoverable gas in the basin. In the years since, new discoveries of offshore gas fields have been made by Egypt, Israel, and Cyprus, while Lebanon and Turkey continue to search their territorial waters for signs of similar resources.

These newly identified hydrocarbon resources lie under some of the world’s most contentious and contested maritime claims. At least five countries have contested or unrecognized maritime claims in the region. The prospects of energy independence and financial benefit that the riches of the Levant Basin gas field offer make the stakes high for all. Adding to the contentiousness of the claims to the Levant Basin energy resources, its waters abut—and in fact, overlap—several of the most contentious conflicts in the Middle East. The Turkish-Greek dispute, the Cyprus dispute, the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, the simmering Turkish-Israeli relationship, the ongoing Syrian civil war, and political turmoil in Lebanon, are all manifest along the littoral of the Mediterranean. Many of these conflicts have erupted into direct military action in the last 40 years, sometimes including naval engagements.

For regional claimants, the scale of the hydrocarbon resources that may be available under the Eastern Mediterranean can potentially have strategic impact. The size of Israeli discoveries, for example, exceed what is required for domestic demands, making it essentially energy independent while po-

tioned as an exporter. Hydrocarbon development also has the potential to promote regional cooperation as states attempt to provide a favorable atmosphere for outside investment necessary to develop their finds.

However, the discovery of commercially viable gas fields in the Eastern Mediterranean also brings the prospect for new competition and conflict. For example, the discovery of gas reserves off the coast of Cyprus poses immediate challenges for the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) and complicates longstanding tensions with Turkey and the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC). Both Turkey and the TRNC claim the right to explore and develop hydrocarbon resources off the coast and both reject the right of the ROC to sign agreements to explore for, develop, and monetize the island’s resources. To counter the ROC’s efforts, the Turkish government has conducted a boisterous campaign to condemn gas development deals, calling the decision “adventurous,” “irresponsible,” and “provocative.”

Turkey also signed an agreement with the TRNC, delineating the continental shelf between the two asserting rights to the entire Cypriot continental shelf for the latter. Subsequent agreements have placed bans on companies doing business with the ROC from working on Turkish energy projects.

Since 2011, a number of minor confrontations between Turkey and Cyprus have occurred in response to the exploration and development of hydrocarbon resources off the island’s southern coast. Turkey has deployed warships to areas where international companies have conducted exploratory drilling and sent research vessels into the island’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in a series of moves regarded by the ROC as provocations.

Turkey has also contested foreign companies exploration activities; in early 2014, its navy expelled a Norwegian vessel searching for hydrocarbons in Cyprus’s EEZ, claiming it had entered an area under Turkey’s jurisdiction.

In late 2014, Turkey dispatched two warships in support of its


own seismic surveys in areas overlapping Cyprus’s EEZ. Indeed, Exxon Mobil’s 2018 announcement that its deep-sea drilling south of Limassol had yielded encouraging results coincided with Turkey embarking on its “biggest-ever” naval exercise in the region, a show of force accompanied with messaging to reinforce Ankara’s own right to energy exploration off the divided island.\(^59\) According to Ankara, Turkish naval and air forces are present in an around Cypriot waters in order to assert its claimed rights to operate there and to explore for offshore resources, as per their continental shelf claims and their agreements with the TRNC. However, Turkish military presence creates tensions in the region and increases the chances for a misunderstanding or a miscalculation at sea. Unlike on land, there is no UNFICYP force to monitor developments and/or interpose itself between Turkish maritime forces and the limited ROC coastal defense forces.

Given that the United States makes no maritime claims in the Eastern Mediterranean and that any U.S. participation in resource exploration or extraction would be by private companies, it is unlikely to be a direct party to any hydrocarbon dispute.\(^60\) However, competition over hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean involves many U.S. allies and partners in the region, particularly Israel and Turkey. The risk, therefore, in this case is less in terms of maritime operations – though given its naval presence in the region, U.S. forces could certainly find themselves proximate to a clash at sea or be drawn in to responding or supporting an ally in the event of hostilities. Instead, the risk of damaging American relations with a key partner is arguably the most pressing concern.

Another major source of disgruntlement for policymakers in the United States is Turkey’s growing ties with Washington’s GPC rival, Russia. These ties are manifest in their cooperation in Syria, Russia’s military sales, particularly the delivery of S-400 system to Turkey, and cooperation on energy infrastructure. Russia’s TurkStream pipeline runs from the Black Sea through to Turkey, with additional legs of the pipeline planned to carry gas to Europe. TurkStream allows Russia to export gas to Europe, bypassing Ukraine. Turkey, as an importer of energy, is eager to secure access to Russian gas and establish itself as a hub for gas distribution networks. As U.S.-Turkish relations continue to chill over divergent interests, Turkey...
may be more incentivized to continue, or even deepen its relations with Russia.

Russia’s interests in Eastern Mediterranean gas go beyond forming a link with Turkey. From the beginning of the Mediterranean gas bonanza, Russia has been a participant. Gallia Lindenstrauss, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University notes, “Russia will not want to see the rise of serious competition to its energy exports to Europe.” In addition to Turkey, Russia has been growing its diplomatic and economic links with Cyprus and Israel, and several of its companies are players in Eastern Mediterranean gas exploration and development activities. Russia has secured drilling rights to finds in Syria and Lebanon, increasing the likelihood that if and when regional cooperation on gas development extends to these countries, it will have a foothold. Russia has restructured terms of loans with Cyprus to offer more favorable interest rates. In 2015, at a time when many European countries were reevaluating cooperation with Moscow in the wake of Russia’s annexation of Crimea and activities in Ukraine, Cyprus signed a military cooperation agreement to give the Russian Navy access to its ports. As Cyprus seeks to build a favorable economic climate for resource development, its dependence on Russian investment and loans may be helpful in the short term, but set up the island nation up for a long-term complicated relationship, particularly if Russia were to apply pressure or seek a sort of quid pro quo for favorable terms.

While China is not a direct party to hydrocarbon developments nor has the PRC taken a clear position on the future of Mediterranean gas development or the related boundary disputes, its increased investment, cooperation forums, and presence in the region creates potential influence. For China, the broader Mediterranean region is of real interest in terms of both energy security and trade. China has invested in Greece’s port of Piraeus and other facilities throughout the region as part of the western outlet for its “New Silk Road.” As China and Russia become more connected and enmeshed with Eastern Mediterranean countries, they will be posi-

tioned to exert pressure on local actors, which will likely complicate the calculations of regional countries.63

Conclusion

So where do all of these developments leave us? While predictions about the twists and turns of regional politics, diplomacy and security in the Eastern Mediterranean can be perilous, a few things are clear. First, while U.S. interests in the region remain largely consistent with the decades preceding the emergence of GPC, the landscape has changed dramatically. Expanding Russian and Chinese interests now overlap, and in many ways challenge U.S. aims. Similarly, the U.S. Navy is no longer uncontested in its influence in the region and it no longer has unquestioned naval primacy. With the wide expansion of RFN naval activities in the Eastern Mediterranean, a growing anti-access/area denial capability developing in Syria, and increasing Chinese presence in the region (including in key ports, commercial hubs, and at sea) U.S. naval operations in the region no longer go unobserved. Thanks to assertive diplomatic, financial and increasingly naval moves by China and Russia, U.S. naval influence in the Eastern Mediterranean now has viable competitors. Depending how things unfold, the U.S. Navy may one day soon find its ability to operate at will in the region contested.

Second, Russian naval forces are now in a position to maintain a continual military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and seem likely to turn it into a source of influence directed at U.S. friends and allies. Russia has demonstrated that it can conduct land attack operations from surface and subsurface units in the region; no nation there can ignore Russia’s ability to influence the shore from the sea. Russian aircraft also regularly patrol the skies over Syria and keep a keen eye on areas well beyond Syria’s borders. Russian naval forces regularly exercise in the region, make port visits, and support Russian diplomacy and arms sales. While not yet a peer of the U.S. Navy in overall naval capability, RFN influence is palpable in the Eastern Mediterranean and plays a direct role in Russia’s efforts to lessen Washington’s influence.

Third, China clearly has its eyes on the Eastern Mediterranean. While the PLAN does not regularly patrol the waters of the Levant, Chinese diplomatic, economic, and security interests have a distinctly maritime dimension. Chinese companies and parastatal actors are investing directly in Eastern Mediterranean ports, maritime infrastructure and seaborne commerce. And the presence of Chinese naval forces in the region is on an upward trend. The only major foreign military operations that the PLAN has undertaken in the last two decades—beyond counterpiracy operations off the Horn of Africa—have been the NÉOs in Libya and Lebanon. PLAN task forces frequently transit the Suez Canal and make port calls in Europe and North Africa. Those ships regularly transit the Mediterranean en route to major naval exercises with the United States’ other GPC rival, Russia. More recently, the PLAN has even conducted its own live fire exercises in the region.

Fourth, potential flashpoints in the Eastern Mediterranean, such as the conflict in Syria, unresolved territorial claims, and the competition for hydrocarbon reserves are real, are unresolved, and could easily touch off a conflict that originates in—or spills into—the maritime domain.

As a result, U.S. naval strategists and planners must now face the challenge of adjusting to a period in which they may no longer have uncontested naval primacy in the Eastern Mediterranean. The prospect of the U.S. Navy having the resources to dramatically increase its force presence in the region appears slim, so “growing” the steady state force to meet this challenge may not be an option. In spite of these changing circumstances and USN force limitations, American interests and objectives in the maritime domain remain largely as they have for the last three decades. As such, strategists and planners must find novel ways to strengthen partnerships and alliances, enhance interoperability, and promote increases in the capability and capacity of friendly navies alongside the limited U.S. forces in theater. They must find ways to assure friends and allies and deter adversaries while promoting regional security, stability, and prosperity at a time when U.S. influence is being actively contested by Great Power rivals. Doing so will also require a keen understanding of adversary intent, strengths and vulnerabilities, and risk calculus both during calmer times and most importantly in periods of heightened tensions.

This is a tall order, indeed. To rise to it, these strategists and planners will need to be creative, resilient, and adaptive as they seek to apply U.S. naval power in support of American interests in the Eastern Mediterranean while facing the dual challenges of looming maritime flashpoints and increasingly assertive, present and capable Great Power competitors.
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Bastion, Backwater, or Battlefront?
Changing Strategic Views Along Europe’s Northern Shores

Jeremy Stöhs

Introduction

In June 2016, a quarter century after the end of the Cold War, an article co-authored by Vice Admiral James Foggo III, then Commander of the US 6th Fleet, gained significant attention within the defense community. Titled “The Fourth battle for the Atlantic,” in bold letters the admiral warned that “Russia is claiming maritime battlespace across Europe and is deploying forces outside Russian borders […] A fourth battle is not looming, but is being waged now, across and underneath the oceans and seas that border Europe.” In their piece, Foggo and co-author Alarik Fritz recalled that up until end of the twentieth century, the geostrategic relevance attributed to the waters connecting North America and Europe had seen little change. The ability to send reinforcement from the United States by winning the ‘Battles for the Atlantic’ had been vital to the survival of European democracies during both World Wars. Throughout the Cold War, U.S. and NATO contingency planning drew from a similar premise, namely that the North Atlantic and its littorals would be highly contested: “[A]
war might be won in the Fulda Gap but it might be lost at the [Greenland-Island-United Kingdom] gap.”

Once the Cold War ended, the former battlefront gradually transformed into a geopolitical backwater. The demise of the Soviet Union led many observers in Washington, Brussels, and Berlin to believe that the strategic rivalry with Russia had ended. However, the illegal annexation of Crimea and the following events since March 2014, have provided ample evidence that this rivalry has returned. Russia’s military modernization – hand in hand with a more assertive foreign policy – and Western reactions to it have again transformed the North Atlantic, the Norwegian Sea, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea into an area of strategic competition.

This chapter outlines the corresponding development of European defense policies and naval forces along Europe’s northern shores since the end of the Cold War. It discusses the challenges their navies have faced in the light of significant changes to the global security environment as well as the effects of the previous defense downscaling.

The study argues that European defense polices have undergone a twofold ‘strategic paradigm shift’ over the course of less than three decades: The first took place between 1991 and 2014, as instability and crises beyond Europe’s southern borders and military interventions as part of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) caused latent tension across the North and East to be marginalized and ignored. Correspondingly, the majority of European navies shifted their focus as well; from preparing to conduct naval operations in high-intensity conflicts against peer competitors to deploying low-intensity missions within relatively permissive environments. Rather than stalking Russian submarines in the blue waters of the Norwegian Sea and in the High North, warships found themselves chasin

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6 Foggo, III and Alarik (2016), 19.
pirates off the Horn of Africa and supporting counterinsurgency cam-
paigns across the greater Middle East. 

Since Moscow’s successful attempt to reshape the established security order on the European continent, Russia has reemerged as a political and military competitor in the global arena. Consequently, from 2014 onwards, the defense strategies and postures of Western states have under-
gone a second strategic paradigm shift; this time focused on reinvigorating the concept of collective security and territorial defense.

Based on observations of nearly three decades of European naval evolu-
tion, the study will conclude with several recommendations. It will suggest measures how their military and naval services ought to address the grow-
ing range of maritime security challenges along the northern frontier with-\textsuperscript{9}\textsuperscript{9}\textsuperscript{9}\textsuperscript{9}\textsuperscript{9}\textsuperscript{9}


tion of nearly three decades of European naval evolu-
tion, the study will conclude with several recommendations. It will suggest measures how their military and naval services ought to address the grow-
ing range of maritime security challenges along the northern frontier without resorting to similar myopic thinking that led to Europe’s lopsided naval policy and posture in the first place.

\textit{The First Paradigm Shift: Uncertainties along the Southern Flank}

The period between 1991 and 2001 is characterized by the emergence of novel threats and a new understanding of how military force was to be ap-
pled.\textsuperscript{9} With the threat of the Soviet Union relegated to the pages of history, the United States and its European allies felt compelled to shift their focus from the Central European front, the Baltic littorals, and the waters of the North Atlantic, to the South, the Middle East, and well beyond the tradi-
tional sphere of the NATO alliance.\textsuperscript{10}

Meanwhile, governments throughout the Western World were eager to capitalize on the financial opportunities the ‘peace dividend’ promised. They willingly reduced defense spending over the course of the decade. Still, many militaries retained sufficient means to deal with the widening scope of commitments. The U.S. Navy, “well suited to address this new complex security environment given its practice as a forward present, combat-ready, and credible force,” was committed to actively join European
naval forces in shaping events in regions of crisis. The overwhelming U.S. naval superiority relative to any other actor of the time also served as a backstop for the incremental decline of European power at sea.

In a period of significant instability along Europe’s southern shores, European naval forces remained in high demand. Considerable troop contingents were deployed to the Middle East before, during, and after Operation Desert Storm and the liberation of Kuwait. Some navies even found themselves operating outside their ‘traditional’ area of operations for the first time. In accord with key tenets of the first paradigm shift, multilateralism, cooperative security, crisis management, and conflict resolution, the naval forces of many European states began to increasingly conduct power projection operations in regions farther from home and together with like-minded states.

Western military interventions in the Balkans throughout the 1990s vindicated the idea that, in future, navies would largely be required to effectively operate in the littoral regions of the world. From there they could project power from the sea onto land. Europe’s most powerful sea service, the British Royal Navy, led the charge by opting to strengthen its expeditionary capabilities at the expense of its sea-control proficiency. Consequently, long-range strike assets such as the Tomahawk cruise missile were procured whereas the conventional leg of its underwater force and a sizable portion of its escort fleet were disbanded. Meanwhile, Britain’s small

carriers and fleet air arm proved their worth during the wars in the Balkans and contributed to remaining a relevant tool of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{16}

The new-look Royal Navy was to be structured around carrier task groups designed to project power into areas of strategic interest. The hunter-killer submarine force, originally designed to search for and attack its Russian counterpart in the North Atlantic and Arctic, was rerolled for land attack [and] the force rarely forayed into the northern waters of the Atlantic.\textsuperscript{17}

Early post-Cold War naval missions revealed various shortcomings among the naval forces under discussion. For one, even the newest platforms had been designed – and their crews trained – for waging war against a similarly capable opponent, mostly in the cold waters along and beyond Europe’s northern shores. Many of these platforms (mine warfare vessels, fast patrol craft, fixed and rotary wing aviation) suffered from limitations while operating for extended periods in sub-tropical conditions.\textsuperscript{18} With maritime security operations, crisis management, law-enforcement, and humanitarian-assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) roles receiving greater attention, substantial changes to the systems and operational procedures were inevitable.

Consequently, the ability to use naval forces to shape events over great distance and for long periods of time was enshrined in the defense and maritime strategies of several states (Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, and

\textsuperscript{16} One reason for the Royal Navy initially not suffering as severe budget cuts as its sister services was the RN’s importance as a key enabler in Britain’s effort to “prevent or shape crisis further away [from home] and [its ability] to deploy military forces rapidly before they get out of hand”, as the “Strategic Defense Review,” published in 1998, emphasized; Ministry of Defence, “Strategic Defence Review” (London: Ministry of Defence, 1998), Chapter Five.


the Netherlands)\textsuperscript{19} while their fleets became increasingly expeditionary-oriented (Germany, Denmark, and Portugal). Initially, several smaller Northern European navies (Finland, Sweden, and Norway) continued to adhere to more traditional interpretations of naval power, \textit{i.e.} for territorial defense. All of them, however, had to stomach cuts to their forces as they underwent far-reaching structural and organizational streamlining. By the beginning of the new millennium, defense appropriations had shrunk considerably and navies were finding it increasingly challenging to modernize their fleets with the available budgets.

\textit{Out of sight – Out of mind: Navies and sea blindness in the 21st century}

As cooperation between Europe and Russia expanded throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, so did the widespread lack of appreciation for the maritime environment and for the value of naval forces in providing security and prosperity for a state; a phenomenon also referred to as ‘sea blindness.’\textsuperscript{20} Political leaders and their constituents seemed convinced that the gravest threat to Europe’s security was no longer to be found above, on, and under the waves of the North Atlantic. If at all, it came at a great distance from home. Russia’s military remained in a poor state with its fleet rusting away in its once formidable sea-bastions. Meanwhile, intergovernmental forums and initiatives, such as the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, the Partnership for Peace program, the Arctic Council, the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, and the NATO-Russia Council paved the way for peaceful resolution of maritime disputes and greater cooperation among the various stakeholders in this region of the world.\textsuperscript{21}

The attacks of 11 September 2001 appeared to vindicate the idea that the biggest threat to the liberal world order no longer emanated from Rus-

\textsuperscript{19} This is described in the following documents: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, \textit{Weißbuch zur Sicherheit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und zur Lage und Zukunft der Bundeswehr} (Berlin: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 1994), 120f; Ministerio de Defensa, “Strategic Defence Review” (Madrid: Imprenta Ministerio de Defensa, 2003), 107; Ministry of Defence (1998), np.


sia but was posed by terrorists determined to commit atrocities among the civilian population and, thus, strike the heart of western democracies. The string of terrorist attacks across the globe and the ensuing GWOT made conventional warfare against a peer competitor seem anachronistic. Proponents of conventional deterrence were quickly criticized for committing to the ‘least-likely war fallacy.’

Constabulary operations, counter-terrorism raids, and state-building were the buzz-words of the time. Naval power proved relevant in degrading and destroying enemy infrastructure, inserting large troop contingents into the theaters of operation, and providing logistical and fire support for troops on the ground. Nevertheless, these were land wars with land and air forces receiving the lion’s share of attention and funding.

The military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq heavily influenced military modernization and structural reform. “Readiness and maintenance were adjusted to meet the requirement of the next rotation of force in the theater of operations, and logistics focused on the current mission. Training and exercises were designed to prepare the force for the challenges they could expect to encounter in action”, one analyst noted. With NATO forces heavily engaged in overseas contingency operations, funding for naval modernization, however, was difficult to secure.

The ongoing shift towards “crisis management operations anywhere in the world,” as the Dutch defense white paper spelled out in 2005, resulted in navies acquiring larger, more capable platforms, with greater range and endurance. Expeditionary capable ships, such as the Spanish Juan Carlos I carrier, the Dutch/Spanish Enforcer design landing platform docks, or the Danish Absalon-class support ship were the visible result of changes in military strategy and naval policy after the end of the Cold War. An array of new surface combatants, specialized in anti-air warfare, provided fleet air defense for expeditionary task groups and allowed ground forces to conduct operations on foreign soil under a protective umbrella deployed from the sea. Being both larger and more powerful than their predecessors, these vessels (German F-124 Sachsen, British Type 45 Daring, Dutch De Zeven Provinciën, Norwegian Nansen classes, the last equipped with AEGIS,

24 Ministry of Defence, “Netherlands Defence Doctrine” (The Hague: Defense Staff, 2005), S.
as were the Spanish Álvaro de Bazán) came with substantially higher price tags, resulting in far fewer units to be acquired.  

Inevitably, a smaller number of platforms was tasked with a growing range of maritime missions.

While budget restraints led militaries to curtail and cancel procurement plans, some navies abandoned specific capabilities altogether. Denmark, for example, phased out its submarines by the end of 2004, in an effort to transform its navy from a littoral defense force and gatekeeper of the Baltic Sea to a small blue water navy. Following in Denmark’s footsteps, Norway and Sweden disbanded parts of their coastal artillery networks and, together with Finland, began to tailor their shrinking naval forces to multinational naval operations in the Mediterranean and beyond the Horn of Africa. “Our security cannot be maintained through a one-sided focus on the conventional defence of Norwegian territory,” is how a defense white paper summed up this remarkable strategic evolution.

From a platform-centric view, both Norway and Sweden struggled to effectively modernize their naval forces. Despite the investments in state-of-the-art technologies and network-centric warfare, declining defense allocations proved insufficient to maintain forces of both high quality as well as significant quantity. The Netherlands meanwhile, equally unwilling to provide sufficient funding to modernize its military, were unable to reach the defense goals they had set themselves. “Once one of the more significant European maritime forces, the Royal Netherlands Navy has been progressively reduced in size and stature since the end of the Cold War until it barely ranks amongst Europe’s second-tier fleet,” an analyst lamented.

The decline of the British Royal Navy was particularly pronounced. If governments accustomed themselves to cutting defense spending year after


year, the financial crisis in 2009 and the ensuing economic downturn brought significant hardship upon the Royal Navy. Draconian budget cuts saw Britain forfeit its carrier strike capability for over a decade (until the commissioning of the Queen Elisabeth and Prince of Wales) along with its fixed-wing maritime patrol capacity (MPA). The escort fleet was further reduced to 19 ships (down from 49 at the end of the Cold War). Long-standing recruitment and retention problems exacerbated the already dire situation. Even filling the ranks of Britain’s depleted naval force proved difficult.30

Elsewhere along the shores of the North Atlantic, the situation was no less challenging. France maintained its single nuclear-powered aircraft carrier but cancelled the development of a second ship of the Charles-de-Gaulle-class while an order for new surface combatants was curtailed, bringing the escort fleet down to a mere 15 vessels. Spain, meanwhile, accepted shortfalls in training and readiness to maintain its balanced fleet.31 Germany might have been less severely affected by the crisis, owing to its economic prowess. Nevertheless, the ill-fated defense reform in 2010 was the result of austerity measures rather than prudent defense planning. It caused the German armed forces to shrink in lockstep with those of its neighbors.32 Germany’s capabilities in the naval sector, particularly its submarine force, had played a role in Denmark’s decision to readily disband its own subsurface flotilla mid-decade. However, faced with substantial budgetary restrictions, the German submarines force was effectively cut in half between 1991 and 2014. In the end, the navy was barely able to put more than two units to sea in a time of emergency.33

30 Militaries have found themselves competing with the often better paying private sector. Consequently, higher wages and greater amenities (such as housing and medical care) consume a large chunk of each navy’s budgets. Exact numbers are always difficult to come by, but militaries across Europe have been known to spend more than two-thirds of their entire budgets on personnel.
33 While German officials claim that four units could be deployed in case of emergency; sources tell the author that the German navy would hard pressed to man and deploy more than two submarines at any given point in time.
National and allied command structures underwent equally extensive re-organization. Although many streamlining efforts had already been made during the 1990s, further consolidation measures were undertaken and many military bases across northern Europe were closed (e.g. MPA surveillance flights from the naval air station in Keflavik, Iceland, ended in 2006). For NATO, the land wars throughout the greater Middle East and reduced tension with Russia led to the transfer of responsibility from the Supreme Allied Command Atlantic in Norfolk (SACLANT was disbanded in 2003), to Allied Command Transformation (ACT), which was henceforth responsible for “training and exercises as well as for force planning in the NATO structure. . . . [During this period, ACT’s] priority was to assist in the development of deployable forces for counterinsurgency operations,” Svein Efjestad explained.34

Throughout most of the decade, large-scale naval exercises, designed to hone the alliance’s ability to conduct high-intensity warfare and defend NATO territory against a capable aggressor, lay dormant. Unlike during the 1980s, when American carrier battle groups, alongside their allies, regularly tested operational procedures and probed their enemy’s defenses, “traditional defence exercises were expensive and no longer received [adequate] support from NATO’s common funding.”35 Frankly, regional crisis in other parts of the world required most attention. In this context, NATO and its partners can be criticized for not recognizing and addressing the subliminal tension that persisted in the High North and the Baltic Region.

Despite Russia’s military intervention against Georgia in 2008 and its comprehensive military modernization efforts, relations with the West remained largely unchanged. The mainstay of NATO’s naval forces continued to be tied down in out-of-area operations where they were appointed with a range of tasks. In light of standing commitments towards the alliance’s collective security, anti-piracy missions off the Horn of Africa, ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, civil wars in Libya and Syria, and, finally, the rise of the Islamic State, European navies were barely able to sustain the increasing tempo of deployment.36

The campaign to oust Libya’s long-time ruler, Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011, painfully revealed the shortfalls and incongruity two decades of aus-

34 Efjestad (2017), 61.
35 Ibid., 62.
terity measures had caused among European navies. For the first time since the inception of the carrier-weapon, Britain was unable to deploy a ‘flat top’ to an area of crisis, having to make do with the landing platform dock HMS Ocean.\textsuperscript{37} Italy, under considerable financial and political pressure, withdrew its own carrier while some of France’s stocks of precision ammunitions were close to depletion.

The Second Paradigm Shift: Recommitting to the High-End

In light of ongoing counterinsurgency efforts and tanking economies during the first decade of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, Western responses towards Russia’s war against Georgia and increasingly competitive foreign policy proved largely haphazard. Russia’s forceful annexation of Crimea and military actions in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, on the other hand, ushered in a period of renewed strategic competition. For the first time since end of the Cold War, European states have politically re-committed themselves to defense spending and revitalizing collective defense. Importantly, within this context of NATO’s “360-degree approach,” i.e. addressing challenges in all strategic directions, Europe’s eastern and northern frontiers have again received far greater attention. As part of this “second strategic paradigm shift,” the Atlantic has, once again, become the fulcrum of strategic competition between East and West.

As mentioned above, Russia has also significantly improved the state of its armed forces. Although air and land forces, as well as its strategic nuclear force, have received most attention, the navy has regained some of its capabilities.\textsuperscript{38} Substantial investments have been made to add new warships to the fleet, to reorganize and streamline command structures, and improve training and readiness. Both the number of snap drills and actual deployments has spiked in past years.\textsuperscript{39} Today, Russia’s military activities across the maritime domain have reached a level not witnessed in several

\textsuperscript{37} Apache helicopters and other rotary aviation deployed from the amphibious assault ship HMS Ocean.


decades.\textsuperscript{40} In a sense, then-Vice Admiral Clive Johnston’s warning that NATO is witnessing “more activity from Russian submarines than we’ve seen since the days of the Cold War,” is accurate.\textsuperscript{41} However, one might add the caveat that the same could have been claimed every single year since the navy’s nadir during the late 1990s.

Nevertheless, the United States and its allies and partners in Europe (Sweden and Finland) are actively engaged in adjusting their strategies and force postures to counter this perceived threat. The measures range from filling capability gaps, establishing a greater presence, investing in high-end capabilities, strengthening territorial defense, signing off for large-scale procurement programs, conducting more comprehensive exercises, and improving command and control and decision-making processes.

Any comparison of naval capabilities between Russia and NATO is prone to generalizations and misjudgment; more so because land, air, space, and cyber capabilities also weigh in on the equation. Nonetheless, an argument can be made that, at sea, NATO and its partners still enjoy advantages over their Russian counterparts in both numerical as well as qualitative terms. There are, however, indications that Russia has been able to narrow and close these gaps in certain areas whilst establishing a lead in other sectors, notably low-yield nuclear weapons and doctrine, anti-ship and land-attack missiles, deep-diving (auxiliary) submarines, electronic warfare, and covert operations. Moreover, unlike NATO, an organization comprised of 29 democratic states, Russia enjoys advantages in the speed at which it can make political decisions, despite lacking some of the military capabilities necessary to quickly and decisively react to events globally.

NATO territory and cohesion is considered particularly threatened in the Baltic region, where Moscow already applies hybrid strategies and elements of grey-zone warfare to advance its political goals.\textsuperscript{42} These activities below the threshold of armed conflict are backed by a conventional and nuclear arsenal of such size that it has led Western experts to warn the

\textsuperscript{40} At the same time, it is important to note that they are neither qualitatively nor quantitatively of the same order as during the Cold War. John A. Olsen, “Introduction: The Quest for Maritime Supremacy,” in NATO and the North Atlantic: Revitalising Collective Defence, ed. by John A. Olsen, Whitehall Papers vol. 87 (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 2017), 7.

\textsuperscript{41} Vice Admiral Clive Johnstone quoted in Foggo, III, and Alarik (2016), 19.

Baltic states could be overrun within days. Nevertheless, under close scrutiny it becomes evident that, in terms of naval capabilities, NATO and its partners still enjoy significant advantages in this area of operations. In addition, shorter lines of communication and land-based aviation can, in theory, compensate for some of NATO’s weakness when it comes to conventional deterrence.

Across the North Atlantic, the Norwegian Sea, and beyond the Arctic Circle, the lack of readily available platforms is more pronounced and has called NATO’s ability to naval superiority into question. Here, the decline of the British Royal Navy has been felt most drastically. British surface combatants and nuclear attack submarines are charged with keeping watch over the mainstay of Russia’s naval forces as they transit into the open waters of the North Atlantic. Norwegian, Dutch, Belgian, and German surface warfare assets are equally stretched, conducting duties of an expanding naval portfolio. What is more, the conventionally powered submarines in service with some of the latter states are designed to defend northern shorelines and are less well-suited for operations in deep, blue waters. France maintains some credible anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities in the Arsenal de Brest but its SSNs are homeported in the Mediterranean and need days to transit north of the GIUK gap.

Clearly, the U.S. Navy has kept a close eye on the re-emergence of Russia’s sea bastion. However, as significant American forces are tied down in the Indo-Pacific region, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean, less than a handful of units can be expected to be assigned to duties in northern waters. These circumstances, paired with Europe’s shortage of surface combatants tailored to ASW and a shortfall of designated MPA – neither the Netherlands nor Britain currently operate them – place limits on what the allies can do to gain maritime domain awareness. This also undercuts NATO’s deterrent posture, the alliance’s ability to deploy credible forces in

45 German P-3Cs Orion MPAs have recently received comprehensive upgrades while Britain and Norway are scheduled to receive the P-8A Poseidon. Since 2018, the U.S. Navy episodically operates its MPAs from Keflavik, Iceland. This might be
the case of emergency, and its ability to establish a high degree of sea control. The decision of August 2018 to reestablish the U.S. Navy’s 2nd Fleet, is a clear indicator that the problem has been recognized in Washington. Tellingly, in fall of that year, 2nd Fleet participated in exercise Trident Juncture and led the multinational Baltic Operations 2019 (BALTOPS), as large-scale practices conducted by NATO and its partners, to prepare for complex military scenarios and operations in highly contested environments.

Recommendations

What does all of this mean for European defense planners? Without underestimating the threat that hybrid warfare and new forms of subversive actions pose, the security environment along Europe’s northern shores allows for relatively traditional responses to a rather traditional set of challenges. The much-discussed anti-access/area-denial networks in the Baltics and the High North are but modern-day iterations of the bastion concept dating back to the 1970s and 1980s. In other words, the notion that Russia could wage a U-Boat-style tonnage war against shipping on the high seas, or that NATO needs to prepare for a repeat of the World War ‘Battles for the Atlantic,’ as Foggo, Fritz, and other pundits have recently implied, is a highly doubtful proposition. From a naval perspective, clear centers of gravity can be identified, namely Russia’s land, air, and sea-based forces on the Kola Peninsula in the High North and Kaliningrad Oblast and St. Petersburg in the Baltic.

Under this premise, the following (maritime) measures will likely leave an impression on Russia’s political and military leaders in Moscow and St. Petersburg:

- the necessary impetus for the Netherlands to again acquire maritime patrol aircraft (either used P-3Cs from Norway or a small number of P-8s).


• Regularly deploying capable naval units, such as destroyers, frigates, and submarines, across the North Atlantic and beyond the GIUK Gap into the Norwegian Sea and the High North. This should chiefly be done by European navies due to Russia’s aversion towards U.S. operations on its doorstep and to signal to all parties that European countries are capable and willing to assume greater responsibility in their own neighborhood.

• Conducting maritime exercises (including land and air elements) with a focus on multidimensional operations in high-intensity conflicts (Saxon Warrior, BALTOPS, Dynamic Mongoose). These need to be accompanied by comprehensive public diplomacy efforts in order to reassure alliance members and partners, deter Russia, and to avoid being interpreted as escalatory.

• Forward basing further defensive-oriented NATO units (air and land) as well as appropriate logistics and materiel in Norway and Iceland.

• Forward basing U.S. naval forces in Germany or Denmark (preferably Littoral Combat Ships). Due to their offensive capabilities, forward basing American destroyers (akin to Rota, Spain) should not be considered.

• Strengthening the armed forces of the Baltic States, particularly their naval forces, thereby utilizing the strategic depth that the Baltic littoral offers. Obtaining asymmetric capabilities (such as modern sea and shore-based anti-ship missiles) in order to compensate for numerical disadvantages would constitute and effective deterrent. More pressure must also be placed on the Baltic governments to develop common solutions, for example, in the area of procurement and shared maritime domain awareness.

• Improving information sharing between the various civilian and military agencies as well as the private sector (multinational and cross-sectorial cooperation).


49 Thomas-Durell Young, “NATO’s Selective Sea Blindness – Assessing the Alliance’s New Navies,” in Naval War College Review vol. 72, no. 3 (2019), 21f.

• Further enhancing maritime (aerial) reconnaissance capabilities across the North Atlantic.
• Complementing information networks with corresponding command and control procedures and infrastructure in order to establish a recognized maritime picture and guarantee comprehensive maritime awareness in peace, crisis, and war. In the area of maritime domain awareness and SAR, the maritime domain also offers potential for low-level cooperation with Russia.
• Strengthening and protecting critical infrastructure such as C2 or C4ISR facilities, airfields, and communication routes and nodes from (kinetic) attacks.\textsuperscript{51}
• In addition to these military aspects, strengthening the civilian, economic, and intellectual defense of European states to counter hybrid and subliminal threats.
• At the same time, (re-)establishing diplomatic channels with Russia. Intergovernmental forums that can help promote cooperation and the peaceful resolution of disputes are in no short supply. Institutions such as the Arctic Council allow both the West and Russia to conduct a multi-faceted foreign policy.

Therefore, one the one hand, the show of force implicit in these political ideas is understood as a strategic signal of capability and intent. On the other hand, there are viable channels for dialogue and cooperation given the political will to do so. Responses to the perceived threat posed by Russia have been tried and tested time and again throughout the Cold War. They rested upon the concept of credible nuclear and conventional deterrence and are supported by “meaningful dialogue” and political cooperation in areas of mutual interest.\textsuperscript{52}

Beyond that, it will be particularly important for European states to spend more money, more wisely, on defense. Substantial investments will be necessary so that these military forces can operate more effectively both in joint and multinational settings. While it will be difficult for some, such as the Baltic States, to comprehensively expand their naval postures (main-
ly for fiscal reasons),\textsuperscript{53} it is well within the reach of rich nations, such as Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Germany, and even Poland to do so.\textsuperscript{54} However, it is likely that several NATO members will fall well short of spending two percent of their gross domestic product on defense – the agreed minimum target figure. Despite positive signals in the recent past, there are serious doubts whether post-'Brexit' Britain, the fiscally self-constrained Netherlands, the strategically land-oriented Poland, or the \textit{Zivilmacht} Germany will make continued and sizable investments towards their naval forces. As one study warned, there is “no hard evidence that the upward trend [among European navies is] going to endure [or that states will] spend their money better or with more intra-European cooperation than before.”\textsuperscript{55} In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic will likely have a significant negative impact on national economies, thus creating new challenges for European defense investments in the future.

\textit{Conclusion}

For roughly five hundred years, world affairs hinged upon the waters that linked the New World with the Old. Throughout the twentieth century, until the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Atlantic Ocean represented the lifelines of a beleaguered European continent. However, after 1991, in a period of profound changes to the global security order, the Atlantic and its adjacent northern waters slowly lost their importance. Western naval forces shifted their attention towards peace-time duties and crisis management along southern shores and deployed to the littorals of far-off regions. Defense spending was cut, procurement processes curtailed, and force-levels reduced. In absence of a peer-competitor, many politicians and defense planners were preoccupied with the struggle against instability and violent extremism, rather than preparing for worst-case scenarios. Militaries were


\textsuperscript{54} Young (2019), 13-39.

shaped to deal with the most-likely events, such as the counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. As part of a first strategic paradigm change, crisis response, combating piracy, and supporting the fight against terrorists and insurgencies became principal tasks of twenty-first century navies.

Two decades later, Russia’s aspirations to regain position as a great power and its concomitant military buildup along Europe’s borders have once again called the strategic importance of the Atlantic Ocean to attention. NATO and the West responded to Russia’s more assertive behavior by undergoing a second strategic paradigm shift and returning to core principles: supporting collective defense among its members and partners, raising defense expenditure, and strengthening the overall military posture. However, over the coming decades it will be important not to commit similar strategic errors as in the past.

Clearly, today European states are compelled to find more balanced approaches towards national and collective defense. The broad range of naval tasks and the mounting threat posed by state and non-state actors need to be appropriately reflected in defense strategies and operational doctrine. Navies must do everything. Big and small, they will need to be shaped with both low-intensity peacekeeping operations and high-intensity force-on-force engagements in mind. “Where the balance point regarding structure, volume [of forces] cooperate efforts and readiness” lies, as Niklas Granholm rightly queries, varies from state to state and will remain a topic of constant debate.56

At the same time, Europe’s southern waters and shores will continue to demand attention and draw upon a significant portion of resources within the proclaimed 360-degree approach. Fleets will therefore need to operate both capable platforms designed to tackle Russian submarines in the North Atlantic as well as a range of less heavily armed assets for constabulary duties in more permissive environments. Current procurement projects are underway to fill the gaps which twenty-five years of fiscal austerity measures have caused.

In the future, Russia’s military activities have to be closely monitored and Western responses constantly adjusted to the varying threat levels. Russia must be opposed where it acts aggressively and threatens established norms and international law but must be supported where its actions promote peace and cooperation. In the North Atlantic, Russia needs to be both deterred by credible military capabilities and engaged through

56 Granholm (2019), 85.
established forums and channels. A return to close study Russia’s history and strategic culture – largely ignored in the previous two decades, is of paramount importance.

If the aforementioned goals are pursued over the coming decade, European navies will be in a more comfortable position to deal with future challenges both along its northern borders, its southern shores, as well as globally. Their governments will be positioned to answer great-power challenges, as well as crises ranging across the intensity spectrum. With greater capabilities in place and as part of a reinvigorated military alliance and partnerships it can be hoped that for the foreseeable future the “fourth battle of the Atlantic” will remain what it is today, namely a somewhat misplaced figure of speech.

North Atlantic, Stöhs 2020
Despite declining numbers and readiness over the last three decades, the naval forces of NATO and its partners continue to constitute the first response to a host of potential challenges across and beyond Europe’s northern waters.\textsuperscript{57}

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Conclusion

Sebastian Bruns & Sarandis Papadopoulos

This edited volume brings together eminent and emerging scholars and practitioners on naval and maritime strategy from Asia, the United States, and Europe. When the idea of a dedicated *Festschrift* first came to our mind, we hoped on contracting half a dozen, perhaps up to eight authors and about 60,000 words in total. The significantly larger number of chapters here, spanning the world’s oceans, and their intellectual depth, are a testament to Peter Swartz’ enduring and wide-ranging influence on maritime and naval experts around the globe. Hence, this compilation is not just a celebration of Peter’s life-long achievements. It also meant as a lasting source and bibliography for naval planners, scholars, policy-makers, and strategists alike.

A popular saying has it that strategy is both an art and a science. Historians and political scientists are often overly focused on the actual strategic documents, for they provide one of the few tangible statements of intent regarding the three-legged stool of ways, ends, and means. Instead, strategies can be manifold. Some are top-down plans driven by interests and goals, other can be bottom-up ideas fueled by the existing level of military capabilities. They can be scenario-based using situation and context, threat-based using the meeting of a challenger or opponent (or enemy) as an approach. A functional approach would delineate a certain set of strategic missions; to minimize or offset a risk, hedging strategies could be applied. Finally, strategies can also be based on superior capabilities and technology, trading them for lower human costs, or be fiscal-driven – or in any combination of the above.¹

It has well been established that there is a correlation between six key variables. These are the national interests and objectives, the derived security (or “purely” military) strategy, the means and instruments in use, the risk of failure, the broader security environment, and the available re-


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sources, when it comes to force planning. This rather useful, scientific approach ends at the moment where any given strategy is exposed to the real-world dynamics of domestic and global policy. In the words of heavy-weight boxing great Mike Tyson, “Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face.”

So much for the science part. What about the art portion, conscious that any work of art is in the eye of the beholder, or the critic? The essays in this volume have underlined that processes must not be overlooked. These can be messy, chaotic, and often impossible to trace and clarify. They may be classified or be subject to wide-ranging public and oppositional interpretation. Processes change continuously, too. Finally, to arrive at a strategy, or a set of strategies, means exposing them to the real world. Operationalizing strategic documents is an art in itself, not least because the strategist must be conscious of what works, and what does not work. Institutions have interests, and these sometimes collide. In democratic regimes, there is also the notion that events (from elections to international crises, from technology, or to what media chooses to report, etc.) drive politics and governments unlike any other force.

A further complication is the preference for solving operational problems, or shorter-term budgetary issues, rather than writing more abstract strategy, at least in Western navies. As the essays of Larissa Forster and Jeremy Stöhs highlight, these can draw attention from questions of why and when naval force is to be used, to answering how it is best employed instead. Unsurprisingly, military professionals like what they know best, and most naval officers are adept operators of their vessels and aircraft. The problem comes when they attempt to write strategy without enough history or at least using context. In the American case, at least, the tradition of trying to operationalize national strategy arguably extends back in time to Emory Upton of the nineteenth century.

In light of these considerations, real strategists can at best give advice to their masters. This is what Peter Swartz did, essentially throughout the entire course of his lengthy career. During the 1960s, he was an advisor to the South Vietnamese Navy. Subsequently, he served as an advisor to a whole host of U.S. Navy admirals in the 1980s, and to Secretary of the Navy John Lehman. Towards the end of the decade, he became an advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell. In the 1990s, his advisory role turned from military rank to civilian job, when he joined

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the Center for Naval Analyses, then in Alexandria, Virginia. Thereafter, he advised his colleagues at CNA about what the Navy required, and in turn offered the Navy staff advice on what it needed to know, translating what each side needed from the other. Not every piece of advice he could and did bestow was considered properly, and certainly his work for the South Vietnamese Navy was challenged by grander US foreign policy decisions at the time. Political success was quite beyond his pay grade as a lieutenant in 1970. (He did, however, meet his wife Thuy in country, and their long marriage is likely the warmest strategic outcome of his time in South-East Asia.)

Nowhere does Peter’s advice stand out more brightly than in his strategy-writing role during his second career, and this was where most contributors to this volume came to owe their debts to him. Through research and writing, then saving and sharing that work, he enabled all of us to exceed the limits of what we already knew, or could find in books and archives. A reference call to Peter, on a subject of seeming obscurity, would result in a rapid-fire listing of the people to whom to talk, followed up by a series of e-mailed sources which threatened to overwhelm an e-mail inbox. His provision of sources became the means employed by dozens, possibly more than a hundred researchers, to achieve their own individual ends.

Whether those recipients’ ends meant studying naval history for a doctoral dissertation, crafting a strategic theory’s analysis, grasping at understanding an internal decision process, or trying to reconstruct U.S. Navy budget choices after the fact really didn’t matter. Peter’s most recent advisees, international graduate student researchers, Federal historians struggling to understand hazy, half-concealed decisions, analytical colleagues at CNA, and the Navy and Marine Corps officers closest to his métier, are the beneficiaries of his measure as a true colleague. It is our collective hope that we have shown here some of what we have learned because of him.

Earlier in this book, Geoffrey Till linked the process of making strategy to an old-fashioned pinball machine, where the little ball of strategy bounces around between the pins in a random, even contingent, but generally downward direction until it drops out of the bottom with some kind of accumulated value. In this sense, Peter Swartz is a real “Pinball Wizard.”

More seriously, to paraphrase the writer Adam Gopnick, all significant scholarly discoveries perform two functions. On one level, they advance

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what that author calls “the narrow field of fact,” what humans collectively understand and share with one another. What the authors in this volume hope is that we have shown how Peter Swartz widened the general understanding of what sea power has meant and continues to mean. That credit is important enough on its own. But the second purpose of all literary exploration is “to extend the imaginative field of wonder,” showing us what ideas can do. As an inspiration, our friend has shown us both the art of the possible in creating maritime strategy, and more importantly the science needed to write and explain what such strategy means. We need more of the latter to permit the former to flourish.

Works Cited


About the editors


Sarandis (Randy) Papadopoulos received his B.A. from the University of Toronto, an M.A. in military and naval history from the University of Alabama and earned a Ph.D. from the George Washington University (GWU). At GWU his dissertation was entitled “Feeding the Sharks: The Logistics of Submarine Warfare, 1935-1945.” He has been a Lecturer in History at GWU, Norwich University and the University of Maryland, College Park, worked at the US Navy History and Heritage Command, and is currently the Secretariat Historian for the United States Department of the Navy. His publications include articles, book reviews, reference works, and service as principal co-author of the book Pentagon 9/11 (Washington, DC, 2007), published under the auspices of the Historian, Office of the Secretary of Defense. Randy holds both the Department of the Navy’s Superior and Distinguished Civilian Service Awards.
About the authors

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*Larissa Forster* is a political scientist at the Swiss Department of Defense. Her current work focuses on international security and armed conflicts. She previously worked at the University of Michigan as a postdoctoral fellow. Her research has addressed foreign policy, international security, conflict management, military interventions and naval diplomacy. Larissa received her Ph.D. from the University of Zurich, Switzerland in 2010. Her dissertation *Influence without Boots on the Ground* explores the political use and impact of US naval forces during international crises that fall short of full-scale war. Peter Swartz’s help, guidance, and knowledge during her dissertation research were invaluable.

*Michael Haas* is a Researcher at the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zürich and a lecturer in the Swiss career officers’ education program. He holds an MSc in Intelligence and Strategic Studies from Aberystwyth University and an MA in Political Science from the University of Innsbruck. His most recent publications include, 'Access for Allies? NATO, Russia and the Baltics', The RUSI Journal 161:3, 34-41 (with Martin Zapfe), and 'The Evolution of Targeted Killing Practices: Autonomous Weapons, Future Conflict, and the International Order', Contemporary Security Policy 38:2, 281-306 (with Sophie-Charlotte Fischer).

*John Hattendorf*, DPhil, DLitt, LHD, FRHistS, FSNR, is Senior Mentor in the John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research and the Ernest J. King Professor Emeritus of Maritime History at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. He is author and editor of numerous essays and books. These include *Naval History and Maritime Strategy: Collected Essays* (Krieger Publishing: Malabar, FL 2000); “The Use of Maritime History for and in the Navy”, in: Naval War College Review Volume LVI (Spring 2003), pp. 13–38; and the seminal collections of U.S. naval strategy documents of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

*Peter D. Haynes*, Ph.D. is a retired captain in the U.S. Navy, having served for thirty years as an operational commander, carrier aviator, and strategist. A scholar of U.S. naval strategy, he works at the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington DC. He holds a Ph.D. in Security Studies and a M.A. in National Security Affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School and a B.A. in History from the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of *Toward a New Maritime Strategy: American Naval Thinking in the Post-Cold War Era* (2015).
Andrzej Makowski is a professor at the Command and Naval Operations Faculty of the Polish Naval Academy in Gdynia. He received his Ph.D. from the Naval Academy in Leningrad in 1985, a D.Sc. from the Academy of National Defense in Warsaw in 1993, and became a full professor in 2001. A retired Captain of the Polish Navy in command of the minesweepers of the 9th flotilla, Andrzej is the author and co-author of about two hundred publications, most recently Poland’s Strategic Concept for Maritime Security (Warsaw-Gdynia 2017).

Amund Lundesgaard has a Ph.D. in history from the University of Oslo spring 2017. Since 2009, Lundesgaard has been studying the U.S. Navy’s strategic priorities after the Cold War, which was also the topic of his Ph.D. Lundesgaard is now working on issues related to operational cooperation in the North Atlantic, as well as other projects related to his Ph.D.

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Martin Murphy, Ph.D. is a political and strategic analyst specializing in maritime conflict. He is the author of over 60 books, book chapters and journal articles on maritime conflict, economic warfare, hybrid warfare and grey zone threats, piracy and counter-piracy operations, terrorism, and related topics. He is working currently on a two-volume study of the United States and the sea in the 21st Century, the first entitled The Tragedy of American Sea Power and the second The Problem of Asia. He holds both UK and US citizenship and divides his time between London and Virginia.

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**Eric Thompson** provides strategic leadership to CNA’s Strategy Policy and Plans Division. As Vice President and Director, he leads over 50 national security specialists working both at CNA headquarters and in the field, and provides support to U.S., NATO and coalition military commanders during training, exercises and operations. Previously, he led CNA’s International Affairs Group, Strategic Initiatives Group and Center for Stability and Development. His areas of expertise include strategy and policy, Middle Eastern political and military affairs, security challenges in Europe and Asia, as well as partner capacity building, maritime security, coalition integration, campaign planning and assessment, and terrorism. Thompson’s articles have been published in *PRISM*, *Proceedings*, the *Middle East Journal*, and *Middle East Policy*. He has presented research papers at many conferences, including those sponsored by NATO, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Naval War College, the Army War College, the National Bureau of Asian Research, RUSI, the Stanley Foundation, Wilton Park and the Foreign Policy Association. He holds a Ph.D. and an M.A. from the University of Virginia.

**Geoffrey Till** is a British naval historian and emeritus Professor of Maritime Studies in the Defence Studies Department of King’s College London. He is the Director of the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies. Previously, he held positions at the Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth, the Royal Naval College Greenwich, the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, the U.S. Marine Corps University, Quantico, Virginia, the Joint Services Staff and Command College, Shrivenham, and the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore. He has written extensively on maritime history and strategy. Till has been Reviews Editor for the Journal of Strategic Studies since it was launched in 1978, General Editor of *Brassey’s Seapower: Naval Vessels, Weapons Systems and Technology* series since 1987, contributing its first volume on modern sea power, and general series editor of the Frank Cass series on naval policy and history.

**Sarah Vogler** is a research analyst with CNA’s Strategy, Policy, Plans and Programs division. Her work focuses on adversary strategic calculus and decision-making, maritime security, and U.S. ally and partner engagement. She holds a masters’ degree in international affairs from the Elliott School of International Affairs at The George Washington University.
Steven Wills is an expert in U.S. Navy strategy and policy, and U.S. Navy surface warfare programs and platforms. His research interests include the history of U.S. Navy strategy development over the Cold War and immediate, post-Cold War era, and the history of the post-World War II U.S. Navy surface fleet. Prior to joining CNA, Wills completed a Ph.D. in military history from Ohio University, and had a 20-year career as an active duty U.S. Navy officer. Wills’s articles have appeared in the United States Naval War College Review, the United States Naval Institute News, Real Clear Defense, CIMSEC, War on the Rocks, and Information Dissemination. Wills holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in History from Ohio University, an M.A. in National Security Studies from the United States Naval War College, and a B.A. in History from Miami University, Oxford, OH.
Biography of Peter M. Swartz

Peter Swartz was born and raised in Providence, Rhode Island, the grandson of Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe. His father was wounded in combat during World War II while serving in General George Patton’s Third Army in its drive across France, earning a bronze star, and later owned and managed small businesses. His mother was a homemaker. Peter served for over 27 years as a U.S. Navy officer, primarily as a specialist in strategy, plans and policy. Early in his career he helped train Navy personnel heading to assignments in Vietnam, and subsequently served two tours in-country himself during the war, as an advisor to the Republic of Vietnam Navy, and on the staff of Vice Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr. He then helped manage Navy intercultural relations programs from Washington and London, followed by two Pentagon tours as an action officer in the Navy’s Strategy, Plans and Policy Division (OP-60). He played a leading role in conceptualizing and drafting the Navy's Maritime Strategy of the 1980s, serving successive Chiefs of Naval Operations, and in Secretary of the Navy John Lehman’s Office of Program Appraisal (OPA).

In his first joint military assignment, he was Director of Defense Operations for the U.S. Mission to NATO in Brussels as the Berlin Wall was coming down. He completed his service on active duty as a Special Assistant to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell during and after the First Gulf War.

Following his retirement from the Navy as a Captain in 1993, Peter joined CNA as a naval analyst and remained there for more than a quarter of a century, retiring in 2019 from full-time analytical, management, and consulting work as a Principal Research Scientist, Strategy and Policy Analysis Program Director, and analyst directly supporting Navy policy and strategy offices. He still continues his affiliation with CNA in a part-time on-call status.

His work at CNA drew lessons for contemporary U.S. Navy decision-makers and staffs from the historical development and implementation of past Navy concepts, policies, strategy, operations, organization, international and inter-service relationships, and doctrine. He analyzed alternative global fleet deployment models; lessons learned from past Navy homeland defense, counter-piracy and irregular warfare operations; the Navy's role in the evolution of the Unified Command Plan (UCP); and relationships between Navy strategy, programming and budgeting. He drafted many classi-
fied and unclassified documents and briefings; published several public conference papers, journal articles, book chapters and books; chaired or participated in numerous conference panels; was interviewed by oral historians; and – notably assisted and mentored numerous shipmates and colleagues in conceptualizing and writing their own presentations and publications.

He served from 1985 to 1987 on the Secretary of the Navy’s Advisory Committee on Naval History, and from 2006 to the present on the Naval War College Review editorial board. From 2008 through 2019 he was a founding co-chair of the unofficial off-the-record Strategy Discussion Group (SDG), of which he remains a member. In 2020, he was a co-recipient of the prestigious annual Naval Historical Foundation Commodore Dudley W. Knox Naval History Lifetime Achievement Award.

Peter was the first member of his family to graduate from college. He holds a B.A. in International Relations with Honors from Brown University, an M.A. in International Relations from the Johns Hopkins University’s Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and an M.Phil. in Political Science from Columbia University. He also spent a year at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) as a Navy Federal Executive Fellow (FEF). Conversant in French and Vietnamese, he lives with his wife of over 49 years, the former Nguyen Thi Tho (Thuy), in Burke, Virginia. They travel extensively. Their daughter Diana lives in Notting Hill, London with her family, and is a governance consultant to international non-profit organizations. Their son Daniel lives in Washington DC’s Penn Quarter and is a well-known society photo-journalist.
Publicly available output of Peter Swartz

Editorial note: Throughout his Navy and CNA careers, Peter researched and drafted numerous papers and briefings, a goodly number of which remain classified or otherwise limited in their distribution. The accounting below is solely of writings that have been cleared for public release as of 1 April 2020.

Prize Essays

Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial prize essay (Providence, RI: Narragansett Council, Boy Scouts of America, 1959)

Books


Book chapters

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“Forward … From the Start,” in *Naval Review Proceedings* vol. 130/5/1,203 (May 2003), 80-86.


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**CNA reports (publicly available)**


The CNA Capstone Strategy Series, 2011 (slide format).


Publicly available output of Peter Swartz


**Other reports**


**Video presentations**


*“Future Deployment Options for the Fleet: Lessons from the Past”* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, College of Distance Education (CDE), Joint Maritime Operations (JMO) Course, 14 December 2018).
Selected conference papers and briefings

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Publicly available output of Peter Swartz


Oral Histories, interviews, podcasts, biographical articles


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Incomplete drafts, previously published data sets and working papers


CNA Historical Paper Series


Publicly available output of Peter Swartz

Archival collections

“The Peter Swartz Collection” (Lubbock TX: The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University, added 16 June 2004); unclassified publications related to the Vietnam War and psychological operations.

“Working Papers of Captain Peter Swartz USN (Ret), 1970s-1993,” Collection 49 (Washington D.C.: Archives Branch, Operational Archives Section, Naval History and Heritage Command, added 1993); unclassified and classified records related to the development and dissemination of the Maritime Strategy, the 600-ship Navy, maritime concepts and strategy, naval arms control, naval force levels and missions, northern flank NATO strategy and related naval topics of the 1980s and early 1990s.

“Peter Swartz Working Papers,” 2019 (Arlington, VA: CNA Strategy, Policy, Plans, and Programs (SP3) Division); unclassified publications – mostly historical secondary sources – relating to US Navy deployment strategy, homeland defense, combatant commands, the Unified Command Plan, the Air-Sea Battle concept, carrier aviation, riverine warfare, multinational naval operations, the US Navy and NATO, piracy, the US Navy’s history in Africa, and other naval topics.


Acknowledged contributions to the works of others


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**Book jacket contributions**


**Committee, board, discussion group memberships**

“Commanders Cabal” (CDR Norman Mosher convener), late 1970s.

Navy Discussion Group (CDR/CAPT James Stark convener), Mid 1980s.

Secretary of the Navy’s Advisory Committee on Naval History, 1985-1987.


*Naval War College Review*, Editorial Board, 2006-present.

Selected graduate-level academic courses and classes taught


Conference conceptualized and convened

U.S. Navy Forward Presence Bicentennial Symposium (Center for Naval Analyses, 21 June 2001)

Military operations (Vietnam, 1969)

Vietnamese Navy Fourth Coastal Zone
Giang Thanh river & Vinh Te canal
Cua Lon river, Ca Mau peninsula
Phu Quoc island
Gulf of Thailand and islands