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From Preponderance to Partnership:
American Maritime Power in the 21st Century

By Frank Hoffman

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Cover Image

Naval ships from Argentina, Brazil, Spain, Uruguay, and the United States participate in a gunnery exercise during UNITAS 47-06 Atlantic Phase. UNITAS is the largest multi-national naval exercise conducted with naval forces from the U.S., the Caribbean Sea, and South and Central America. The exercises focus on building multinational coalitions, while promoting hemispheric defense and mutual cooperation.

U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Michael Sandberg (Oct. 26, 2005)

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About the Author

Frank Hoffman is a retired Marine officer with 30 years of experience in policy development, strategy and force analysis, and consulting.

One of the most important national security challenges facing the next president of the United States will be preserving America's maritime power. The U.S. Navy has been cut in half since the 1980s, shrinking steadily from 594 to today's 280 ships. The fleet size has been cut by 60 ships during the Bush administration alone, despite significantly increased Pentagon budgets.

Several naval analysts and commentators, including the observant Robert Kaplan, have argued that America's present naval fleet constitutes an "elegant decline" or outright neglect. A former Reagan administration naval official contends that our current maritime policy and investment levels are "verging towards unilateral naval disarmament."[1]

This is something of an overstatement. The American naval fleet is still substantially larger than any other, and has unmatched global reach and endurance. The U.S. Navy's aggregate tonnage is the equivalent of the next 17 international navies, of which 14 are U.S. allies, and our power projection capabilities retain a 4:1 advantage in missiles. Looking simply at overall naval ship totals may not be the most accurate measure of naval power, but it is an historical standard of measurement. By that criterion, the U.S. Navy has not been this size since World War I, when Britain's Royal Navy was the guarantor of the global commons.

While one can debate whether today's Navy is sized properly, there is little doubt that U.S. maritime capabilities are critical to the execution of any national security strategy. The so-called American Century has largely been coterminous with the U.S. Navy's mastery of seapower. In a global economy that is increasingly interdependent and dependent on the security of the global highways of international trade, maritime security will remain a vital national interest.

Over the past decade, American strategists seem to have collectively lost sight of this relationship. Given the advance of globalization and the increasingly integrated economies that use the world's oceans as superhighways, the relationship between U.S. national interests and American naval assets should not be hard to grasp. Yet, the ongoing Long War against al Qaeda and the conduct of multiple counterinsurgency campaigns far from the sea have allowed our attention to drift. The next

administration must resolve the apparent strategy-resources mismatch that currently characterizes our present naval policy and capability, and link naval resources to our overall strategy. Accordingly, this report offers a way to close the strategy-resources gap, and identifies the requisite maritime strategy and forces to carry it out.

"In a global economy that is increasingly interdependent and dependent on the security of the global highways of international trade, maritime security will remain a vital national interest."

The first section of this report provides a detailed review of the latest national maritime strategy. This strategy reflects an acute appreciation for new parameters in the security environment and their potential impact on our interests. However it is not without faults; modifications to U.S. maritime strategy are offered that better support a sustainable and affordable grand strategy for the United States.

The most important element of any strategy is its relationship to resource allocation priorities and the development of the means of carrying out the strategy. Thus, the second section of this report details the current naval fleet and shipbuilding architecture. After presenting the current Navy acquisition plans, a range of alternative fleet designs is briefly reviewed to illustrate the range of options. This section concludes with a synthesis of these competing designs, and an argument for why this particular fleet better matches the sustainable grand strategy offered in the first section. The report concludes with a few general recommendations.

THE NEW MARITIME STRATEGY

Today's military leadership recognizes the altered security landscape and is adapting. Last October, the heads of the nation's three maritime services published a national maritime strategy. Like its predecessors, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* was signed by the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and his traditional partner, the Commandant of the Marine Corps.[2] However, this strategy was unique in that the Coast Guard signed and contributed to the substance of the publication. The new maritime strategy bound the Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard "more closely together than they have ever been before to advance the prosperity and security of our nation."[3]

This effort was initiated at the direction of then-CNO Admiral Mike Mullen.[4] The last formal version was crafted in the early 1980s and aggressively marketed during the Reagan administration.[5] That version was the culmination of years of intelligence estimates, internal debates and wargames. It served as the cornerstone of the Navy's thinking about how it intended to fight, what type of fleet was needed to counter the Soviet Union, and how it would operate. It was based on an identified enemy, with a corresponding geography or operating waters. The offensive sea-control approach it advocated was useful for determining the weapon systems and force structure needed to carry it out. In the public's mind, it was crucial to President Reagan's arguments for building a 600-ship Navy.[6]

In a keynote address at the Naval War College in 2006, Admiral Mullen linked his initiative to the perceived efficacy of the last formal maritime strategy. That document "…clearly defined the purpose of naval forces in that struggle… and articulated precisely how they would be used to deter and, if necessary, defeat the forces of the Soviet Union." It produced a Navy "organized, trained and equipped around a core set of unifying principles and missions."[7]

The contemporary Navy lacked a similar strategic touchstone, and its strategic thinking had been described as moribund.[8] Thus Admiral Mullen's initiative, designed to highlight the overlooked advantages of the United States' mastery of seapower, was long overdue.

But the new maritime strategy has to be very different from its predecessors because it is being crafted for a very different age and within a distinctly altered strategic context.[9] It must be operative and of strategic use in a very different world, one characterized by an increasingly globalized economy and a broadening set of missions for naval forces. The strategy must also be developed in something of a strategic vacuum. Containment, and the consensus built around it, is long gone. The maritime strategy must be subordinated to a long-term grand strategy that has not yet been framed. Instead of a broad bipartisan consensus, stark divisions between liberal internationalism, primacy and alternative models exist that complicate the creation of an enduring strategic framework for any military planner.

The lack of a singular focus or adversary complicates the long-term planning required to create and maintain a fleet with the right capabilities and capacity. Today's naval planners have a range of opponents and missions to consider. U.S. policy makers face transnational threats as well as rising powers, and naval strategists today lack the agreed-upon analytical foundation that their predecessors exploited effectively for generations.[10]

Of greater relevance, geopolitical and geoeconomic forces have altered the alliance structure that enabled U.S. forward operating capabilities in critical regions. The end of the Cold War removed the necessity of overseas

military bases and undercut the political support required to sustain them. Simultaneously, domestic pressures have forced former allies to consider the political costs of permanent U.S. military garrisons on their soil. Over the last decade or so, America's overseas posture has been considerably altered, limiting our ability to project and sustain forces at a great distance.[11]

Admiral Mullen understood the characteristics of today's new era. He was also aware that the Navy had not yet come to grips with the implications of globalization or the end of the Cold War. He urged it to embrace *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman's more integrated "flat world."[12] He challenged his audience to:

> …redefine Sea Power for this new era and explain how we will operate differently, train differently, educate differently, and balance our forces differently. So I am here to challenge you. First, to rid yourselves of the old notion — held by so many for so long — that maritime strategy exists solely to fight and win wars at sea, and the rest will take care of itself. In a globalized, flat world the rest matters a lot.[13]

The Department of the Navy did not go 20 years without a strategy or without any reflection about changes in the security environment. The Naval leadership issued two major "institutional vision" statements in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's dissolution that were strategically innovative: "From The Sea" (1992) and "Forward…From the Sea" (1994). The former provided a striking alternative to the Cold War emphasis on deep blue water. While defense planners at the time struggled with the meaning of Desert Storm and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Naval Service's "best and brightest" crafted a remarkable paper. "Our ability to command the sea in areas where we anticipate future operations allows us to resize our naval forces," the white paper concluded, "and to *concentrate more* on capabilities required in the complex operating environment of the 'littoral' or coastlines of the earth."

This was a bold statement in 1992, and it remains so today. "From the Sea" went on to clarify the purpose of a post-Cold War Navy, which represented a new strategic direction, "derived from the National Security Strategy, represent[ing] a fundamental shift away from open ocean warfighting *on* the sea toward joint operations conducted *from* the sea…"[15]

However, this change in direction proved too radical a paradigm shift for traditionalists and created tension inside the Navy. The suggestion that carrier battle groups were not the desired force building block of the future caused a row among traditional Navy power centers and resource sponsors. While the Navy leadership recognized the need to "resize" and concentrate resources, it could not institutionally commit to altering the crown jewels. The Navy backtracked and published "Forward…From the Sea" to clarify the enduring utility of its carrier-based force as the basic building block of forward presence and the Navy's contribution to regional stability.[16]

So now a new maritime strategy has been painstakingly developed and promulgated. It remains to be seen if today's Navy will accept this new strategy and what influence it will have in shaping the fleet. The strategy has been met with positive reviews overall, although it is not without faults.[17] John Lehman, a driving force behind the maritime strategy of 1986, described it favorably.[18] But on the Hill, a key audience for such a strategy, it was met with less than exuberant reviews. One Congressman dismissed the Cooperative Seapower Strategy as nothing more than "a really slick brochure."[19] On the other hand, allies and even some Chinese observers appear to have positive views.[20]

The new maritime strategy rests upon a number of propositions:

> *"The security, prosperity, and vital interests of the United States are increasingly coupled to those of other nations."*
>
> *"Our Nation's interests are best served by fostering a peaceful global system comprised of interdependent networks of trade, finance, information, law, people and governance."*
>
> *"No one nation has the resources required to provide safety and security throughout the entire maritime domain. Increasingly, governments, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and the private sector will form partnerships of common interest to counter emerging threats."*
>
> *"We believe that preventing wars is as important as winning wars."*
>
> *"Maritime forces will be employed to build confidence and trust among nations through collective security efforts that focus on common threats and mutual interest in an open, multi-polar world."* [21]

These propositions are consistent with Friedman's stress on globalization. They also reflect the insights of Dr. Thomas P.M. Barnett, who has stressed the importance of naval forces in a highly connected world.[22] Both of these modern strategists are optimistic in their worldview, and focus on opportunity over threats. They seek collaboration over competition. So too did Admiral Mullen with his "1,000-ship Navy" concept, which was the intellectual generator of what is now known as the Global Maritime Partnership initiative.[23] The propositions are also inherently consistent with a grand strategy of Off Shore Partnering, as discussed in detail below.

The Cooperative Seapower Strategy lays out the half dozen major tasks or "strategic imperatives" that America's maritime services must attain. These can be identified as the strategy's ends, which include:

- Limit regional conflict with forward-deployed, decisive maritime power.
- Deter major power wars.
- Win our nation's wars.
- Contribute to homeland defense in depth.
- Foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international parties.
- Prevent or contain local disruptions before they impact the global system.[24]

Those ends should be seen as prioritized, although the document does not say so. The emphasis on deterring, responding and winning major wars belies the strategy's major propositions but retains the Navy's ultimate *raison d'etre* as the guarantor of global access and freedom of maneuver for the United States. The strategy goes on to delineate six "expanded core capabilities" that the Sea Services will use to obtain these ends. Four are standard naval missions: forward presence, deterrence, sea control, and power projection. To these traditional core capabilities, the strategy adds maritime security and humanitarian assistance and disaster response.[25]

Assuming again that these goals are prioritized, these missions create a fleet prepared to maintain credible combat forces anywhere American access and influence are challenged. The latter two core capabilities represent logical additions in a globalized world fraught with local instabilities that could be magnified by transnational threats into strategic effects. These priorities may not, however, create a fleet designed to support the Cooperative Seapower Strategy's emphasis on collaborative partnerships, but they do reflect the traditional missions of American seapower.

Assessment

On the positive side, the Cooperative Seapower strategy makes three very telling points. First, it emphasizes the importance of prevention over preemption. In point of fact, the strategy argues that using seapower to maintain stability and prevent wars is as important as winning wars.[26] This is a major step forward, as in the past both America's land and naval forces were configured to "fight and win" battles to the exclusion of preventative and constructive actions, including maritime security or naval constabulary work.

Prevention during the Cold War was limited to deterrence. This strategy goes past the theologies of the standoff against the Soviet Union, for naval forces will engage with local forces for maritime and collective security, not merely to pass through on extended patrolling cruises and "drive-by" port calls. Previous strategies emphasized forward posturing, but forces were postured to act reactively on short notice to emerging crises. The Cooperative Seapower Strategy presses U.S. naval forces past being merely deployed forward to *engaging forward*, in a proactive sense, to enhance and minimize the conditions that generate conflict and instability in the first place. Moreover, it suggests helping partners at the grassroots level from the perspective of smaller countries, not merely the defense needs or priorities of the United States. Such a shift is very consistent with the latest National Defense Strategy and its emphasis on building partnership capacity and security cooperation to minimize emerging transnational challenges.

Consistent with the logic of Off Shore Partnering, the publication observes that:

> …integrated maritime operations, either within formal alliance structures (such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) or more informal arrangements (such as the Global Maritime Partnership initiative), send powerful messages to would-be aggressors that we will act with others to ensure collective security and prosperity.[27]

Second, the new strategy embraces the essential logic of Off Shore Partnering, as "maritime forces will be employed to build confidence and trust among nations through collective security efforts that focus on common threats and mutual interests in an open, multi-polar world."[28] This focus reflects Admiral Mullen's Global Maritime Partnerships initiative, which seeks a cooperative approach to maritime security, promoting the rule of law by countering piracy, terrorism, weapons proliferation, drug trafficking, and other illicit activities. This orientation is important to many other countries, as it constitutes their most immediate national security needs. These efforts will presumably establish habits of cooperation, interoperability and responsibility for the shared commons. These partnerships and cooperative naval action can reduce the probability of disruptive events that might endanger the highly interdependent global system and also reduce their severity.

The third positive element of the new maritime strategy is its indirect treatment of China. There are many analysts in the national security community who regard China as a rising competitor in search of regional hegemony or even global dominance. The easiest thing for the drafters of the strategy to have done in order to justify a larger share of the Pentagon's budget was to have exaggerated Chinese military modernization. Critical observers believe that the Navy should focus on the most stressing or most dangerous threat in order to garner its share in the Beltway's zero-sum contest for scarce resources.[29] The Pentagon is not usually reticent about labeling China as a threat. For example, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) labeled the Middle Kingdom as having "the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States

and field disruptive military technologies that could over time offset traditional U.S. military advantages absent U.S. counterstrategies."[30]

But the Navy chose not to hype the threat and it went so far as to deliberately not mention China at all in its new maritime strategy. To be sure, Chinese investment levels are under considerable scrutiny. The Pentagon's congressionally-mandated report on China's military capabilities provides a public assessment.[31] Consistent with the open literature, this report suggests that China remains focused on Taiwan and improving its defensive or sea denial capabilities. It is seeking to protect its periphery and borders, and is pursuing a sea denial strategy with a corresponding investment in mines, submarines, and cruise missiles to keep the U.S. Navy at arm's length. In particular, China's growing submarine production—including its indigenous Song and Yuan-class boats and the Type 093 nuclear attack submarine—are drawing greater attention, and appropriately so. But China's Navy does appear to be broadening its approach and extending the range of its sea denial capability to waters beyond Taiwan.[32] In the near term:

> China's current ability to project and sustain power at a distance remains limited, the PLA [People's Liberation Army], at least for the near and mid terms, will face an ambition-capability gap. Currently it is neither capable of using military power to secure its foreign energy investments nor of defending critical sea lanes against disruption.[33]

But one should not dismiss the Chinese Navy's ongoing modernization or the potential for a rising power to disturb the status quo. Of particular concern is a rapid submarine building program and the development of long-range ballistic missiles that can target ships at sea. The fact that China has built or bought more than 30 submarines in the last decade to our four in the same period is not comforting.[34] These developments suggest that while China may not yet be pursuing a "blue water" navy, it can certainly threaten the use of the global commons by others.[35]

Some imagine China as a robust blue water threat, and imagine that we need a Navy to reprise War Plan Orange, the battle plan for the Pacific in the last world war. Such symmetry grossly oversimplifies the geostrategic nature of the competition to only a military dimension. As Robert Kaplan has argued in a perceptive essay, the Chinese are not going to oblige us in a conventional fight in blue water. Instead they will focus on asymmetrical approaches emphasizing space-based surveillance, submarines, and cyber operations.[36] They will not embrace Mahan, even with Chinese characters.[37] Their strategic approach will be far more indirect and more formidable than a clash of fleets, as evidenced by its multidimensional charm offensives in Asia, South America, and Africa. Our strategy must be just as comprehensive and indirect or nuanced. A strategic and comprehensive response is warranted if the United States is to apply the "power of balance" in Asia.[38]

On the negative side, the strategy has four shortfalls. The first is its lack of a clear and compelling force architecture.[39] Navy strategists claim they never intended to articulate a requirement for a 600-ship or 300-ship Navy, and reject any criticism about the strategy's opacity. The Navy's internal classified strategic plan will reportedly frame exactly what kind of Navy is needed to implement the Cooperative Seapower Strategy. This is a major mistake. At the end of the day, a true maritime strategy needs to delineate exactly what kind of fleet is needed, where it will operate, and against whom.

The Cooperative Seapower Strategy fails in this principal objective. It clarifies neither the type nor

the priorities for future investment. The journalist Robert Kaplan, whose recent assessments reflect a keen comprehension of the Navy's growing role, concluded that the strategy presents "a restrained, nuanced, yearning for a bigger Navy."[40] This nuance is so subtle that it has been lost on most readers. Nuance and globalization will not by themselves garner additional resources from the taxpayer and their elected representatives. A valuable opportunity has been missed.

Regrettably, the Navy missed the chance to clearly link their strategy to the necessary means (ships and sailors) and the resources required to implement the strategy. The fact that there has been little change from last year's long-range shipbuilding plan to today's suggests there is little linkage at all, or that the strategy has been backdated to justify the existing capital modernization plan. Moreover, the Chief of Naval Operations recently commented that the present plan is a floor, not a ceiling, and stated "the 313-ship Navy will not be enough for the missions that we're going to be tasked with in the coming years."[41] The basis for this claim is not clear. Nor is it evident that the composition of the 313 ships in the current plan is logical. Again, these are exactly the issues the strategy should have addressed.

The second problem with the new maritime strategy is that it contains lists of missions and imperatives, but little in terms of priorities, investment requirements, or organizational initiatives. The reader has to ask what is truly new here, and what is the Navy doing that is different. To the lay reader it is not clear at all. To the sophisticated reader in Washington, there are subtle shifts in priority and some nuanced indications of posture shifts.

Naval analyst Robert Work of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments has evaluated the Cooperative Seapower Strategy and challenged its providence as a strategy. Its failure to clearly link strategic goals (ends), ways (the methods that the organization uses to achieve those ends), and means (amount and type of resources required to fulfill the ways) left him to conclude that the document was more aptly described as a maritime strategic concept than a true strategy. Without an overt and compelling linkage, he argues, the cooperative strategy will not rise to the level of a "maritime holy grail" that helps the Navy frame its requirements in a compelling manner. It will simply take its place beside a long list of other concepts and strategies produced since the end of the Cold War.[42]

The strategy is incomplete as a comprehensive articulation of just how maritime power will be developed and applied. As presented, it is more a description of the need for strong maritime capabilities and the various missions that the Navy should be prepared to execute.

The third sin of omission is the strategy's limited discussion about power projection and forcible entry operations, or what might be better reclassified as "assured access" operations. The studious neglect of this component in the nation's arsenal, coupled with the Navy's struggle to maintain a modernized amphibious force, make this the perfect opportunity to extol the strategic benefits of assured access for the combatant commanders. The strategy purports to generate American access and influence indirectly, but not when it is contested. Its discussion about power projection does properly note that the ability to overcome challenges to access and to project power ashore is the basis of our combat credibility, but it is not clear what priority this mission really has or if "stand off warfare" with precision missiles mistakenly constitutes power projection.[43]

Given the importance and the vast expanse of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and the policy shift

as reflected in the Global Posture Review from fixed, vulnerable, and politically difficult forward-stationed combat forces inside foreign countries to more flexible and politically acceptable modes of basing, one might think this imperative would have been highlighted.[44] It remains crucial to the ability to project and sustain forces in theater without relying on other countries to provide facilities. It is evident to many other nations that the utility of amphibious shipping has increased in value, which has resulted in significant growth in this versatile mode of shipping in the international community.[45] Here the maritime leadership missed an opportunity to support the 2006 QDR, which expressed a strong need for innovative basing modalities, greater freedom of action, and cost-imposing strategies.[46] Sea-based presence can meet all three of these strategic priorities.

Fourth and finally, the strategy notes that cooperation and partnership are not restricted to just international coalitions, but also apply to the partnership among the three Maritime Services. It notes that the strategy's implementation cannot be attained without "an unprecedented level of integration among our maritime forces."[47] But the strategy is mute on implementation or examples other than the comment that the Marines will be "employed as detachments aboard a wider variety of ships and cutters for maritime security missions" and that representatives of all three Services will be "teamed in various combinations of security forces, mobile training teams, construction battalions, health services, law enforcement, and civil affairs units to conduct security cooperation and humanitarian assistance missions."[48]

The strategy includes references to several unilateral service initiatives, for example the Naval Expeditionary Combat Command, Global Fleet Stations, Maritime Partnership initiatives, and Security Cooperation task forces. None of these represent integrated or interdependent capabilities. In fact, many of these unilateral initiatives predate the strategy, and all reflect additive costs for ships or manpower vice integrated options that create synergies. Since the strategy was issued almost a year ago, no proposals for an organizational initiative have been generated inside the Maritime Services.

Grand Strategy in an Interdependent World

Our maritime forces have to be designed to support an overall grand strategy. America's Cold War grand strategy of containment was no longer needed after 1989, and a strategy best described as "preponderance" evolved during the Bush administration. The logic of preponderance required American policy makers to amass military power in order to dissuade other great powers from emerging or even contemplating arming themselves to contest U.S. primacy.[49] This strategy has focused largely on military power, and the unilateral application of force to maximize U.S. strategic freedom of action. Arguably, America's primacy has been a source of stability that many have benefited from. But in a world in which power is distributed more widely, with new players on the global scene, where America's preeminence is challenged in myriad ways, preserving or extending preponderance as an operative framework will be increasingly difficult. The world, in the words of Robert Kagan, is becoming normal again.[50]

As the tragedy of 9/11 showed, our traditional military might can be contested by new modes of warfare that bypass the Pentagon's tanks, aircraft carriers, and stealth bombers. Chinese and Russian assertiveness on the global stage — and the spiraling risks of nuclear proliferation from North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan — indicate that nations can and will find ways of contesting American influence. Additionally, America's

strategic position, based upon its economic competitiveness and human and physical infrastructure, is eroding relative to others'.[51]

However, the need for leadership (and indeed a reluctant sheriff) is readily apparent.[52] Some strategists have argued that America should stop trying to preserve the "unipolar moment" and embrace an alternative grand strategy. Strategies of "restraint" and "offshore balancing" are offered.[53] These approaches focus on ensuring that America avoids entanglement in the internal or regional affairs of others. Instead of risking overstretch by the extensive costs of posturing military forces around the globe, offshore balancing focuses first on our own narrowly defined interests in our region. Other regions would be expected to provide for their own national and regional security commensurate with their interests. The major regional powers would police themselves. Advocates of this approach would withdraw from most, if not all, of America's treaties and security obligations, and limit forward-based forces, which would permit a sizable reduction in U.S. military forces.

The problem with the strategies of restraint and balancing is that they overlook current geostrategic circumstances. Today's challenges and the integrated globalized economy do not support the detached posture and cold calculations suggested by either approach. Since 9/11 we have learned that small events and under-governed areas have big consequences. We have learned that geography and our oceans no longer protect us the way they once did. Due to the interdependent networks of financial, energy, and information systems, American interests in many areas are not trivial or secondary, but crucial. Finally, history suggests that regions do not police themselves and that we cannot stand idly by while other regional powers satisfy their ambitions at our expense. As noted in a United Nations report, "in today's world, a threat to one is a threat to all. Every State requires international cooperation to make it secure."[54]

Balancing from a great distance does not generate international cooperation or develop the necessary capacity to maintain the sinews of international economic activity. We need to recognize that America's interests and future prosperity are interdependently tied to others. So many of today's challenges are transnational in nature and cannot be met without the cooperation and efforts of others. Furthermore, so much of our success and security is tied to reliable access to the global markets, commercial networks, trade routes, and cyber communications that constitute today's "global commons."[55] We need not act as if we own or dominate these commons, but we must actively ensure that access to them is reliably secure for everyone. Thus more collective frameworks, which reflect shared interests and cooperative approaches, appear warranted today.

Adapting the Maritime Strategy and Naval Forces for an Interdependent World

Our maritime forces should be adapted to support this more cooperative approach. Rather than balance from afar, we can help others help themselves and bind them to an international system and a set of rules that benefit all. Partners need not commit to one hegemon over another, but they should be able to commit to a rule set that maintains global order and a mutually prosperous system of trade and commerce. Rather than standing back as free riders, a larger regional community of interest can be motivated to collaborate in the day-to-day maintenance of the basic commons. With respect to maritime forces this means seeking multilateral combinations to deal with maritime security, commerce, smuggling in narcotics and humans, criminal activity, and counterproliferation. Hopefully, when either natural or state-based challenges to the commons arise, the habits of cooperative support, coupled with a sense

of common interest, will engender a greater collective response to threats to stability.

Such an approach emphasizes cooperative concerts and flexible arrangements built around maritime partners to support mutual interests in maintaining order. Partners are not asked to support American hegemony as a transactional payment, but the international economic and maritime security system itself. This indirect approach, which I call "Off Shore Partnering," requires forward engagement and regular, interactive dialogue and cooperation with all possible partners.

Off Shore Partnering requires earlier and proactive involvement at local levels, not detachment or reactive responses. It requires working with and through others over the direct or unilateral application of U.S. power. Local approaches to local and global problems are sought, not merely transplanting U.S. templates to various regions. Furthermore, it does not assume U.S. operational leadership in day-to-day activities. Finally, Off Shore Partnering provides for an inherently flexible posture while minimizing our political or military footprint.[56] Over time our force posture must be retooled to maximize flexibility and adaptability.[57] We will accrue numerous benefits from this shift in posture. Maintaining a flexible approach over fixed commitments avoids the counterbalancing so evident today, builds more positive relationships over intrusive obligations, and reduces the costs of fixed military presence to both our hosts and the American taxpayer.

The adoption of a more indirect approach will increase our reliance on maritime assets as well as the Special Operations community. It will also allow us to adapt how we use our forces. This military posture and presence should be used more as a positive tool for "proactive engagement" over static positioning or belated crisis response.[58]

A more expansive view of our posture is needed to secure long-term goals of sustained stability, access to markets and resources, and secure access to the global commons to connect the two.[59]

Thus, the United States will be more secure, and global stability better sustained, if America shifts its maritime forces consistent with Off Shore Partnering on behalf of a sustainable grand strategy. This strategy relies upon the global reach and capability of our maritime services to work with others to preserve and extend security via multilateral approaches.

> *"Rather than balance from afar, we can help others help themselves and bind them to an international system and a set of rules that benefit all."*

On balance, the Cooperative Seapower Strategy is very consistent with Off Shore Partnering. The new maritime strategy is long on globalization's fragility, and the role of maritime forces in securing the seas from disorder and disruption. The benefits that the global community gains from our persistent forward maritime presence are manifestly clear, as is the shared responsibility to maintain the global commons.

The only distinction between the new maritime strategy and Off Shore Partnering would be in the priorities of the missions required and the

resulting allocation of constrained resources to shipbuilding in accordance with those priorities. The new Cooperative Seapower Strategy retains the Navy's traditional warfighting missions as its top three priorities and gives less emphasis to partnerships, cooperation, and maritime security. A strategy of Off Shore Partnering would better balance those priorities and be more faithful to the professed notion that preventing wars is as important as fighting them. More specifically, the strategic imperative to "foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international parties" and "to prevent local disruptions before they impact the global system" needs to be raised higher.[60]

From this reprioritization of missions and imperatives, a different fleet architecture can be developed. It is not clear why the service chiefs did not think the public, the customer of this determined effort, needed to be better informed about the logic between this strategy and the force levels required to implement it. This does not help the Department of Defense (DoD) or Congress understand the total requirements picture or the tradeoffs that may be necessary to balance the demand for naval forces and available funding. Without such clear direction, the new maritime strategy will fail to stimulate the necessary understanding and garner the support required from Congress to resource it. The next section of this study turns to that challenge.

FLEET DESIGNS AND INVESTMENT

What kind of military capabilities are required to make Off Shore Partnering feasible? Given the need to lean forward and engage persistently in many littoral regions, how should tomorrow's fleet be framed? What investment priories might we extract from the nuances of the Cooperative Seapower Strategy? Do we need a bi-modal Navy constructed to deal with the different demands posed by the shallow green and brown waters of the littorals compared to the deeper blue waters?[61] Or do we need three different kinds of naval forces, as Robert Kaplan has suggested: one to conduct deep strike operations ashore, another to support our Special Forces, and a third component to operate stealthily along the Chinese mainland and Taiwan Strait?[62]

This question about the operational design of the fleet is important, as Navies are not like ground forces. They are not as fungible and are far more platform oriented and capital intensive. The Army and Marine Corps are general-purpose forces, and can be employed across a wide range of tasks from humanitarian assistance to stability operations and counterinsurgency, up to and including intense conventional ground operations. With the right training and doctrine, different ground units (artillery, infantry, armor) can be cross-trained to fulfill security tasks across the range of military operations.

Naval capabilities are different. Fleets are longer in development and their systems have to last longer. An aircraft carrier represents a $10 to $14 billion investment and may be employed for 40 or 50 years. These larger costs and longer time lines generate greater risks of getting future requirements wrong. Carriers displacing 100,000 tons cannot race at 45 knots and operate in shallow waters against smugglers. Small craft do not have the size to maintain large batteries of fire support

systems with robust inventories of missiles and shells. Submarines make lousy landing platforms for aircraft, of course. Ships have to be more closely designed for their intended purpose, which increases the risk that force planners will not correctly identify the type and quantity of ships that may be required in the future.

Today's Fleet

The current U.S. Navy battle force fleet is composed of roughly 275 combat and support ships. The Department of the Navy shipbuilding plan lays out a requirement for 313 battle force ships. That plan is built around 11 carrier strike groups and 88 large surface combatants (see Table 1).[63] Over the past several years, Congress has become increasingly concerned about the Navy's inability to consistently articulate a rationale for the fleet, provide a compelling fleet architecture or design, argue for a fleet large enough to maintain the shipbuilding industrial base, or manage the sharply rising costs of Navy procurement programs. The Navy has endeavored to stabilize its requirements to provide the shipbuilding industry some consistency, and has worked with Congress to explain its needs. It has also worked to control changes in requirements to the specifications for ships to better manage costs. However, a variety of factors continue to plague ship development, and have significantly raised the costs of several Navy acquisition programs. Government analysts also continue to criticize the Navy's cost estimates for its programs, undercutting the Navy's credibility with key Congressional audiences. Most significantly, to its supporters on the Hill, the Navy has not crafted a strong compelling argument for substantially augmented funding for ship construction.

The U.S. Navy is currently conducting a number of major ship programs. These include almost every ship type in the Navy and incorporate a number of rather revolutionary technologies that will extend America's naval preeminence. The Navy's significant new programs include these ships and submarines:

CVN 21. *Ford*-class carrier. A 100,000+ ton nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to replace the *Nimitz*-class series. Estimated cost: $11.2 billion each.

CG (X). A modern air-defense cruiser designed to replace the *Ticonderoga*-class vessels with updated radar and advanced missile systems. Estimated cost: $5 billion.

DDG. This element of the Navy plan is in disarray. The Navy had planned to deploy a new 14,400-ton *Zumwalt*-class guided missile destroyer to replace the DDG-51 *Arleigh Burke* series. Its main armament is two 155 Advanced Gun System mounts, with 300 rounds each, to support joint operations ashore. Its high cost and narrow application have led to a decision to stop production after two or three vessels. Estimated cost: $3.3 to 4.4 billion each.[64]

Littoral Combat Ship (LCS). The LCS, a 3,000-ton shallow draft platform capable of speeds over 40 knots, has three different mission modules for anti-submarine, anti-surface, and anti-mine warfare. Estimated cost: $600 million each.

LPD 17. The *San Antonio*-class amphibious assault ship displaces over 25,000 tons and can carry 700 Marines and conduct flight operations with both jet aircraft and helicopters. Estimated cost: $1.5 billion each.

SSN 774. The *Virginia*-class nuclear attack submarine will replace the aging *Los Angeles* class. It displaces nearly 8,000 tons and carries 12 vertical launch system (VLS) tubes. Estimated cost: $2.2 billion each.

The Navy has just recently updated its long-range, 30-year ship construction plan. To implement the plan, the Navy must buy 296 ships between now and 2037—almost ten ships a year. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has estimated that executing the Navy plan will cost $27 billion a year (FY09 dollars), or twice as much as the Navy has been appropriated in the previous decade.[65]

The Navy now estimates that procuring those new ships would cost about $19.4 billion a year, which brings its estimate much closer to CBO and other independent estimates. In the past, CBO has publicly questioned the Navy's costing methodology and budget assumptions.[66] In the near-term portion of its budget, the Navy is still underestimating its acquisition program by nearly 30 percent according to CBO's detailed analysis.[67]

The main conclusion to draw from CBO's analysis is that unless shipbuilding budgets increase significantly in real (inflation-adjusted) terms or the Navy designs and builds cheaper ships, the size of the fleet will continue to fall substantially. Many defense analysts do not think resources can be increased substantially enough or that costs can be adequately reduced to ensure that the Navy

Table 1
CURRENT FLEET AND NAVY PLANS

Type	Designation	Current Fleet	Navy Plan
Aircraft Carriers			
Large Aircraft Carriers	CVN	11	11
Surface Combatants			
Guided Missile Destroyers	DDG-51, DDG-1000	83	69
Guided Missile Cruisers	CG, CGX	22	19
Littoral Combat Ships	LCS	2	55
Submarines			
Missile Submarines	SSBN, SSGN	18	18
Attack Submarines	SSN	53	48
Expeditionary Ships			
Amphibious Ships	LPD, LSD, LHD, LHA-R	34	31
Maritime Prepositioning Ships	Composite of commercial ships, landing platforms, high speed connectors	0	12
Mine Warfare		14	0
Combat Logistics and Support			
Logistics/ Support Ships	Various tankers, oilers, supply ships and sealift	45	50
TOTAL SHIPS		**282**	**313**

Abbreviations: CVN: multi-purpose aircraft carrier with nuclear propulsion; DDG-51: Arleigh-Burke class guided missile destroyer; DDG-1000: Zumwalt class guided missile destroyer; CGX: guided missile cruiser (to replace Aegis cruisers); LCS: Littoral Combat Ship; SSBN: nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine; SSGN: nuclear powered conventional missile submarines, converted SSBN (carries 154 cruise missiles and advanced SEAL delivery system); SSN: nuclear powered attack submarine; LPD: San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock; LSD: landing ship dock; LHD: Landing Helicopter Dock (Wasp class amphibious assault ship); LHA-R: Landing Helicopter Assault - Replacement (amphibious assault ship).

does not precipitously shrink further. Given the costs generated by ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the need to both grow and reset America's ground forces, enlarge its Special Operations Forces, and address the aging Air Force's aircraft, modernization funding is going to be hard to come by. Thus, naval force design needs to be strategically driven and relentlessly applied to ensure it meets priority requirements.

Fleet Alternatives

Because of the Navy's struggle to present an acceptable rationale for an affordable future fleet to meet the nation's needs, Congress requested a number of alternative fleet architectures from various agencies. This section of the report will address several fleet design options. It will also present a compromise option designed to be compatible with an Off Shore Partnering strategy and to be more affordable over the long range.[68]

CBO presented a range of options to Congress several years ago. This CBO study highlights the severe pressure on Navy programmers to construct and fund the future fleet. It also illustrates the need for a serious debate on exactly what sort of Navy we need. This effort presented a number of potential strategic priorities that might be used to guide a naval force design.[69] All estimates were predicated upon a fixed budget level analogous to naval modernization budgets over the last decade.

CBO presented a Balanced Fleet option, which results largely from cutting across various ship categories equally, producing a fleet that has only seven aircraft carriers and half as many amphibious craft as today. The Balanced Fleet appears to be the Navy's unannounced plan. Under this option, the CVN-21 carrier would be delayed from 2008 to the 2020s due to unaffordability. The number of expeditionary strike groups would also decline to seven (from nine), and the number of amphibious ships able to deploy in those strike groups would be cut in half. Submarine forces would be reduced by about one-third from the Navy's planned levels. Under this alternative, the total number of battle force ships would increase from 285 today to 299 in 2020 (due to the LCS) and then decline to 217 by 2035.

This is an informative option, as it suggests what will occur in the absence of a sound strategy and increased funding. But even if the Navy acquires additional funding, it may not be able to expand appreciably, much less obtain its 313-ship goal. The additional funding may do little more than support the Red Queen effect of keeping the Navy running in place. Unless it contains its operations costs, curtails requirements creep, and better manages its major programs from substantial cost growth, the Navy will continue to shrink.

Another study, conducted by the DoD Office of Force Transformation (OFT), outlined a more radical fleet architecture. While OFT mirrored today's major operational formations (12 Carrier Strike Group equivalents, 12 Expeditionary Strike Group equivalents, and 9 Surface Strike Group equivalents), the composition of the normal groupings varied from the programmed fleet. More importantly, the platforms proposed were based almost entirely on new ship designs.[70]

This option was created with the principle that presenting future adversaries with increased complexity through increased numbers of smaller, faster, stealthier platforms networked together was needed to maximize the overall combat effectiveness of American forces. Instead of a few capital ships arrayed around a large carrier, the fleet would exploit numbers, speed, and networks to gain operational advantage. This design optimizes the U.S. Navy to conduct Network Centric Warfare and explicitly responds to projected Sino-American military

competition. Fleet options were created to increase the level of difficulty to Chinese naval planners, rather than present the Chinese with a single and relatively static challenge to overcome:

> Such a U.S. fleet architecture can enormously complicate the problem with which the Chinese must cope. It would leave them a much greater number of lower signature ships to track, no clear center of gravity to target, and uncertainty as to the threat with which they are faced. These features would impose costs on Chinese planning and procurement by creating uncertainty as to how they should prepare for conflict with the United States.[71]

Instead of the Navy's prized aircraft carriers, this option uses 24 smaller carriers that have a displacement of only 57,000 tons, little more than half the size of the current *Nimitz*-class. Each carrier would deploy with a notional air wing of 30 Joint Strike Fighters (JSFs), six MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft, and 15 unmanned air vehicles (UAVs).

This design also advocated the inclusion of a set of smaller surface combatants, including a 1,000-ton surface combatant with a maximum speed of 40 to 50 knots and standard interfaces for accepting various modular mission packages. This vessel is much closer to Admiral Cebrowski's preferred "Streetfighter" concept. OFT envisioned the Navy procuring 417 of these smaller corvette-sized ships, which are much cheaper and one quarter the displacement of the Navy's LCS.

The study also proposed a 57,000-ton missile-and-rocket ship that would be equipped with 360 vertical launch system (VLS) tubes and four rocket launchers. This ship would provide surface strike power and would also have space for unmanned systems. The effort also presented a design for an amphibious assault ship that would embark a notional air wing of either 30 CH-46 equivalents or six JSFs, 18 MV-22s, and three heavy-lift helicopters. It would also have spaces for Marine Corps equipment, unmanned vehicles, and mission modules for the 1,000-ton surface combatant. This ship would have the same hull size and form as the surface strike ship.

The OFT fleet proposal also introduced some unconventional ideas about submarine development, and argued for a non-nuclear-powered submarine equipped with an air independent propulsion (AIP) system. Forty-eight of these AIP submarines were estimated to be needed, and presented as a lower-cost design for use in shallow waters than the Navy's nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs). These boats would have to be transported from their home port to any theater of operations by transport ships.

All told, this alternative fleet structure posits a fleet of at least 558 ships. Additional requirements for ballistic missile submarines and various combat logistics ships must also be included, bringing the total composition of this particular fleet design to something akin to the 600-ship Navy of the 1980s.

Another option argues that America's current and programmed fleet is extremely capable, if not several orders of magnitude superior to the combined fleets of any set of adversaries. In terms of the numbers of targets our carrier strike forces can accurately strike, and the number of precision cruise missiles carried, the U.S. Navy enjoys a substantive advantage over potential opponents.[72]

Instead of making substantial investments now in a series of new ships, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) proposes extending the service life of many existing ships and extending current production lines. The end result of these

Table 2
ALTERNATIVE FLEETS

	Current Fleet	Navy Plan	Alt. 1: CBO Balanced Fleet	Alt. 2: OFT Fleet	Alt. 3: CSBA Fleet	Alt. 4: Tri-Modal Fleet
Aircraft Carriers						
Large Aircraft Carriers (CVN)	11	11	7		10	8
Medium Aircraft Carriers (CVE)				24	4	0
Surface Combatants						
Guided Missile Destroyers	79	69	43		71	56
Guided Missile Cruisers	22	19	11	33	19	18
Small Surface Combatants				417		40
Littoral Combat Ships	2	55	40		55	48
Submarines						
Missile Submarines	18	14	10		18	14
Attack Submarines	53	48	35	48 AIP	48	40
Expeditionary Ships						
Amphibious Ships	35	31	15	24	31	36
Maritime Prepositioning Ships	0	12	12		12	0
Mine Warfare	14	0	0	0	0	0
Combat Logistics and Support						
Logistics/ Support Ships	48	50	38	12	45	40
Total Ships	**280**	**313**	**211**	**558**	**313**	**300**

Abbreviations: CVE: Conventional escort carrier as described in text. AIP: Air Independent Propulsion, a conventional submarine. CBO: Congressional Budget Office. OFT: Office of Force Transformation (formerly part of the Office of the Secretary of Defense). CSBA: Center for Security & Budgetary Assessments. For other abbreviations, see note for Table 1.

four force elements is displayed in Table 2. The CSBA force would have roughly the same number of ships as the current Navy plan, but at a more affordable level. This force is centered on today's existing platforms instead of investing in untested ship designs. CSBA trades off one new carrier, and adds four additional medium-sized aircraft carriers (CVEs). The conversion of one carrier into an afloat forward staging base is proposed, and offers a useful platform in a world in which Special Operations Forces can work effectively in a more indirect manner from sea-based platforms. The surface fleet is built around the existing DDG-51 *Arleigh Burke*-class guided missile destroyer, and the DDG-1000 series is capped after the first two are built. The cruiser program is also postponed. LCS totals are maintained at 55 ships to increase the fleet's ability to dominate littoral waters.

The Tri-modal Fleet

A final fleet option might be called the tri-modal fleet, which is a synthesis of the three other models. Robert Kaplan was right, we need three fleets—or at least a fleet with three significantly different components—to fulfill the full range of missions we project for the emerging security

environment. Our maritime strategy recognizes this imperative but does not square the circle by framing a fleet architecture. We must have a fleet sized and shaped to keep the global commons open and to work proactively with many friends and partners, while retaining the ability to dominate in conflicts that occur in contested zones in coastal environments.[73]

Among the strategic imperatives that generate fleet design requirements are power projection, crisis response, littoral control, and maritime security. Power projection and strike capabilities provide us with sea control. Dominance of the blue water cannot be presumed forever. Next, we need robust forces—preferably forward deployed—able to respond rapidly to contain

"We must have a fleet sized and shaped to keep the global commons open and to work proactively with many friends and partners, while retaining the ability to dominate in conflicts that occur in contested zones in coastal environments."

flashpoints and provide reinforcement to allies, partners, and our own forward-based forces. Such forces can seize chokepoints, assist local forces with constabulary tasks, and buy time for diplomatic initiatives. Expeditionary naval forces can provide this linchpin capability, which also offsets our dwindling forward garrison posture and our need to step lightly on the toes of foreign partners. Because of political and military vulnerabilities, America will require an increased ability to project power from and operate from sea bases in and around the world's littorals. This ability requires the creation of (or maintenance of existing) platforms to support an indirect approach from the sea. In addition to operating from mobile sea bases or supporting ground forces operating in and around austere expeditionary bases, we must be prepared to seize access when it is contested. The tri-modal fleet option provides a Power Projection Fleet, Expeditionary Fleet, and Littoral Superiority Fleet to fulfill these strategic imperatives.

The carrier is the centerpiece of the Power Projection fleet, but it is an expensive component. Navy shipbuilding priorities, in the words of one courageous Naval Aviator:

> Continue to emphasize carrier strike groups dominated by high-end technologies designed to meet Soviet surface action groups steaming through the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap and regimental formations of Backfire bombers descending from the polar north.[74]

This design alternative reduces the carrier force to no more than eight, and buys three CVN-21s between 2011 and 2035. The Navy's improved maintenance and surge capacity reduces the rationale for 12 of these very capital-intensive ships. Operationally, the Navy's improved sortie-generation rates and markedly impressive precision strike enhancements reduce the aggregate demand. The current plan leans too much towards Mahan and open-ocean fighting,

and remains dependent on expensive carriers and relatively short-range fighter aircraft.[75] The Navy should be advancing its unmanned combat aerial vehicle program to extend the range of operations. Innovative employment of the aviation-capable large decks in the amphibious fleet will also compensate in some scenarios.

The surface assets in the Navy require serious attention and accountability. While canceling the *Zumwalt* DD-1000 program is unfortunate, the program's high cost and low acquisition objective of seven ships means it does not warrant survival. At $4 billion a copy, the *Zumwalt* simply makes little sense as a destroyer even if its impressive land attack systems eventually prove themselves. The remainder of this component of the fleet would include still-potent DDG-51s, which frees up resources for the guided missile cruiser program CG-X. This platform is necessary to protect against advanced missile threats to our fleet, and to provide for a potential sea-based national missile defense platform.

The Expeditionary Fleet remains robust, as it is the most versatile component. This alternative maintains 11 expeditionary strike groups to ensure sufficient amphibious ships to maintain a strong "off shore" forward presence and sea-based crisis response capacity. This would require 33 amphibious ships, and three additional vessels are added to provide platforms for the Global Fleet Station concept. The proposed acquisition of new maritime prepositioning ships is deleted in order to ensure adequate funding for the more versatile and more survivable amphibious shipping goal. Extending existing legacy capacity in a prepositioned mode is an option. A prepositioning program that allows Marine forces to close faster is not as important as preserving or extending the capacity required to be present with credible and ready forces, and maintaining the ability to operate in the littorals and ensure access.

The Littoral Superiority Fleet emphasizes operations on and close to shore; it would buy 48 LCSs and at least 40 1,000+ ton surface combatants. If built with a modular capability like the LCS, these small "Streetfighters" could serve as assets for both the maritime security role in peacetime, and as part of the power projection force for gaining assured access in an anti-access contingency as envisioned by OFT's analysis. More importantly, these smaller craft represent the kinds of assets needed to partner with small nations to counter threats to access in tight waters and areas where access to the global commons is most at risk. These platforms provide the right scale to work the problem and to interact with partners in problem areas.

Submarine assets are necessary to operate successfully in the world's littorals. Like amphibious ships, our submarine fleet is a versatile asset. It can protect our power projection fleet or operate as part of the littoral superiority effort. A total of 40 SSNs are incorporated in this plan, along with a replacement for the existing Ohio class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) over time. They are the most survivable leg of the strategic delivery triad of the Cold War. At present, the resources for the strategic deterrent are not included in the current shipbuilding plan, which rests on planning factors and assumptions best described as aspirational. A larger number of submarines could be warranted, depending on how the geopolitical situation in the Pacific plays out. Trends in naval warfare and space-based surveillance suggest that stealth may be critical to future success, and our advantages in undersea warfare may provide a crucial competitive advantage to leverage in the 21st century. Serious study of this element of

the fleet is needed, and close coordination with industry is required to preserve crucial skill sets and capacity in the long term.

Overall, this option reshapes the Navy's battle force fleet from 280 ships today to a different mix of 310 ships by 2030. More importantly, it does so within a more reasonable funding line, estimated at roughly $20 billion per year, or 25 percent less than the current ship acquisition plan.

The tri-modal fleet seeks a better balance, a modular architecture operative across brown, green and blue waters.[76] It is also designed to fulfill the Navy's principal roles: diplomatic, constabulary, engagement, and military. Some will argue for a fleet more overtly designed to contest China's emerging maritime capabilities. These analysts must first assess what a fleet of eight large carriers, 11 small carriers, 74 large surface combatants, 88 smaller combatants, four "arsenal" boats and 40 attack submarines cannot do against a projected Chinese navy. They must also accurately project what type of fleet China or others will build and under what conditions we will have to compete.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The leaders of the maritime services did a fine job of communicating the importance of seapower in a globalized economy to the American people. They failed, however, to convert their conclusions into clear priorities and increased funding, and to impress Congressional leaders who hold the purse strings. There are a number of things the Navy needs to do to regain strategic credibility with policy leaders and appropriators:

1. Delineate clear priorities for naval missions and place greater emphasis on preventing challenges to access and working with partners on those priorities. At the same time, ensure that tomorrow's naval forces retain the capacity to maintain secure access to the global commons as part of our overarching strategy. Hedging against prospective threats to that access will remain a core element of the strategy.

2. Revamp the shipbuilding program to close the abyss between projected funding and required resources. Give greater emphasis to smaller craft needed to support Off Shore Partnering and maritime cooperation.

3. Release a new version of the maritime strategy with modified priorities and appropriate shipbuilding requirements. Within that plan, incorporate all naval requirements—including Navy contributions to national missile defense and strategic deterrence—if warranted. Additionally, the Navy should define ship plans to support its Global Fleet Station concept.

4. As part of the revised strategy, incorporate new organizational initiatives, including a truly Naval Engagement and Cooperation Command (NECC) to provide a structure for cooperative engagement. This command can be a force provider that combines Navy, Marine and Coast Guard assets to generate sufficient resources for all maritime security cooperation efforts. Marine security force, training and advisory units, and civil affairs elements could be grouped within this revamped NECC. Other initiatives, including the Navy's Global Fleet Station and the Marines' nascent Security Cooperation Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs), should be integrated into the NECC to maximize the efficient allocation of resources and develop truly naval units with integrated—vice duplicative—assets. The utility of modifying current naval capabilities, including the Expeditionary Strike Groups, into Maritime Security Groups should be examined to better support the strategy and meet the needs of combatant commanders. Current plans rely too much upon additive resources to meet emerging missions, despite stark budget gaps. Greater organizational adaptation and innovation needs to be pursued.

5. Rigorously implement the resulting naval acquisition plan with greater attention to controlling requirements creep and escalating costs. Navy officials and industry must work together to drive down the extensive inflation in ship development costs that threatens to drive down the size of tomorrow's fleet. Navy officials need to reestablish effective management accountability over requirements and budgets to regain Congress' confidence and ensure that maximal value is gained from constrained resources.

CONCLUSION

Today's naval strategists are embracing complexity and uncertainty, as well as a broader range of missions, for naval forces. They are shifting to what British historian Geoffrey Till calls the post-Mahanian era.[77] A post-Mahanian naval strategy supports a sustainable U.S. grand strategy that seeks to maintain access to the commons and preserve an international system dependent on interdependent trade networks. This approach recognizes that America's influence must be renewed in such a way that it inspires others to cooperate with us to face myriad global challenges. Such a strategy realizes that "no matter how powerful the United States is, it cannot effectively address these challenges alone."[78]

"American security interests will have to be secured and advanced in tomorrow's 'contested zones': the urbanized littorals of the rim lands of Asia and Africa."

Translating this grasp of the whole problem into a defensible and affordable fleet remains a vexing challenge. Naval planners preparing forces for tomorrow cannot narrowly focus on only one threat or one kind of war. As the astute historian Colin Gray has warned, "defence planning should seek to achieve and sustain a military posture that is flexible and adaptable, and not geared to a single, preclusive vision/doctrine of future warfare."[79] American planning over the last decade has too often been dominated by such visions.[80]

Force planning should not be geared to narrow visions about the kinds of warfare in order to reduce the risk of surprise. But our naval forces have to be designed to support a broader grand strategy and a supporting maritime strategy that is not solely based on fighting wars. To fulfill a grand strategy that stresses partnerships and prevention, our naval services must improve their ability to work with others as cooperatively as possible. The Cooperative Security Strategy clearly defines that task, as well as the other strategic imperatives that tomorrow's Navy will be expected to fulfill. However, its imperatives remain tightly tied to traditional naval missions, not the strategy. Moreover, it has not constructed a compelling narrative or affordable fleet design to carry it out.

We must hedge against a dark future, but future conflict will be more complex than a straightforward contest of fleets in the Pacific. Such a symmetrical contest might fit the Navy's ingrained institutional culture, but not U.S. security interests broadly defined. American security interests will have to be secured and advanced in tomorrow's "contested zones": the urbanized littorals of

the rim lands of Asia and Africa. That will require more than a blue water fleet that commands the commons from standoff distance. The ability to control the commons will remain a prerequisite for attaining success—but by itself will not be sufficient. Access to and use of the commons is most at risk in the narrows and transition points of the littorals. We need to influence friends and partners in this area proactively, off shore if necessary but never from afar. Tomorrow's fleet must partner, protect and dominate in the contested zones too.[81]

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