

## The U.S. Navy's Role in National Strategy, Especially Between 1980 and Today

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Cat: Where are you going?

Alice: Which way should I go?

Cat: That depends on where you are going.

Alice: I don't know.

Cat: Then it doesn't matter which way you go.

—Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

### **Introduction**

No matter whether you consider Lewis Carroll's cat as the Navy and Alice as the corresponding national strategy, or whether you read it the other way around: The U.S. Navy's role in national strategy and American strategy itself are so intertwined that it is nearly impossible to untangle enduring causal and reciprocal relationships. In fact, strategy making at a service level and the national level are complex, even chaotic processes with numerous elements, factors, and potentially disruptive influences that are highly likely to disappoint practitioners and researchers alike.

This is certainly challenging for the political scientist who might have happily retreated to complex and "ivory-towerish" theories and methods to analyze strategy making in complex environments. It can be equally difficult for a naval historian, in particular one who is constrained by access to and availability of sources. Owing to the complexity of the subject, the political and military dynamics involved, and the observation that dominant sea power<sup>1</sup> has a shaping function (and always has had in human history), there is hardly ever a desired end state for strategy. More so, strategy is a living and breathing, sometimes coughing, thing. In a Western democratic presidential or parliamentary system where the primacy of civilian politics is one of the fundamental golden rules, Carroll's Alice and the cat thus could be seen as symbolic for the symbiotic relationship between a service and its political masters. If the

path forward is unclear and the end goal is a mere set of ideas, then it does not matter whether one is on the right track. It is merely about not being incorrigibly wrong.

This paper discusses the Navy's role in American strategy, or in other words the paths and frameworks. The Marine Corps and Coast Guard will only be touched upon in passing and allied or foreign perspectives will only be referred to peripherally. First, the essay sheds a light on the historiography of the subject, seeking to give an overview of who writes, why, and how about the issues at hand. Second, the paper identifies some key debates. Third, it will look at existing literature, available and accessible sources, and potential barriers to reckon with.<sup>2</sup> Fourth, this chapter speaks on challenges and opportunities for assessing very recent Navy strategic history.

### **Historiography**

A recent study found that each year between 2009 and 2013 close to 16,000 history books were published in America alone. That equals more than 40 books per day, ranging from popular histories to academic studies.<sup>3</sup> Yet, even a cursory review reveals that there is little on Navy strategy and the service's role in national strategy. Is this the infamous "sea blindness" at work with the American people, authors, and researchers? After all, it must be assumed that very few people and almost no professional naval or strategy historians write on modern strategy (that is, inside the 30-year limitation usually imposed on official documents before these are made available to historians). The Navy, even though "open ship" events and fleet weeks regularly draw tens of thousands of fascinated visitors, apparently does not lend itself to historians with an interest in strategy. The Navy's strategic culture is difficult to transcend and the service has practiced forward operations since the end of World War II, which quite figuratively keeps them out of the eyes (and minds) of many Americans. The Navy and by extension its approach to strategy are forward by definition—out of sight and out of mind for longer periods of time—and operationally focused by their own rationale. As retired Navy Captain Peter Haynes put it, "The institution's locus remains these 'forces,' termed 'the fleet,' which is the reason why the rest of the Navy exists. Its requirements are never questioned, its importance never rivaled. Like operations, the fleet's salience is supposed to be self-evident."<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, this thinking hardly motivates individuals within the naval branch to take up study in modern naval strategy because they are focused elsewhere, and it creates problems of its own.<sup>5</sup> Then again, if a huge military branch such as the Navy operates forward, should it not have a concise strategy to begin with?

For the purpose of this paper, strategy is considered the *conditio sine qua non* with which naval power cannot be exercised effectively. In other words, this is “the art of directing maritime capabilities to attain political ends.”<sup>6</sup> It is both an art and a science. More so, from the social sciences point of view, it is imperative to understand strategy as fundamentally interdisciplinary. It includes—but is not limited to—political, historical, geographic, geopolitical, technological, sociological, and even psychological (rational) nuances. This, in turn, may scare off professional historians (and it also does not necessarily encourage political scientists either). Strategy is usually understood as a ways-means-ends linkage to achieve specific goals or objectives. For the Navy, more specifically OPNAV, this means “to formulate an organizational strategy that enables the Navy to support higher-level policy objectives.” This type of strategy ideally should be framed by a conceptual analysis of the future security environment and U.S. defense policy. For OPNAV, Navy strategy is transformative in the sense that it offers a plan to create the Navy of tomorrow out of the Navy of today.”<sup>7</sup> The fundamental question that needs to be answered is this: Are you writing about war at sea—or the importance of the sea for strategic ends?

In principle, the literature of strategy is vast. The use of the term has expanded drastically, especially in the business sector since the 1980s. A November 2016 cursory search at Amazon.com’s book department yielded more than 240,000 titles for the keyword “strategy,” although these include anything from military strategy to business strategy, to self-help books for individuals seeking spiritual, financial investment, or relationship guidance. It is thus imperative to qualify what kinds of strategy are in the focus, and for the purpose of our profession and this paper these are: grand, military, and naval (or maritime) strategies.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to note that U.S. grand strategy, as opposed to the Navy strategy, is rather well reflected in the expert (academic) literature, although that should hardly come as a surprise given the United States’ dominant role globally and its status as the world’s remaining superpower. Grand strategy considerations mandate a global analytical approach by virtue of the scope it takes.<sup>9</sup> This is where many political scientists and scholars of international relations come into play. Consider, for example, Samuel Huntington’s groundbreaking essay from 1954 in which he identified three eras of U.S. policy: First, there was the Continental phase, followed by an Oceanic period, and finally the Transoceanic era.<sup>10</sup> Huntington, who would later rise to write even more influential thoughts, remains such a key influence on the

elements of a naval and maritime strategic concept that scholars have used his work as stepping stones to develop his concept further. Edward Rhodes, for instance, spoke of a fourth Cis-Oceanic era in 1999,<sup>11</sup> which was later adapted for the 21st century by Austrian scholar Nikolaus Scholik, who added a fifth stage for the United States: the Post-Oceanic—or global—era.<sup>12</sup>

The past four years have seen an increasingly widening body of literature on Navy strategy, but very few actually written by trained naval historians. Rather, these authors often come from genuinely different, even outsider backgrounds (including this author's own study). They include Swiss political scientist Larissa Forster, who published a quantitative study on U.S. Navy response from the sea in 2013;<sup>13</sup> Captain Haynes, whose intellectual history of the Navy's post-Cold War strategic development hit book stores in 2015;<sup>14</sup> R. B. Watts' book *American Sea Power and the Obsolescence of Capital Ship Theory*;<sup>15</sup> and Peter Swartz' and Randy Papadopoulos' chapters in the 2016 *Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security*.<sup>16</sup> Norwegian scholar Amund Lundesgaard's recently completed Ph.D. dissertation on U.S. Navy force structure after the Cold War<sup>17</sup> and this author's work complements that body of literature.<sup>18</sup> Forthcoming is at least one more study titled *Bearing the Trident: The United States' System of Transoceanic Power Projection in Ascendancy and Crisis* by Austrian national Michael Haas.<sup>19</sup> Concurrently, a number of studies relevant to the subject of U.S. Navy strategy, the Navy, and its naval allies have recently been published or will be forthcoming.<sup>20</sup>

One may wonder why there is an increasing interest in more recent naval strategic history and the political use of sea power. Contextual trends, i.e., the reassessment of maritime strategic issues in this century in light of globalization, rise of other powers and a relative decline of U.S. power, and changes in the nature of war and warfare have also affected the U.S. role herein based on seeking an appreciation for the broader context of sea power. As Seth Cropsey noted, "Wide-ranging sea power is not so much an instrument of force [...] as a condition of stable commerce, effective diplomacy, and regional influence."<sup>21</sup> However, there have been vast gaps in research and application of recent naval strategic events and developments if one looks beyond the vast stream of think-tank papers and blog posts.

Beyond the news that is driving the defense and security policy day, the rising interest in naval strategic matters has to do with the Navy itself. For the first time since "The Maritime

Strategy” of the 1980s with the CS-21/CS-21R updates (2007/2015), the Navy has been able to develop a conceptual narrative of how to employ naval power to achieve political objectives. The Navy’s shrinking fleet size, a development that caught the attention of various senior leaders, has also led many to reconsider what the Navy offers for U.S. national security and defense—and how much it costs.<sup>22</sup> The advent of ever-more sophisticated technology such as drones and unmanned vehicles accelerates military change and relationships, with sketchy strategic-operational ramifications still. For the first time since the end of the Cold War in 1990, the United States is also in danger of giving up its sea control, both in confined and shallow waters as well as on the high seas. Perhaps, in recognizing the systemic nature of maritime security in a grand strategic sense, as Peter Haynes has shown, and providing a very real illustration how the Navy serves political ends through such measures as sea control, showing of the flag, power projection, and deterrence, the Navy finally turned around the adverse momentum of the land-centric (read: Army, Air Force, Marine Corps) campaigns in the Middle East following 2001. A final hypothesis relates to the broader economic and political environment: Beginning with the 2007 economic crises and accelerated by tectonic shifts in the international security environment from about 2014,<sup>23</sup> some cost-benefit issues for pricy gadgets like aircraft carriers have gained some interest, with underlying strategic debates being conducted since.<sup>24</sup>

A number of recent doctoral dissertations on contemporary Navy strategy using methods of historical research have their foundation in CS-21 as an incentive to study the role of naval power in American policy. As a Norwegian colleague postulated, “With CS 21, the US Navy had an official strategy for the first time since the Maritime Strategy was published in 1986.”<sup>25</sup> Also, CS-21 was specifically billed as a maritime, not just a naval strategy, which made it attractive to researchers outside of the Navy’s own immediate community. Surely the largest push came from an asset that was well used for research, the ready-presented capstone documents study by retired Navy Captain Peter Swartz. His concise list of numerous issues on the military strategies since 1970 emitted from an internal Navy workshop in 2005. The original request to analyze three Navy strategies soon morphed into a multi-volume PowerPoint presentation with thousands of slides, which is a chronology rather than a narrative, but has invaluable raw data in it. Concurrently, since 2004, Professor John Hattendorf’s document collection has allowed researchers to follow the major naval strategic documents and the debate.<sup>26</sup> That said, it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the different views and finding of recent works on Navy strategy.

It is timely, though, to lay out some key debates and recurring themes in the literature. The following is a list of seven broad groups of strands and lines.

1) *The Navy does not have a strategy/The Navy does not need a strategy.*

Among the most basic of debates, this issue was raised as early as the 1980s in the confrontation of then-Secretary of the Navy John Lehman and former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy in the Carter administration, Robert W. Komer. Komer became a very vocal critic of the 600-ship Navy idea pursued by Lehman and his disciples.<sup>27</sup> Another example for such a fundamental dispute can be traced in the two essays by John Mearsheimer, who labeled the 1980s “Maritime Strategy” a strategic misstep, and Colin Gray’s emphatic support of such a maritime grand strategy.<sup>28</sup>

2) *Should the Navy have a strategy at all?*

A related argument focuses on whether the service actually has a larger strategy, and a subset of strategies (such as for shipbuilding, retention, recruitment, etc.). Navy leadership would enthusiastically make the case that—of course—the Navy should have a strategy and that there is a strategy (like CS-21, CS-21R, “Forward... From the Sea,” etc.)—in addition to a subset of strategies for other fields (regional, functional). Samuel Huntington, in his landmark 1954 essay, left no doubt that in his mind the Navy and the nation needed a strategic concept. A service strategy to describe and amplify global maritime aspects, recommend changes and professional judgements, and to organize, train, and equip is necessary. This was also reflected in some of the more academic debates of the 1980s.<sup>29</sup>

Among the more recent fundamentalist critics who thought services in general should not mingle in strategic conceptualizations was Bush administration Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Defense secretaries, especially those without a strong bond to the Navy, may favor the joint staff, the combatant commanders, and defense specialists inside and outside of government bureaucracy. Services could have visions or policies, but not strategies—a

sentiment shared by those with a strict view on the primacy of politics over the military, or fans of the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Note: There are important semantic differences between maritime and naval and Navy strategies, or the names of capstone documents, a term coined by Swartz, then a senior researcher at the Center for Naval Analyses. As he put it, “USN [was] never rigorous in its approach to policy/strategy/concepts terminology. Definitions considered dull, unimportant, individual idiosyncratic approaches abound.”<sup>30</sup> In fact, there have been, in no particular order, strategies, doctrines, concepts, concepts of maritime operations, visions, concepts of naval operations, philosophies, politics, guidance, analysis, and PR pieces.<sup>31</sup>

3) *What is the best fleet design and force structure? What kind of conflict and future war should the Navy be prepared to fight? How “hard power” should a strategy be?*

Broadly speaking, there is a tendency to discuss force structures delineated from the aircraft carrier, still the major asset in the Navy. That debate is recurring, both in its fundamental version (carrier proponents vs. carrier dismantlers) and its more nuanced sister, namely what kind of aircraft carrier the nation needs. In the 1970s, it was Admiral Elmo Zumwalt’s High-Low mix that advocated for a combination of platforms. Shortly thereafter, President James Earl Carter Jr.—a nuclear submariner—pushed for the sea control ship, a light carrier that was to replace the conventionally and nuclear-powered big-deck aircraft carriers. His counterpart, Admiral James Holloway, emphatically rejected the idea<sup>32</sup> and under Carter’s successor Ronald Reagan, the big-deck carrier school won out. In the absence of a sea-control challenger and with the power-projection and close air support missions of the 1990s and 2000s, the role of the carrier was increasingly looked at through a budgetary lens. Even the Air Force–driven RAND Corporation chipped in, producing a report highlighting the utility of the aircraft carrier in the modern day and age.<sup>33</sup> More recently, the debate came to light publically with the exchanges between retired Navy Captain Henry Hendrix (former director of Naval History and Heritage Command, now with the Washington-based think tank Center for New American Security) and retired Commander Bryan McGrath (team leader for the 2007 Cooperative Strategy writing process and deputy director of the Hudson Center’s Institute for American Seapower, Washington, D.C.). McGrath

was also involved in a 2016 report on the validity of aircraft carriers.<sup>34</sup> The uniformed strategists are markedly quiet on this issue, at least when it comes to the public, perhaps wary of a reprise of the 1949 “Revolt of the Admirals.”

Roger Barnett’s 2009 postulate that a “fleet is like a hand of cards—you play the hand, not the individual card”<sup>35</sup>—speaks to the validity of warships other than 100,000-ton carriers. One need not return to the schools of thought of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julien Corbett to illustrate the debate between those favoring capital ships as the bedrock of strategy (*Ticonderoga*-class guided missile cruisers or *Arleigh Burke*- and *Zumwalt*-class destroyers) and those who lobby for smaller vessels (fast patrol boats, frigates, or littoral combat ships) for the modern Navy. This needs to be seen against the background of where the Navy faces the most significant challenges, by whom, and what it is being asked to do by the President. For instance, in the post-9/11 years, the focus increasingly was on navies combatting non-state actors such as pirates, terrorist, or human traffickers in the littoral and coastal, confined and shallow waters. That tide has turned with an increase in blue-water challengers, such as China. The early 1990s saw a similar discussion between two camps.<sup>36</sup>

The third major strand of thought concerns the role of nuclear weapons at sea, although that discussion is, for the time being, largely confined to the 1980s. It was nuclear escalation and the Maritime Strategy which concentrated seasoned analysts’ minds.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps the pending replacement of the *Ohio*-class nuclear-powered ballistic and guided missile submarines (SSBN/SSGN) will bring fresh ideas to the role of nuclear weapons and the future of nuclear deterrence from the sea.

Below the threshold of devastating atomic war, the fourth strand relates to just how many conventional (or hybrid) conflicts the Navy should strategically be outfitted for. The range goes from one major war, to 1.5 (however one measures this) or to two. This obviously also concerns the kind of contingency that is expected, or as Edward Rhodes put it in 1999, if one is to fight a counter-military or a counter-societal campaign.<sup>38</sup> Finally, just where these contingencies will take place is of note. After all, with two extensive and expensive U.S.-led land-centric



campaigns in Southwest Asia and a perceived turn to asymmetric warfare perpetrated by terrorists, insurgents, and other non-state actors, riverine (or brown-water) warfare as well as force protection in the wake of the attack on *Cole* (DDG-67) was in increasingly high demand.<sup>39</sup> A fifth strand focuses on peer competitors and their capabilities. China has notably gained significant attention here, although these works only rarely verbalize what the Navy's strategy and U.S. national strategy should do in response.<sup>40</sup>

4) *What is the Navy concerned about? What is its place in national strategy?*

In contrast to the few published works that look at broader strands, continuities and changes in Navy strategy, comparatively many more studies focus on particulars. For example, one could look at the Navy through a technology lens as a common denominator that shapes naval missions and the particular utility of naval assets in a given area such as strike, ballistic missile defense, cyber, special operations, electronic warfare, or logistics.<sup>41</sup> Another prism to use are the particular missions of the Navy, a term that is nowadays understood as the set of overarching tasks around which planners build balanced naval forces. It is a most helpful tool for analysts to focus their view of assessing the naval contributions to U.S. national security and interests.<sup>42</sup> The mission set changes based on what political and military leaders deem important. Today, for example, the Navy's missions include power projection, sea control, deterrence (both conventional and nuclear), and presence. Historically, the missions have included others such as coastal defense, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, or amphibious assault, although this set has waxed and waned over time.

The focus on naval missions or technology is a debate that hardly ever is felt outside of expert circles. In fact, it is rare that the actual use of the Navy for political ends is discussed in public, with the argument between Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus over presence vs. warfighting capabilities of the Navy in 2015/2016 a very recent exception to the rule. It was slightly different in the Cold War against the background of nuclear parity, as a number of books can attest to. Some of these works continue to inspire naval strategy analysts today.<sup>43</sup>

5) *Who makes naval strategy? Who creates, who interprets, who modifies, who implements it?*

This leads to a major fruitful debate, one that seeks to answer who makes strategy as such. To John Hattendorf (2004), it is the President, the Secretary of Defense, and OPNAV, where he attributes no Congressional role in it whatsoever (in this sentiment, echoing Winfried Stallmann [2000]).<sup>44</sup> Peter Swartz, in his voluminous body of slides (2011), noted that it was various ranks who actually wrote naval strategy in OPNAV, ranging from lieutenant commanders to captains and even rear admirals. David Rosenberg, on the other hand, noted that process, rather than particularly gifted or empowered offices or individuals, was the key to understanding how strategy was formulated.<sup>45</sup> To the researcher, this severely complicates identifying the particulars of the subject. A couple of years after his first analytical piece, Rosenberg—together with noted military historian Jon Sumida—narrowed the particulars down to a catchy quintet: According to the two authors, it was machines, men, manufacturing, management, and money that literally made naval strategy.<sup>46</sup> The late German political scientist and German Navy Captain Wilfried Stallmann (2000) added a sixth “M”: (naval) mentality.

6) *What is the value of naval history and the enduring relevance of the classics?*

In lieu of very recent theorists and in acknowledgment of the relatively high number of constants in sea power and naval strategy, some of the classics receive recurring attention. Alfred Thayer Mahan, for instance, has been the subject of at least three major naval strategy books since 1990.<sup>47</sup> Julian Corbett, the British strategist of the early 20th century, has gotten less of such exposure, which may simply be due to his background rather than the enduring value of his theories. A similar fate can be diagnosed for Samuel Huntington, whose thoughts on the need for a strategic concept await rediscovery by academics and policy-makers alike.

### **A Hard Look at Sources**

For those historians interested in researching the Navy’s role in national strategy, there are a number of starting points. First, there are the strategies themselves. Internet archives, but more importantly the collections in the Newport Papers, are formidable sources.<sup>48</sup> In fact, of

the 40 or so capstone documents that the Navy has issued since 1980, only a handful remains classified.

Oral histories and recorded interviews are another viable source of information, although for the very recent history there is a lack of oral histories and interviewees might be hard to track down owing to the fact that they are very often still in office or in an official position.<sup>49</sup> The problems with this approach are manifold. These are, in essence, elite conversations with a particular narrow or too broad focus. Access to decision-makers willing to speak can be challenging, and interviews and a transcript are time-consuming undertakings. It is also challenging, in particular with charismatic interviewees, to assess the real impact of that individual's work on the national level, especially when it comes down to the attribution of successes and failures.

Existing literature can be broadly grouped into the classics, the more nuanced uses of maritime power in the Cold War, a reassessment for the post-Cold War world, and a few operational histories. The reader is kindly referred to this presentation's bibliography. Memoirs and (auto-) biographies are far and few in between. To date, the works on Elmo Zumwalt, Hyman G. Rickover, James Holloway, and John Lehman remain the only notable points of departure in this genre.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, there are still only a limited number of analyses of Navy strategy. Interestingly, and perhaps worthy of enquiry, two of these are from Germany (this author's forthcoming book will be the third).<sup>51</sup>

To reiterate a point made above, no dedicated study or research project, even in the principally large field of legislative studies, exists on Congress's role and influence on recent naval strategy-making, something that a close examination of House of Representatives and Senate records and qualitative interviews with individuals from both chambers, and others such as the Navy legislative liaison office or Ron O'Rourke of the Congressional Research Service could help eradicate.

### **Challenges and Barriers**

Social scientists will often encounter different obstacles when researching recent and/or policy-relevant issues, and naval strategy is no exception. First, there is a distinct lack of documentation about processes. One can try to retrieve memos and drafts of strategy documents, for example, only at a significant research expense because these often do not make it into archives. The relative lack of attribution and the differing strategy formulation

practices make a pattern difficult to discern and consequently to find the right people or institutions to whom to look for original source material. Second, classification is also an issue, as with any national security problem. Where strategic documents are often un- or declassified (after all, a strategy is meant to inform a larger audience), drafts thereof remain classified and the more recent, internally aimed capstone documents are still out of reach. Third, a challenge particular to historians is one that is deeply rooted in their academic upbringing and ethos: the inability or even unwillingness to engage with ongoing political processes. By virtue, historians often are accustomed to looking at details more than at patterns and at individuals more than at processes. They are trained to work on issues at least three decades old (the average time for archival sources to be made available) so that they need not necessarily interact with current policy-making messes. At the same time, political scientists are often too focused on a narrow problem or a method or theory in order to connect the larger dots and provide practical expertise. The question of just who writes strategy, and to interpret accordingly without setting a gold standard from decades ago for something entirely more complex today—as the Maritime Strategy became a gold standard for many capstone documents of the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s—is a very challenging one.

Fourth, something very particular to academic work in the military realm is the problem of “Outsider vs. Insider.” Military processes are inherently complicated to trace and track. To complicate matters further, the abundance of acronyms and coinages in military lingo is fabulous. From ship designations to Department of Defense branches, this is sure to frustrate many analysts who are not familiar with how the military works, how it thinks, and how it enacts orders or policy objectives. It does not help that there is a certain periodization of military history—the fifth challenge—which potentially confuses the strands and lines that cross systemic changes (e.g., before/after the advent of nuclear weapons at sea, during/after the presidency of Ronald Reagan, before/after the end of the Cold War, etc.). Sixth, it is challenging to measure successful strategies altogether. Was, for instance, “The Maritime Strategy” a success, did it even win the Cold War? Or was it a failure, for many of its key components were never tested in anger because the Soviet Union was already on its way out anyway? Did it harm the Navy’s own strategic culture given how challenged the service was after the demise of the Soviet Union? These are some of the substantial disagreements in the scholarly and practical community.<sup>52</sup>

Seventh, institutional learning is hard to measure because of the dynamics involved in how departments change, and the individuals who rotate through them. Eight, causation does not

imply correlation: Disentangling reciprocal causality is the supreme discipline for the strategy researcher. To complicate matters, as Swartz, Amund Lundesgaard, and Peter Haynes have repeatedly stressed from different angles, the Navy is fundamentally about operations. It devotes finite energy and time to strategic excellence because it strives for operational perfection. Ninth, what prism does the analyst use to focus the research? Is, for example, the type of warfare—nuclear, conventional, and unconventional—a valid lens through which to focus the analyses? What if they are more intimately intertwined? Isn't one of them perhaps used as a strawman? How can this be balanced? What is missing? It goes without saying that a narrative is not necessarily an analysis.

Tenth, there is the issue of historical revisionism. Intentions and results are two very different cups of tea, but in hindsight things might make sense to the outside observer, especially when supported by evidence from oral histories or selective research. This also relates to the blame and praise assessments, especially in an era where bemoaning the lack of strategy is the rule, not the exception—except, naturally, at a given time in the past when strategy (to which the sender of such a message might often have a personal relationship!) was perfectly in place.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, analysts need to take a hard look at the established views of the policy-makers. If it holds true that the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Navy are the most important players in developing and implementing naval strategy (Stallmann in 2000 and Hattendorf in 2004 made these points clear), then why is there so surprisingly little from their point of view?

### **Opportunities and Avenues for Future Research and Writing**

There is a vast field that demands research when it comes to naval strategy and its place in national strategy. It would be impossible to devise research questions for every single one of these, and some issues are arguably more pressing than others. Still, grant-making institutions, think tanks, universities, and research and dissemination institutions should look at these as possible prisms for work that really would make an impact in the naval strategic community:

- Strategic shocks and their context: How have pivotal events such as the end of the Cold War, the demise of the Soviet Union, 9/11, or the financial crisis impacted naval strategy, the thinking about maritime means and ends, and the use of the Navy? What contextual factors need to be considered?

- Naval strategy and sea power as a foreign policy tool: Where, when, and how was the Navy used as a foreign policy tool, from maritime diplomacy to coercion, from naval deterrence (conventional and nuclear) to capacity-building and confidence-building measures? What is the political value of a navy?
- Navy strategy and U.S. Congress: What is Congress' impact on naval strategy? Who were the major lawmakers for or against a strong Navy, how did they build networks, what tools do they have at their disposal? What's the role and impact of the Navy's legislative affairs shop on Capitol Hill, and how does it seek to influence the thinking about, and appreciation, of the Navy (from free pizza lunches for staffers to congressional delegations)?
- Navy strategy and the American public: What are the demographics of the Navy? Are there regional differences? How could the Navy's public image relate to strategy and the acceptance of the Navy, anywhere from music videos to *Top Gun*?
- Navy strategic relationships with other branches, allies, adversaries: How has the Navy worked with (or against) the Air Force, the Army, the Coast Guard, the Marine Corps? Which programs were affected, and what strategic consequences did this have? What were some of the key relationships to alliances (such as in the shaping of allied maritime and naval strategy) and adversaries (such as versus the Soviet Union)? Where are some causal links between naval strategies, e.g., the German navy's development since the 1980s in a strategic realm and how much was it informed/influenced by U.S. naval policy and strategy?
- Correlation: What are the relationships between strategies and naval operations, and between operations and the crafting of strategy? Which individuals have been able to test strategies live (through exercises, etc.), and/or how have seasoned operators informed naval strategy? What is the role of (disruptive) technology as a prism to think about, and operationalize naval strategy?
- Institutional learning: How has the Navy (OPNAV) organized to craft and execute strategy? Where have naval strategic thinkers gone as part of their tours (perhaps as legislative fellows or associated to universities and think tanks) and after their careers so that the effects of an unforgiving military system of rotating billets could be lessened?

## Conclusion

Naval strategy and the role of the Navy in national strategy are deeply rooted in the normative and political history of the country, and its role and place in the world. Quite simply, almost every major war that the United States was involved in began with an attack on a U.S. warship.

Also, context is important if one attempts to make sense of the messy chaotic process that is naval strategy, and the place of the Navy and what it does in the national *raison d'être*. The current changing strategic environment needs historians who provide insights from the past to learn for the future and help address current problems. Thus stems the need to encourage younger colleagues to actively participate in the analysis and shaping of strategy: less sequential, more parallel, and in closest collaboration with other historians and political scientists, at home and in the English-speaking world abroad, for the very real ramifications of U.S. naval strategy and America's maritime approach to world politics. Historians need to be encouraged to write on recent and very recent strategy so that, as Seth Cropsey wrote in 2013, the victories of sea power are no longer silent. Such historians will place themselves in a unique position to influence policy.

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<sup>1</sup> As Geoffrey Till has remarked, sea power—*sea power* is American usage; *seapower* is British usage, but is also used by some Americans—is a relative concept. It should be understood as having an input or the means (such as navies, the defense industry) and an output or the ends (the capacity to influence other people or things by what one does at or from the sea). Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Routledge, 2013), 25.

<sup>2</sup> This is principally informed by the author's own experiences as a German national studying potentially classified issues from 5,000 miles away for his Ph.D. dissertation between 2010 and 2014—*U.S. Navy Strategy & American Sea Power from “The Maritime Strategy” (1982–1986) to “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower” (2007): Politics, Capstone Documents, and Major Naval Operations 1981–2011* (Kiel, Germany: Christian-Albrechts-University Kiel, 2014). The dissertation will be published shortly as a revised

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monograph, *US Naval Strategy and National Security: The Evolution of American Maritime Power, 1981–2015* (Routledge, Abingdon, UK, and New York, forthcoming 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/indicatoroc.aspx?i=393> . This is only rivaled by books on literature. It is two-and-a-half times as many as books dealing with the arts, three times the number of books on language, linguistics, and religion, and eight times the number of new books in the fields of gender/ethnic studies, and philosophy.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Haynes, *American Naval Thinking in the Post–Cold War Era: The U.S. Navy and the Emergence of a Maritime Strategy, 1989-2007* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2013), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Gouré, “The Tyranny of Forward Presence,” *Naval War College Review* 54, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 11–24; “The Maritime Strategy” of the 1980s acknowledges (or rather, states) that naval forces prevent major global war through controlling crises and containing limited wars by way of being on-scene.

<sup>6</sup> Eric Grove, *The Future of Seapower* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press [NIP], 1990), 11.

<sup>7</sup> James Russell, James Wirtz, Donald Abenheim, Thomas-Durrell Young, and Diana Wueger, *Navy Strategy Development: Strategy in the 21st Century* (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), 1.

<sup>8</sup> The setting is important for one can easily get confused in the different altitudes. In 1967, Liddell Hart proclaimed that “Grand strategy should control military strategy”; his contemporary Henry Eccles in 1979 added that “Policy must dominate strategy; strategy influences policy.” Strategy is perhaps best understood to be a loop series of questions that need to be answered (What do we want to do? How? What are we up against? What is available? What are the mismatches? Why do we want to do this?—see P. H. Liotta and Richmond Lloyd, “From Here to There: The Strategy and Force Planning Framework,” *Naval War College Review* 58, no. 2 [Spring 2005]: 121–37, 122). This requires a significant degree of coherence, which is not always easy to accomplish.

<sup>9</sup> For very general considerations about the U.S. role in the world, see, for example, Barry Posen, “Command of the Commons,” *International Security* 28, (Summer 2003): 1, 5–46, in which he underlines that command of the commons was the fundamental base for a unilateral or multilateral hegemonic strategy of the United States and the source of American power and influence.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Huntington, “National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy.” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 80, no.5, (1954): 483–93.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Rhodes, “‘...From the Sea’ and Back Again. Naval Power in the Second American Century.” *Naval War College Review* 52, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 13–54.

<sup>12</sup> Nikolaus Scholik, *Seemacht im 21. Jahrhundert: Handbuch und Lexikon* (Vienna, Austria: Caesar Press 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Larissa Forster, *Influence Without Boots on the Ground: Seaborne Crisis Response* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Peter Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy: American Naval Thinking in the Post–Cold War Era* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> R. B. Watts, *American Sea Power and the Obsolescence of Capital Ship Theory* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> Peter Swartz, “American Naval Policy, Strategy, Plans, and Operations in the Second Decade of the Twenty-First Century,” and Sarandis (“Randy”) Papadopoulos, “Having to ‘Make Do’: U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Strategic Options in the Twenty-First Century,” Joachim Krause/Sebastian Bruns, *The Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security* (London: Routledge, 2016), 229–67 and 268–82, respectively.

<sup>17</sup> Amund N. Lundesgaard, *Controlling the Sea and Projecting Power: U.S. Navy Strategy and Force Structure After the Cold War* (Oslo, Norway: University of Oslo, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> See note 2.

<sup>19</sup> Haas is currently preparing the manuscript for submission by summer 2017.

<sup>20</sup> CAPT Joseph Gagliano, USN, *Congressional Policymaking in Sino-U.S. Relations During the Post–Cold War Era* (London: Routledge, 2014), is a study on the legislature and foreign policy (vs. the conventional wisdom that the President is the dominant figure); Nikolaus Scholik’s *Handbuch* is planned to be available in English in 2018; James C. Bradford, ed., *America, Sea Power, and the World* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), traces the relationship between the American Navy and the position of the United States on the global political stage over the past 250 years. Jeremy Stöhs’ *The Decline of European Seapower* (working title; Annapolis, MD: NIP, to be published in 2017) and a related dissertation project begun with the Institute for Security Policy/Center for Maritime Strategy and Security in 2016 will complement U.S.-centered works.

<sup>21</sup> Seth Cropsey, *Mayday. The Decline of American Naval Supremacy* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co, 2014), 34.

<sup>22</sup> Recall the 2012 presidential debate between incumbent Barack Obama and challenger Mitt Romney, which famously included a short debate on U.S. Navy ship numbers. Recently, President-elect Donald Trump’s plan for a 350-ship Navy has raised the issue to a higher echelon.



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- <sup>23</sup> Recall the rise of ISIS/Daesh in Syria and Iraq, Russia's illegal takeover of Crimea and the ensuing war in Ukraine, and the accelerating migration pressure.
- <sup>24</sup> Recent examples include debates and opinion pieces on the future of the (super) aircraft carrier as the principal force-generating platform of the U.S. Navy (CDR Bryan McGrath, USN [ret.] and CAPT Henry Hendrix, USN [ret.]), and an argument between Secretary of the Navy Ray Maybus and Secretary of Defense Ash Carter about presence vs. warfighting.
- <sup>25</sup> Amund Lundesgaard, *US Navy Strategy and Force Structure After the Cold War (IFS Insights No. 4, November 2011)* (Oslo: Institutt for Forsvarsstudier, 2011), 21
- <sup>26</sup> John Hattendorf, ed., *The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, 1977–1986* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004); John Hattendorf, ed., *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1990s* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2006) and *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1970s*, (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2007); John Hattendorf, Peter Swartz, eds., *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2008). Follow-up editions for the 2000s and the 2010s are highly anticipated.
- <sup>27</sup> Robert Komer, *Maritime Strategy or Coalition Defense?* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1984).
- <sup>28</sup> John Mearsheimer, "A Strategic Misstep: The Maritime Strategy and the Deterrence in Europe," *International Security* 11, no. 2 (1986): 3–57; Colin Gray, *Maritime Strategy, Geopolitics, and the Defense of the West* (New York: Ramapo Press, 1986).
- <sup>29</sup> Linton Brooks. "Naval Power and National Security: The Case for the Maritime Strategy," *International Security* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 58–88.
- <sup>30</sup> Peter Swartz, *U.S. Navy Capstone Strategy, Policy, Vision, and Concept Documents: What to Consider Before You Write One* (CQR D0020071.A1/Final, March 2009). Arlington, VA: CNA, 2009. [https://www.cna.org/cna\\_files/pdf/D0020071.A1.pdf](https://www.cna.org/cna_files/pdf/D0020071.A1.pdf).
- <sup>31</sup> To a significant degree, the labelling also concerns the strategic culture and the audience one wishes to address. A strategist should answer questions such as "What is your audience?" "What do you want to say/achieve?" "How and where do you plan to implement it?" and "How do you hedge against self-fulfilling prophecies?"
- <sup>32</sup> James Holloway, *Aircraft Carriers at War: A Personal Retrospective of Korea, Vietnam, and the Soviet Confrontation* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2007).
- <sup>33</sup> John Gordon IV, Peter Wilson, John Birkler, Steven Boraz, and Gordon Lee, *Leveraging America's Aircraft Carrier Capabilities: Exploring New Combat and Noncombat Roles and Missions for the U.S. Carrier Fleet*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006).
- <sup>34</sup> Seth Cropsy, Bryan McGrath, and Timothy Walton, *Sharpening the Spear: The Carrier, the Joint Force, and High-End Conflict* (Washington, DC: Hudson Center, 2015).
- <sup>35</sup> Roger Barnett. *Navy Strategic Culture: Why the Navy Thinks Differently* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2009), 79.
- <sup>36</sup> Jan Breemer, "The End of Naval Strategy: Revolutionary Change and the Future of American Naval Strategy," *Strategic Review* 22, no. 2 (1994): 40–53. In this article, he noted that the U.S. Navy can focus directly on influencing events on land, thus moving from a strictly naval gray-ship focus to a broader maritime (littoral) leverage. Edward Rhodes, in "From the Sea... and Back Again," took a contrary position.
- <sup>37</sup> Barry Posen. "Inadvertent Nuclear War? Escalation and NATO's Northern Flank." *International Security* 7, no. 2 (1982): 28–54; Geoffrey Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*, 2nd edition (London: Macmillan, 1984); Robert Jervis, "Navies, Politics, and Political Science," J. Hattendorf, ed., *Doing Naval History: Essays Towards Improvement* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 1995), 41–49.
- <sup>38</sup> Rhodes, Edward. "...From the Sea' and Back Again: Naval Power in the Second American Century," *Naval War College Review* 52, no. 2 (1999): 13–54.
- <sup>39</sup> Blake Dunnivant, *Brown-Water Warfare: The U.S. Navy in Riverine Warfare and the Emergence of a Tactical Doctrine—New Perspectives on Maritime History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), traces the evolution of riverine warfare in U.S. military operations from its informal inception in the 18th century to its establishment as a formal doctrine in the 20th century. On *Cole* (DDG-67), see Kirk Lippold, *Front Burner: Al Qaeda's Attack on USS Cole* (New York: Public Affairs Publishing, 2013).
- <sup>40</sup> Bernard Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy in the Twenty-First Century* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2010); James Holmes and Toshi Yoshiara, *Red Star over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2013); Sarah Kirchberger, *Assessing China's Naval Power: Technological Innovation, Economic Constraints, and Strategic Implications* (Baden-Baden, Germany: Springer, 2014).
- <sup>41</sup> Norman Friedman, *Naval Institute Guide to World Naval Weapon Systems* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2006); VADM Arthur K. Cembrowski, USN, John H. Garstka, "Network-Centric Warfare: Origin and Future," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 124, no. 1 (January 1998): 28–35.
- <sup>42</sup> Stansfield Turner, "Missions of the U.S. Navy," *U.S. Naval War College Review* 27, no. 5, (March/April 1974).

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<sup>43</sup> James Cable, *Gunboat Diplomacy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971) and its revised version, *Gunboat Diplomacy 1919–1991: Political Applications of Limited Naval Force* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994); Edward Luttwak, *The Political Uses of Sea Power* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), Sergej Gorshkov, *Seapower and the State* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 1976 and 1979); Ken Booth, *Navies and Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 1977); Charles Allen, *The Uses of Navies in Peacetime* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1980).

<sup>44</sup> The Congressional role in national and naval-strategy making would merit a policy-analytic study.

<sup>45</sup> David Rosenberg, “The Realities of Modern Naval Strategy,” J. Goldrick and J. Hattendorf, eds., *Mahan Is Not Enough: The Proceedings of a Conference on the Works of Sir Julian Corbett and Admiral Sir Hugh Richmond* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1993), 141–75.

<sup>46</sup> Jon Sumida and David Rosenberg, “Machines, Men, Manufacturing, Management and Money: The Study of Navies as Complex Organizations and the Transformation of Twentieth-Century Naval History,” J. Hattendorf, ed., *Doing Naval History. Essays Towards Improvement* (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1995), 25–40.

<sup>47</sup> Gary Anderson, a U.S. Marine Corps colonel, submitted *Beyond Mahan: Proposal for US Naval Strategy in the 21st Century* (Newport, RI: U.S. Naval War College Press, 1990), where Jon Sumida, *Inventing Grand Strategy and Teaching Command: The Classic Works of Alfred Thayer Mahan Reconsidered* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) and the very recent *21st Century Mahan* edited by LCDR B. J. Armstrong, USN (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2014) point to the enduring relevance of this strategist.

<sup>48</sup> The 2000s and 2010s volumes are eagerly awaited by the community of scholars, who in the meantime have to resort to internet or physical archives to retrieve the naval strategies of that time.

<sup>49</sup> This author, when conducting interviews with naval strategists in 2012, found only one interviewee declining to engage in an academic conversation or oral history at all, two interviewees who did not want the discussion to be on the record, and one gentleman unable to find time because of his busy schedule.

<sup>50</sup> Elmo Zumwalt, *On Watch: A Memoir*, (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1976); for a biography of Zumwalt, see Larry Berman, *Zumwalt: The Life and Times of Admiral Elmo Russell “Bud” Zumwalt, Jr.* (New York: Harper, 2012). On Hyman G. Rickover, the “father of the nuclear navy” whose relevance is uncontested because the fundamentally strategic nature of nuclear issues and their relation to the next war of the United States, see Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, *Rickover: Controversy and Genius* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1981); Theodore Rockwell, *The Rickover Effect: How One Made a Difference* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse Press, 2001); RADM Dave Oliver Jr., USN (ret.), *Rickover’s Leadership Principles and the Rise of the Nuclear Navy* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2014); James Holloway, *Aircraft Carrier at War: A Personal Retrospective of Korea, Vietnam, and the Soviet Confrontation* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2007), which includes some autobiographic aspects of his time as CNO; John Lehman, *Command of the Seas* (Annapolis, MD: NIP, 2001). Lehman, a poster child for the 1980s Maritime Strategy, was harshly criticized by people such as Gregory Vistica in his *Fall from Glory: The Men Who Sank the Navy* (New York: Touchstone, 1997)

<sup>51</sup> Peter Rudolf, *Amerikanische Seemachtpolitik und maritime Rüstungskontrolle unter Carter und Reagan* (Frankfurt: Hessische Stiftung für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung, 1990); Wilfried Stallmann, *Die maritime Strategie der USA nach 1945: Entwicklung, Einflussgrößen und Auswirkungen auf das atlantische Bündnis* (Kiel, Germany: Christian-Albrechts-University Kiel, 2000). In addition, Peter Swartz’s draft dissertation manuscript on the lines and strands of U.S. Navy strategy needs to be recognized, even if unfinished. See also Paul Ryan, *First Line of Defense: The U.S. Navy Since 1945* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Press, 1981).

<sup>52</sup> Specialists like George Baer and Joseph Bouchard noted separately that to be successful, naval strategy needed to align with national policy, whereas Roger Barnett and Sam Bateman, also independent from each other, saw alignment with the Navy’s own strategic culture and the persuasiveness in the political environment as key indicators.

<sup>53</sup> After the publication of “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower” (2007), former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman and former Undersecretary of the Navy Seth Cropsey engaged in praise and criticism of the new capstone document. Both agreed, however, that the 1980s Maritime Strategy, to which they were both contributors at various levels, remained a gold standard.