

Why a **CONVERSATION WITH THE COUNTRY?**

A Backward Look at Some Forward-thinking Maritime Strategists

By **KARL F. WALLING**



For over a year now, the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard have engaged in a “Conversation with the Country” to enlighten public opinion about the need for a new maritime strategy for the 21st century. Professor Walling’s address surveys three previous conversations about maritime strategy at decisive moments in American history and explains why it is urgent to engage the country in such conversations today.



VADM John G. Morgan, Jr., Deputy CNO for Information, Plans, and Strategy, briefs Texas citizens on new Navy strategy

U.S. Navy (Sally Hendricks)

Report Documentation Page

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Why do we need a new maritime strategy? Why do we need a conversation with the country about it? The simplest answer to the first question is that the world is changing. Other possible conflicts loom on the horizon 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now. Whatever happens in current campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere, the Navy and other maritime Services must look ahead, lest their current strategies prove obsolete, even dangerous to the American people.

Granted, the world is changing—we all know that because sometimes the only people who can figure out how to operate those fancy electronic gadgets in our homes are teenage children or grandchildren. The big question is what will remain the same. How can we make future plans without something stable and predictable to rely upon?

There is some good news or some bad news here, depending on how we look at it. Both the fundamental problems of strategy in general and the unique problems of maritime strategy in particular remain the same. Strategy is about matching means to ends to achieve objectives at an acceptable level of cost and risk. Note that strategy need not be simply military or maritime. A coherent strategy necessarily involves *all* tools of diplomacy, information and intelligence, economic power, and what we today call soft power, too. Indeed, one of the best ways to evaluate a strategy is by how well it integrates all these different tools of power and influence. This never changes.

Strategy is not simply about war. Indeed, to paraphrase the British strategist Basil Liddell Hart, the aim of strategy is a better state of peace, if only from our own point of view. A responsible strategy not only hedges against the worst-case contingencies, such as war, but also strives to make the best-case scenarios, such as peaceful cooperation among nations, possible and durable. Preparing only for the worst case risks turning potential friends into enemies; focusing only on the best

case risks ignoring potential enemies until it is too late to deal with them peacefully. So engaging old friends and potential new ones is as important to prudent strategy as deterring potential and defeating actual enemies. This too never changes.

Throughout history, three problems have proved paramount in maritime strategy, which is not simply *naval* strategy. It necessarily involves the Marine Corps, Coast Guard, numerous civilian agencies, merchant marine, a host of businesses with interests linked to the sea, and—not to be forgotten—our allies. These problems are:

- to build a moat to provide for homeland security
- to guarantee free use of the ocean, the global commons for trade, fishing, and other goods, usually through control of the sea and denial of its use to likely enemies
- to use the ocean as a highway, paved by ships, to project power from sea to land in order to deter or defeat rivals on their home turfs.

In that sense, a maritime strategy is no less important for preventing wars whenever possible than for winning them whenever necessary.

Given the durability of these three problems, it should come as no surprise that

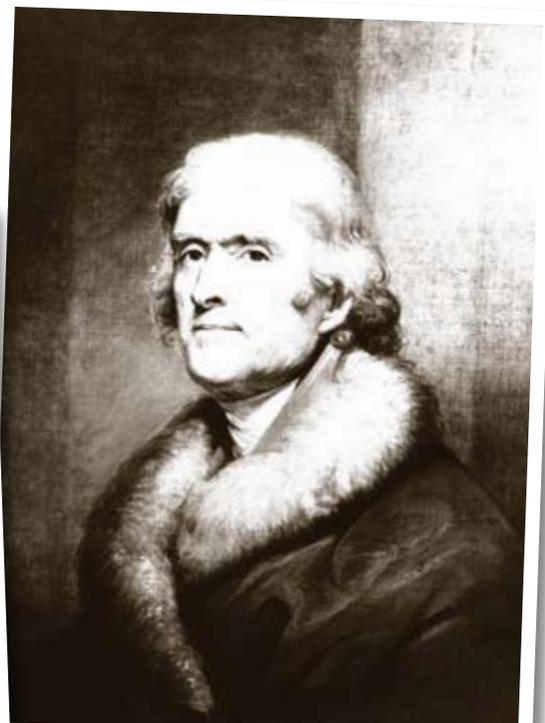
this is not the first time the country has had a conversation—a national discussion—about maritime strategy, which almost by definition must be forward-looking. Somewhat paradoxically, however, I look backward at some forward-thinking maritime strategists in order to explain why it is only natural, indeed inevitable in a free society such as our own, that we have conversations about maritime strategy.

Building the Moat

The first conversation was about homeland security primarily, so I will call it *building the moat*. It occurred during the founding era from 1776 to 1825, between the followers of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. Hamilton's followers, the Federalists, were often veterans of the American War for Independence. Hamilton himself was General George Washington's right-hand man throughout the war and until Washington's death in 1798. These veterans remembered that on July 2, 1776, 2 days before Congress declared independence, the British sent the largest maritime expedition



Bureau of Ships



United States Office of War Information

Above: Thomas Jefferson preferred establishing a coast guard rather than a large navy

Left: USS *Alfred*, first battleship owned by United States, commissioned December 23, 1775, and commanded by John Paul Jones

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in history thus far to capture New York City, with 10 British ships-of-the-line (the aircraft carriers of their age), 20 frigates, and over 100 transports carrying an army about twice the size of the one Washington had to defend the city. So no one should be surprised that Washington, who had no navy, was unable to confront the British invasion at sea. Outnumbered on land, he lost more than half of his army to the British invaders on Long Island and Manhattan and had to abandon the city to the British, who occupied it until the end of the war. No one is quite sure how, but a fire started as the British moved in, and over 60 percent of the city burned to the ground. For these veterans, this was their 9/11, the burning of New York City.

These veterans also remembered that Washington's greatest victory, at Yorktown, Virginia, occurred because France, which became an ally of the United States in 1778, lent the United States a navy that defeated a British squadron on the Chesapeake Bay. The French then blockaded a British garrison of over 6,000 troops under General Charles Cornwallis at Yorktown. The French also brought an army larger than the force of Continental soldiers that Washington sent to Yorktown. In addition, they moved up the Chesapeake to Delaware, where they picked up much of Washington's artillery for the siege of Yorktown, where Washington was able to bombard and starve the British into surrender. News of the surrender shocked the British government so much that it granted Americans independence—so the British could get out of the quagmire in North America and go back what they did best, fighting the French!

The veterans knew that Americans almost lost the War for Independence because they lacked a navy to secure the moat and were able to win perhaps only because France lent them its navy to enable them to get local control of the sea and project ground forces to Yorktown, thus reminding us today of the vital importance of allies, even and especially occasionally difficult ones, for our security from the beginning of U.S. history.

Hamilton built on the experience of the war to develop an extremely ambitious maritime strategy that, not coincidentally, played a significant role in the debate over ratifying the Constitution. That strategy can be summed up in a single Latin phrase, *E Pluribus Unum* (out of many, one), a bold

experiment in what we today call “cooperative security.” That experiment began when Congress adopted the “Unanimous Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen United States of America” in 1776 and called on the states to unite in resistance against England under what became the Articles of Confederation in 1781. However, Congress' inability to raise taxes under the Articles undermined the foundation of Americans' cooperative strategy, and they were scrapped in favor of a new, stronger Constitution in

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1787. Hamilton's chief priority was a durable union, so foreign powers could not play the states against each other to reestablish their empires in North America. Union and a maritime strategy, he believed, were essential to secure American liberty by guaranteeing American independence. He also recognized that the United States was already a commercial nation that depended on free use of the sea for its prosperity, but that lacked a navy to protect its merchant fleet from great powers, such as England, France, and Spain.

Rather than confront the great powers directly while the American Union was weak, Hamilton proposed a small but formidable ocean-going navy capable of tilting the balance of power among the Europeans not where they were strongest, in Europe, but where they were much weaker, the sugar islands in the Caribbean—their most valuable possessions at a time when sugar played a role in the world economy analogous to oil today. Whenever one of the great powers appeared too menacing, the United States would threaten to side with other European powers against it in the New World. In the best case, this would prevent war by deterring it; in the worst case, it would enable the United States to cooperate with great powers to win such wars. Rather than risk war with the United States, each of the great powers would set a price on American neutrality, open its ports to American trade, and leave American shipping unmolested. Through such a maritime strategy, the United States could grow strong, whichever way the winds of war blew in Europe and its colonies.

But Hamilton always thought big. He proposed that, decades hence, the United States should lead the countries of the Western Hemisphere, each of which he believed had a right to be independent of its colonial masters, in erecting a coalition of the New World against the Old World. This

Stephen Decatur boards Tripolitan gunboat, 1804



United States Office of War Information

cooperative strategy was the first American attempt to lead the Free World against the less free world. It was also the foundation of the Monroe Doctrine. Some even see it as the foundation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (an alliance named after an ocean) and other American efforts during the Cold War to form and lead a global maritime coalition against the Soviet Union.

Unintentionally, Hamilton provoked a great national conversation, or perhaps we should say a national ruckus and rumble. Settlers on the frontier did not see the United States as Hamilton did, as an island vulnerable to other navies, but rather as a continent. The farther they moved from the coast, the more they tended to see their security as unconnected with the sea, and thus they saw Hamilton's maritime strategy as irrelevant to their needs—this despite their need to ship their produce down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, which was under the control of Spain, and through the Gulf of Mexico, where the Europeans had their colonies and naval bases. Moreover, Hamilton's great rivals—Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and their followers—exploited the settlers' fears of "big government." They warned that the consequence of Hamilton's strategy would be an undue concentration of power in the national government. As a believer in states' rights, Jefferson worried that Hamilton's ambitious

plans, including his maritime strategy, would become a threat to liberty at home, but what was the alternative? That is always the question for strategists.

Jefferson's alternative had two key assumptions: first, that the Europeans were so dependent on trade with America that economic sanctions (that is, American boycotts and embargoes of trade with Europe) would supply a "peaceful means of coercing" them; and second, that coastal fortresses and a fleet of gunboats, or what we today would

settlers on the frontier did not see the United States as Hamilton did, as an island vulnerable to other navies

call a coast guard, would suffice to protect the homeland from foreign navies. In theory, sanctions would deter war or, if war came, enable the United States to bring the Europeans to their knees while coastal defenses kept them away from American shores.

When Jefferson became President in 1801, he put his maritime strategy into practice, but there were many unintended consequences. Despite initial successes against what we today might call terrorists (the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean, who gave the Marines the right to sing

about the shores of Tripoli), the Navy was simply unprepared for the world war that arose in opposition to France in the age of Napoleon Bonaparte. American merchant ships were attacked by both the French and British navies, each of which aimed to deny the other's country supplies from the United States, with only a few ships in the American navy to protect them in the open ocean. Jefferson and his best friend and successor as President, James Madison, tried economic sanctions first against England, then against France, and then against both, but the result was not what they expected. Americans may well have depended on the Europeans more than the Europeans depended on them. Jefferson's strategy resulted in an economic depression, especially in New England. Finally, believing there was no choice left in 1812, Madison asked Congress to declare war on England, though he acknowledged that Americans had a right to declare war on France, too.

The result was a disaster. American shipping was driven from the ocean. New England in particular saw its economy collapse. The ultimate humiliation occurred when a British army, landed by the British navy, burned Washington, DC, to the ground, including the White House, Capitol, Library of Congress, and most other government buildings. In the meantime, representatives from New England came within a single vote of seceding from the Union, so they could make peace with England and pull their economy out of its depression. Jefferson's maritime strategy almost destroyed the Union, and with it, the Republic in its infancy.

Although the early maritime history of the United States almost ended in tragedy, there was a comic conclusion to our first efforts to build a strategic moat. During and after the Napoleonic Wars, the major nations of Latin America began to declare their independence, often modeling their statements on our own Declaration of Independence. Fearful that such new political principles might breed further revolutions and wars, Tsar Alexander I in Russia formed a "Holy Alliance" among the sovereign heads of Europe to crush revolts begun in the name of freedom not only in Europe but also potentially in Europe's overseas colonies. In 1823, the question before President James Monroe and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams was what the United



Destruction of Spanish Fleet off Santiago de Cuba, 1898

Marine Corps

States should do if the Europeans intervened to recover their colonies in the Western Hemisphere. Henceforth, they said, the Western Hemisphere would be off limits for further European colonization, a principle that promised peace and cooperation with Latin America, since both the United States and the newly independent Latin American nations had a strong common interest in preserving their political independence.

The problem was that the United States had virtually no navy to enforce Monroe's doctrine. So Adams and Monroe might seem a bit silly to have declared a moat around the Western Hemisphere when they developed no means to defend it. But they had solid intelligence that England wanted the former colonies in Latin America to remain independent, so it could continue to trade freely with them. Thus was born a tacit form of strategic cooperation that lasted throughout much of the 19th century. Ameri-

cans would stand for the principle of non-intervention in Latin American affairs, and the Royal Navy, our worst enemy in 1776 and 1812, would enforce it, thus enabling the United States to enjoy the major benefits of a maritime strategy without having to pay for them—a sweet deal if one can pull it off!

Is there a moral to this story? Perhaps Jefferson paid so much attention to what the country wanted (and feared) that he failed to frame the maritime strategy it needed. Perhaps Hamilton paid so little attention to national sentiments that he rejected the maritime strategy the Nation needed most to avoid the disasters of the War of 1812. Those responsible for framing our maritime strategy today must learn from the mistakes of both Hamilton and Jefferson. They must convince the country to want what it

needs, but they will never do that effectively without understanding what the country wants, which is an important reason to talk with the country.

Moreover, although today we tend to see the 19th century as the great period of American isolation, the reality is much more complicated. Our political union was devised to enable the original 13 states to cooperate in the common defense. Building our political union was the fundamental problem of North American interstate relations until the end of the Civil War. Even then, we relied on the silent strategic cooperation of our former enemy, England, to secure the moat required for our internal growth as well as that of our neighbors in South America. From this perspective, what Hamilton and Jefferson, indeed all

Americans would stand for the principle of nonintervention in Latin American affairs, and the Royal Navy, our worst enemy in 1776 and 1812, would enforce it



U.S. Army



War Department

Clockwise from above: U.S. troops embark for France, 1917; Commodore Perry defeats British fleet on Lake Erie, September 10, 1813; wooden ship built in 1918 for U.S. Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation to help revitalize merchant fleet



War Department

the Founders, had in common is far more important than their differences. They understood that the United States had a powerful interest in preserving and expanding a new kind of international system that is captured in another Latin phrase found on the back of every American dollar bill: a *Novus Ordo Seclorum* (a new order of the ages), or what President George H.W. Bush called a new world order, based on such fundamental principles as national independence, sovereignty, freedom of the seas, and peaceful commercial exchange, first in North America, then in the Western Hemisphere, and potentially throughout the world. Just as no individual is perfect, no country ever lives up to its principles completely; but this is the system to which we became dedicated when Monroe proclaimed his doctrine, and the system we have been committed to defend ever since.

Commanding the Commons

The second national conversation to which I would draw attention is about securing free use of the global maritime commons and sea control. It began in the 1890s under the leadership of another forward-thinking maritime strategist, Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan of the Naval War College. Mahan was an evangelist—some even say a propagandist—for the Navy. He believed that commerce was the source of military power, especially in the industrial age. Since most commerce in his time moved by sea, he also believed that whoever controlled the sea would control commerce and with it the foundations of military power. Silent strategic cooperation between the United States and England had enabled the former to become a great industrial nation by the end of the 19th century, but could Americans rely forever on the British? What if England became an adversary? What if England went into strategic decline? What if other powers arose who were less concerned with preserving than with overturning the increasingly liberal international system that had resulted, in part, from de facto Anglo-American strategic cooperation?

In all these contingencies, the United States would need to enter the ranks of the great maritime powers, but how? In the best case, as Mahan's friend and admirer Theodore Roosevelt would suggest, the United States might "speak softly," that is, cooperate with such powers against what we today

call rogue and failed states. Thus, more than 100 years before our maritime Services announced their current cooperative security strategy, Mahan called for the United States to work as part of a maritime coalition in what he called a "naval consortium" to keep the sea lanes open. In the worst case, however, Mahan was as aware as Roosevelt

*when the United States
entered World War I, it had
the wrong navy*

that the United States would need a "big stick" to secure free use of the sea on its own with a navy capable of establishing control of the sea.

In Mahan's view, the key to sea control was a big battleship fleet able to risk all to win all. It would defeat enemy battleship fleets on the high seas, chase their navies and merchant shipping from the ocean, protect our own commerce, and deny trade to enemies, who would be blockaded into surrender. Mahan was so successful at shaping public opinion that not only key American leaders, such as Theodore Roosevelt, but also leaders abroad bought his strategy hook, line, and sinker. He became an international celebrity, with honors from Oxford and Cambridge in England, where

he seemed to have explained how Britannia came to rule the waves. Kaiser Wilhelm in Germany read his book and demanded that Germany build a Mahanian battleship navy. So did leaders in Japan, eager as they were to found an empire of their own.

Mahan had his critics, however. Some worried that he was encouraging Americans to catch the imperial disease—that is, to become like their worst enemies almost a century before. Others wondered whether the best use of a navy was to fight the big battle on the sea; perhaps it would be better for navies to project power from the sea to the shore and further inland. Still others wondered whether battleships, like aircraft carriers today, might be too expensive to lose. Perhaps attacking an enemy's commerce with submarines and other raiders was a better strategy.

But Mahan was so successful at generating public support for his strategy that his critics were generally ignored, at least in America. The result was that when the United States entered World War I, it had the wrong navy. There were no decisive fleet engagements in that war, only might-have-beens, like the Battle of Jutland. This was not a war to be won through decisive battles, but attrition, with the U-boat threat coming close to winning the war for Germany. When the United States entered the war, it

U.S. Navy ships move into Lingayen Gulf preceding landing on Luzon, January 1945



U.S. Navy

had many battleships but few destroyers to convoy merchant, supply, and troop ships across the ocean. It also had the wrong strategy to win the war, but fortunately it had just enough spare industrial capacity to adapt quickly and enable the Allies to win by transporting over 2 million American doughboys to fight in France. So ironically, the future war that Mahan had expected to win in fleet engagements on the sea was won on land by using the ocean as a highway to project American ground forces to Europe.

Is there a moral to this story, too? Public support is clearly essential to sustain a maritime strategy, but sometimes even the greatest strategists—and Mahan was a great one—get it wrong. Mahan and his country could have benefited greatly from something as American as apple pie, if not more so. They needed more dissent and the ability to listen to it, which is another reason to discuss these matters with the country. Moreover, as Russia succumbed to the German war machine and England and France struggled to survive its onslaught, it became increasingly clear that it was no longer possible for the United States to exempt itself from the burdens of world leadership. Although we had benefited more than we usually acknowledged from tacit strategic cooperation in the 19th century, our free-riding, isolationist mentality meant that we had a credibility problem. If we wanted other

nations to cooperate with us both for defensive purposes and to produce a more prosperous peace, we had to put our money where our mouths were; that is, we had to invest the financial and other capital required to get fence-sitters to believe we were serious. This is what Woodrow Wilson meant when he said the noble (but tragically flawed) experiment in strategic cooperation embodied in the League of Nations was about extending the Monroe Doctrine to the world.

But what is the *world*? Nearly three-quarters of it is covered by water. Ninety percent of its trade, the lifeblood of modern economies, moves by sea. The majority of its population lives within a few hundred miles of the coasts. In such a world, the kind of leadership that would result in political, military, and economic cooperation rather than military competition was inherently dependent upon maritime strategy.

Power Projection

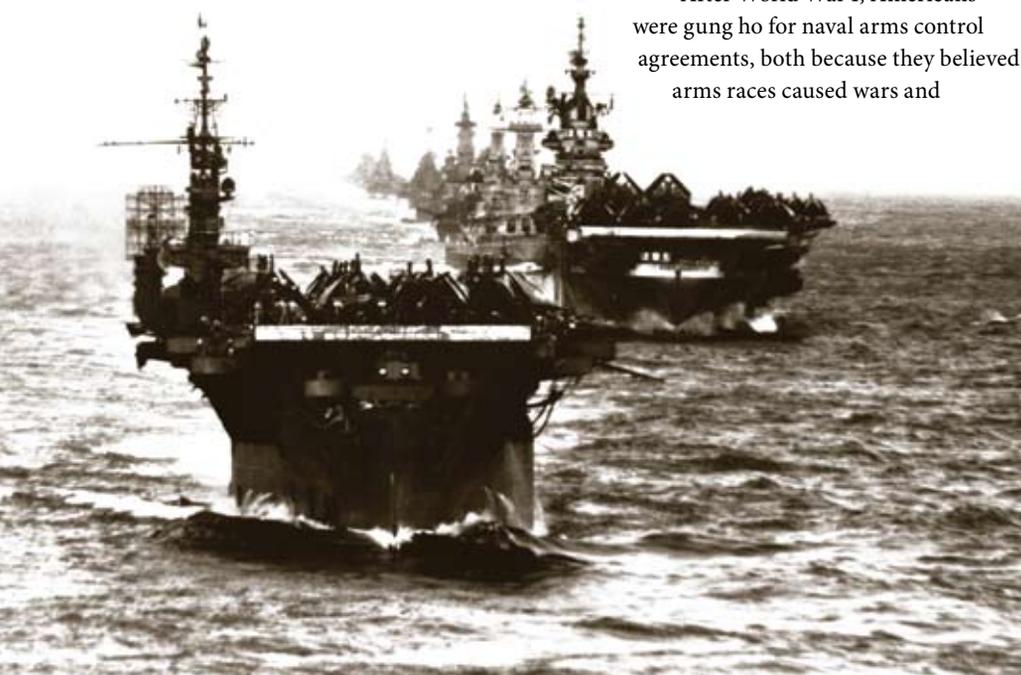
The third national conversation to which I would draw attention concerns using the ocean as a highway to project American power abroad in the air, on the land, and through space, including cyberspace. It began under the leadership of President Franklin Roosevelt (who had served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy in World War I) and Congressman Carl Vinson (D-GA) in the years immediately before American entry into World War II and has continued ever since.

After World War I, Americans were gung ho for naval arms control agreements, both because they believed arms races caused wars and

because they were expensive. The result of the arms control agreements in the 1920s and early 1930s, as well as unwillingness to enforce the Versailles Treaty limiting German rearmament, however, was that Americans reduced the size of their navy while Germany and Japan increased theirs. In this isolationist period, with the country on its knees in the Great Depression, no one could convince Americans to want or plan for much more than homeland security based on securing Fortress America with a giant moat around the Western Hemisphere. Perhaps only the fall of France in 1940, while Japan was expanding in China and Indochina, with England standing alone and its fleet vulnerable to capture or destruction by the Germans, led American leaders to call for a different kind of maritime strategy and a different kind of navy.

Planners realized they did not have a navy big enough to fight *either* Germany or Japan and that once again they had the wrong navy for the war about to come. Germany could not be defeated through battleships, nor could Japan be defeated in one decisive battle at sea. The nature of the war was again a struggle of attrition. Germany had to be defeated first by gaining control of the Atlantic Ocean—that is, by defeating the German submarine fleet. Japan had to be defeated bit by bit, one island at a time, by leapfrogging ground and air forces across the Pacific, with the Navy supplying a highway paved by ships to enable U.S. forces to reach the Japanese homeland. So gradually from 1936 to 1940, always making sure not to get too far ahead of public opinion, President Franklin Roosevelt and Congressman Carl Vinson called for a decisive change in maritime strategy, for a two-ocean navy capable of winning in both the Atlantic and Pacific, with a diversified fleet designed to win against U-boats in the Battle of the Atlantic. Moreover, they wanted to use our own submarines to cut Japan off from supplies and to gain control of the sea originally through battleship task forces and later through carrier task forces, so American ground and air forces could be sustained abroad, and to land such forces in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Normandy, and across the Pacific. This integrated, or joint, combination of Army, Navy, Air Force, and other Services has been the foundation of American military strategy ever since, but that strategy has always been a *maritime*

U.S. Navy Task Group 38.3 enters Ulithi anchorage after strikes against Japanese in Philippines



U.S. Navy

strategy at its core. We are not simply a continental power blessed with no serious enemies capable of threatening us on land. We are also a maritime nation with interests, allies, and enemies linked to us by sea around the globe.

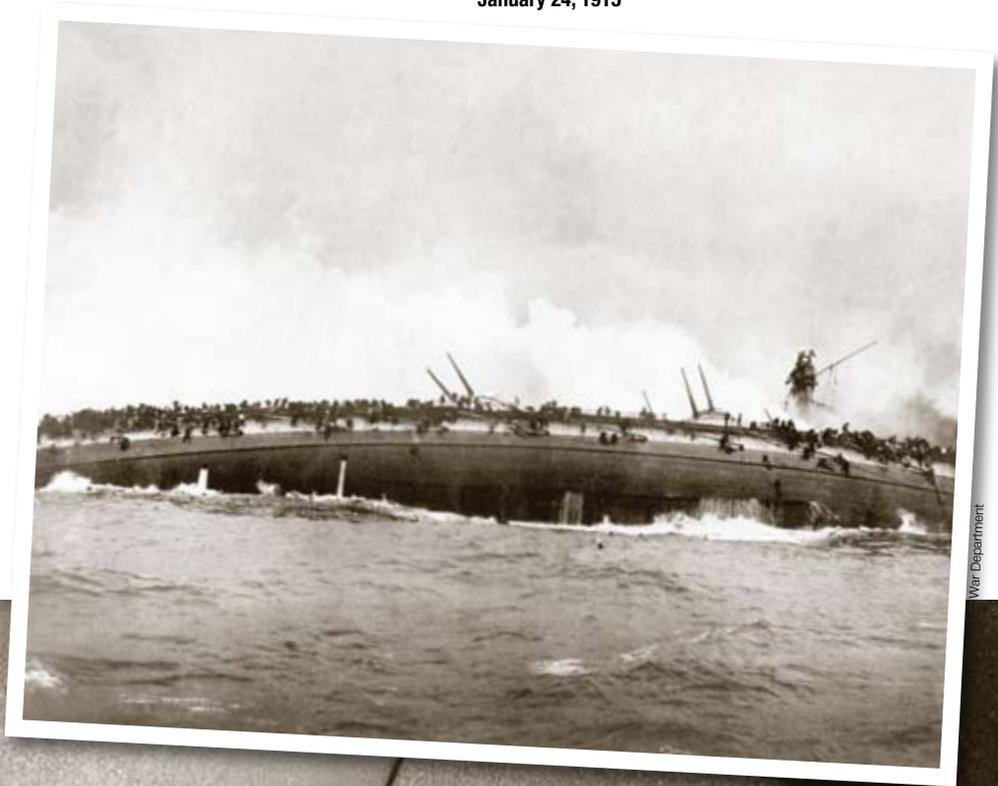
Here I must say something about what we call globalization today, a phenomenon that owes much to how Franklin Roosevelt planned to promote peace and escape another Great Depression after World War II. Provisionally, let us define *globalization* as the increasingly rapid exchange of goods, services, people, information, and ideas around the globe. When did globalization begin? I would say in 1492, when Columbus

Roosevelt and Vinson called for a two-ocean navy capable of winning in both the Atlantic and Pacific, with a diversified fleet designed to win against U-boats in the Atlantic

sailed the ocean blue, in the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria*. He sailed west in the hope not so much of proving the world was round as of opening trade with the East; but he accidentally discovered a new world, the Western Hemisphere, thus laying the foundations for our global trading system.

Several hundred years later, in 1776 in fact, Adam Smith published his great economic treatise, *Wealth of Nations*, the purpose of which, in part, was to describe the consequences and foundations of a globalized economy. Said Smith, if each

Sinking of German cruiser *Blucher* in North Sea, January 24, 1915



War Department



Periscope view of Japanese destroyer torpedoed by U.S. submarine, 1942

U.S. Navy

nation eliminated trade barriers and focused on its comparative advantages, then free-market competition would lead all by an invisible hand to unprecedented economic prosperity—as what was once expensive to produce at home became cheaper to buy from abroad and what was best produced at home began to command markets abroad. Often forgotten, however, is that there is a very visible hand in Smith’s vision of a global free trading system, namely the Royal Navy, which helped keep the sea lanes open in the 18th and 19th centuries.

After 1945, when England was bankrupt, the United States came to play much the same role as guarantor of last resort for a globalized economy by using its navy and those of its allies to keep the sea lanes open. In that sense, the role of our maritime Services is analogous to that of the Federal

Reserve in the monetary system. By preserving confidence that the global trading system will not collapse, both the maritime Services and Federal Reserve increase the willingness of nations to cooperate to preserve the system rather than compete to destroy it. I cannot think of a better reason to take maritime strategy seriously than the fact that the invisible hand guiding globalization today depends on the visible hand of maritime power, which, in the last resort, is American maritime power.

what is a moat in the age of nuclear missiles, and how could a navy supply such a moat today?

Is there a moral to this story, too? Roosevelt and Vinson adapted American maritime strategy just in time to avoid disaster in World War II. We might not be so lucky or wise—or both—again. Absent a clear threat from the Axis powers, it is not certain they could have adapted in time, or carried public opinion along with them. How to match strategic needs to public wants is thus often an urgent question. It must be done in time to make an effective difference, but how? Should we focus on securing our moat? What is a moat in the age of nuclear missiles, and how could a navy supply such a moat today? What kind of moat is required in an age of international terrorism and illegal immigration? Or should we focus on free use of the global commons? What does that mean in the age of space and cyberspace warfare? Or should we focus on projecting power from

USS *Missouri* fires salvo during Korean War, 1950



U.S. Navy



CNO ADM Gary Roughead prepares to testify before Senate Committee on Armed Services

U.S. Navy (Tiffini M. Jones)

the sea as far as necessary to defeat a distant enemy, such as al Qaeda in Afghanistan? Perhaps we must do all of the above. Fine, but how do we diversify our strategic portfolio so that we can protect our most vital interests without becoming overextended militarily, economically, and politically? What roles might a variety of allies, both formal and informal, play as we hedge our bets against the worst case while striving to achieve better cases? These are just the tip of the iceberg of the questions we must address to have a viable strategy in the future.

The new maritime strategy is an effort to answer these and other questions. It is entitled *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. Whereas I have spoken mainly about the past, the new maritime strategy is focused on the future, so let me call attention to the television and film projects, *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*, both of which are vital elements of American soft power, understood as the attractiveness not only of our way of life, but also of our preferred way of resolving international problems. We ought not to forget that we call spacecraft “spaceships,” and that by analogy we see outer space as a vast ocean with an infinite archipelago of bright stars. In *Star Trek*, a federation, or coalition, of planets seeks to provide for its members’ security while upholding a principle of nonintervention, or sovereignty, which is the “prime directive” in intergalactic affairs. The republic is also

a multicultural federation of “diverse intelligent life forms” striving to preserve some form of freedom under law from those who had turned to the dark side of the force—from those who meant to base authority on naked power.

If we reflect on the future envisioned in these internationally popular cultural icons, we can see that it is emphatically not going where none has gone before. We are clearly back to the future because the cooperative approach of the new maritime strategy is as old as Ben Franklin’s remark before signing the Declaration of Independence that we had better hang together, lest we hang separately. A strategy of cooperative security, in other words, is a reflection of our national character and some of our oldest traditions. While no maritime strategy can receive sustained public support unless it is consistent with our national character, the new maritime strategy emphasizes the elements of our national character most likely to prove attractive to old friends and new. **JFQ**

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