

## A COOPERATIVE STRATEGY FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SEAPOWER – THEN WHAT?

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PAPER

**A COOPERATIVE STRATEGY FOR 21ST CENTURY SEAPOWER – THEN WHAT?**

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## ABSTRACT

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In October 2006, the Chief of Naval Operations, Commandant of the Marine Corps and Commandant of the Coast Guard signed *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower*, marking the first time that all three sea services joined in such an effort. This paper will analyze *A Cooperative Strategy* to answer why the sea services created a new strategy, how the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan influenced the document, and how its content could change the strategic culture within the institution of the Navy. The author makes some general recommendations to better implement the strategy.



## A COOPERATIVE STRATEGY FOR 21ST CENTURY SEAPOWER – THEN WHAT?

Naval strategy...differs from military strategy in that it is as necessary in peace as in war. Indeed, in peace it may gain its most decisive victories by occupying in a country, either by purchase or treaty, excellent positions which would perhaps hardly be got by war.<sup>1</sup>

Unidentified French author, quoted by Alfred Thayer Mahan

### Introduction

For just over one hundred years, strategic thinking has influenced the culture of the United States Navy. Most naval historians trace the birth of this strategic culture to the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan. His thoughts have underpinned, albeit to varying extents everything from global “show the flag” cruises, to war operations, to contingency plans, to full-blown strategic documents. As the epigraph indicates, Mahan believed that seapower, which he defined as both naval power (Navy and Marine forces) and merchant shipping, as well as social, political, and geographic factors, held unique utility across the elements of national power. Continuing this belief, naval strategists within the United States Navy traditionally include the application of seapower to peacetime uses in the strategies they develop.<sup>2</sup> Continuing the evolutionary chain of seapower strategy, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* articulates how the United States should use seapower to address current and future strategic challenges. This paper will analyze the new strategy in that context, seeking to answer why the sea services created a new strategy, how the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan influenced the document and how its content could change the strategic culture within the institution of the Navy.

## Why Did The Sea Services Create A New Seapower Strategy?

In 2006, Admiral Michael Mullen, then Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), stated a need to dynamically update maritime strategy to reflect changing environment. The CNO expected the new strategy to describe the ways and means in which seapower will help achieve national strategic objectives. In his view, instead of superseding an existing document, the new strategy would join three existing strategic documents: *Sea Power 21*, which comprises the vision, or ends; the *Naval Operations Concept*, which broadly describes tactics or how the warfighter applies resources; and the *Navy Strategic Plan*, which "...will inform and guide programmers in the development of the budget submission."<sup>3</sup> The stated task of the new seapower strategy is to "... describe the way in which the nation's maritime forces will be structured and utilized to ensure security of the global maritime commons over the next decade."<sup>4</sup>

Prior to this, the Navy's maritime strategy was evolving. From at least the 1970's through Operation Desert Storm, Navy strategic culture centered around the open-ocean, fleet on fleet engagement with the Soviet Navy, as articulated in the 1986 *Maritime Strategy*<sup>5</sup>. The Navy began to shift this focus to littoral operations and jointness with the publishing of *...From The Sea* in 1992 and *Forward...From The Sea* in 1995.<sup>6</sup> *Sea Power 21* sought to continue this shift in the Navy's focus "...to a broadened strategy in which naval forces are fully integrated into global joint operations against regional and transnational dangers."<sup>7</sup>

All of these documents were strategic in nature, but focused on naval operations, that is, operations using the Navy and Marine Corps. Their primary purpose was to shape strategic culture to prepare Sailors, Marines, and the Officers who lead them for future challenges. As essentially service strategies, they did not seek to address the

broader application of diplomatic, informational, and economic impacts of sea-based national power.

Service strategy, sometimes referred to as a strategic concept, attempts to communicate how a service supports national policy, thereby justifying the nation's investment in that particular service.<sup>8</sup> The stated purpose of the new seapower strategy is to accomplish this for all three sea services. If successful, it will communicate to the United States public why they should invest their taxpayer dollars in a Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Thus, there is a twofold purpose for the development of *A Cooperative Strategy*: first, that the nation could understand the value of her sea services; second, to shape the sea services to deliver that value.

While in-depth discussions of *Sea Power 21*, *Naval Operating Concept*, and the *Navy Strategic Plan* are beyond the scope of this paper, the discussion does warrant a brief overview of the relationships among them and with the new strategy, as well as a brief description of their links to national strategic objectives derived from the *National Security Strategy*, *National Defense Strategy*, *National Military Strategy*, and *National Strategy for Maritime Security*.

*Sea Power 21* sought to introduce the Navy to "...a broadened strategy in which naval forces are fully integrated into global joint operations against regional and transnational dangers."<sup>9</sup> The document describes a Global [Naval] Concept of Operations, supported by three fundamental concepts: Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing. These three concepts interoperate through a unifying force architectural

concept: “ForceNet.” Three organizational processes enable those four concepts: Sea Trial, Sea Warrior, and Sea Enterprise<sup>10</sup>.

In the Global Concept of Operations, the Navy supports the joint force through combat power that is widely dispersed as independent operational groups, capable of responding rapidly in order to deter, dissuade, or defeat adversaries. Sea Strike is the ability to project offensive power, Sea Shield is the ability to project defensive power – essentially extending self-defense shore-ward from the sea – and Sea Basing is the ability to support joint force independence of operation through sea-based logistics. One may trace the ideas in *Sea Power 21*, particularly power projection and sea control, to the legacy of Alfred Thayer Mahan.<sup>11</sup> Sea Strike, Sea Shield, and Sea Basing transcend the ideas of combat power, self defense and fleet logistics, extending them beyond the fleet shoreward to augment the joint force, defend allies and support joint logistics. “ForceNet” is an ongoing effort to “align and integrate systems, functions, and missions.” Sea Trial, Sea Warrior, and Sea Enterprise are organizational processes through which the Navy will conduct experimentation, personnel development, and resourcing, respectively.

*Sea Power 21* primarily seeks to describe Fleet capabilities and how the Navy will organize to provide them. The document does not explicitly articulate national strategic objectives which it supports, instead referring to deterrence, crisis response and “fighting and winning our nation’s wars.” Worded slightly differently, these correspond to objectives in the *National Defense Strategy* and *National Military Strategy*. While these support the objectives of the national strategies, the document

does not make a case seapower's unique contribution to them. Thus, while *Sea Power 21* defined itself as naval strategy, it did not answer the question "why seapower?"

Neither did the *Naval Operations Concept*. In this document, the Navy and Marine Corps seek to articulate "...a unified vision for the future," describe "how, when and where the Navy and Marine Corps will contribute to the national defense and maritime security strategies" and support "...evolving our maritime strategy."<sup>12</sup> The document explicitly lists the four specific objectives listed in the *National Defense Strategy*, as well as the three "guiding principles" listed in the *National Strategy for Maritime Security*.<sup>13</sup> As a supporting document, the *Naval Operations Concept* contributes to the discussion on seapower strategy by providing an overarching operational conceptual construct (see Figure 1) that relates strategic missions, naval missions, guiding naval principles, methods and strategic objectives / outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Unsuspecting Army or Air Force readers might infer that the *Naval Operations Concept* constitutes naval doctrine – possibly not realizing the depth of the sea services' cultural abhorrence of the term<sup>15</sup>. Instead, the *Naval Operations Concept* "...provides our 'Commanders' Intent' to guide the considerable creativity and judgment of our Sailors and Marines in applying a set of principles and methods within the framework provided by *Sea Power 21* and *The 21st Century Marine Corps*."<sup>16</sup> While important, the *Naval Operations Concept* does not fulfill the role of strategy as described earlier: it helps to answer "what" and "how" but does not answer the "why" for seapower or for those who invest in it.

## ***Naval Operations Concept Construct***

<b>Commander's Guidance: Leverage Historic Interdependence, Assess/Consult, Open Discussion/Debate With a Common Goal</b>					
Strategic Missions	Naval Missions	Guiding Naval Principles	Methods	Strategic Objectives/Outcomes	
Homeland Defense (HLD)  War on Terror (WOT)/ Irregular Warfare (IW)  Conventional Campaigns  Deterrence  Shaping and Stability Operations (SSO)	Forward Naval Presence  Crisis Response  Expeditionary Power Projection  Maritime Security Operations  Sea Control  Deterrence  Security Cooperation  Civil-Military Operations  Counterinsurgency  Counterterrorism  Counter-proliferation  Air and Missile Defense  Information Operations	Agility  Coordinated Global Influence  Deployability and Employability  Interoperability  Persistent Presence  Adaptive Force Packaging  Precision  Speed  Unpredictability for Our Adversaries and Reliability for Our Friends	Globally Networked Operations  Distributed Operations  Adaptive Force Packaging: Right Force, Right Time, Right Place  Aggregate, Disaggregate, Re-aggregate  Cross Fleet Standardization  Task Focused Training  Cultural Awareness  Sea Basing  Building Partner Capacity	Help Win the Nation's Wars  Establish Favorable Security Conditions  Secure Strategic Access & Retain Global Freedom of Action  Strengthen Alliances and Partnerships  Secure US from Attack	
	<b>Foundations of NOC: Leadership and Professionalism, Mission Type Orders, Global Awareness (Maritime Domain Awareness and Beyond), and Interdependence</b>				

Figure 1

In contrast, the CNO publishes the *Navy Strategic Plan* to provide guidance to those who shape the Navy's budget submission; the current version informed the development of the Fiscal Year 2008 Program Objective Memorandum (POM 2008; covers fiscal years 2008-2013) and the next edition will support POM 2012.<sup>17</sup> This document exists to ensure the Navy resources appropriate priorities to support the CNO's strategic vision. In the "ways, means, and ends" construct, the *Navy Strategic Plan* guides the development of resources which will become the basis for the "means." The *Navy Strategic Plan* assigns Navy Staff Directorates to specific concepts within *Sea Power 21*<sup>18</sup>, provides guidance on concepts like joint interdependence,<sup>19</sup> and articulates CNO focus areas corresponding to recommendations in the Quadrennial Defense Review<sup>20</sup>. Within the Navy, leadership bins capabilities development into the *Sea Power*

21 areas, supporting decisionmaking about where to allocated resources. For example, the *Navy Strategic Plan* assigns N88 (Director, Air Warfare), as the “pillar-head”<sup>21</sup> responsible for Sea Strike. Other than an emphasis on transformation, the document does not refer to the national strategic objectives.

Clearly, *Sea Power 21*, *Naval Operations Concept*, and *Navy Strategic Plan* contain important strategic elements – components of strategy – but do not meet the full need for a strategy that communicates the rationale for a significant investment. This is the gap which the new strategy document needed to fill: the intellectual underpinning required to answer the “why” of seapower.

The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard drafted *A Cooperative Strategy* to answer this question. The document invokes both the geographical-strategic environment and national interests to make this case.

The geographical-strategic environmental argument centers on global interconnectedness and the centrality of the sea to trade, resource exploitation, human habitation, migration, and international security<sup>22</sup>. The document emphasizes globalization’s threats and opportunities as the predominate features of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. Further, the strategy postulates that the sea is the lifeblood of the global system.

*A Cooperative Strategy* invokes the nation’s interests, linking them to this global system through a statement made in the opening paragraph of the introduction: “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.”<sup>23</sup> The strategy does not explicitly list any other national strategic objectives, however, it does state that seapower supports the objectives of the National Security Strategy,

National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy, and National Strategy for Maritime Security, and “additionally... to build confidence and trust among nations...”<sup>24</sup> To articulate how seapower contributes to national strategic objectives, *A Cooperative Strategy* lists six strategic imperatives, or tasks which the nation expects seapower to accomplish.

These six strategic imperatives comprise the “Maritime Strategic Concept.” The imperatives, or seapower tasks, fall into two broad categories with three tasks each. The first category is comprised of regionally concentrated, credible combat power. This concentration of combat power will limit regional conflict with forward deployed, decisive maritime power; deter major power war; and win our Nation’s wars (as part of a joint or combined force). The second category is comprised of globally distributed mission-tailored maritime forces. The distributed force will contribute to homeland defense in depth; foster and sustain cooperative relationships with more international partners; and prevent or contain local disruptions before they impact the global system.<sup>25</sup>

These strategic imperatives build on the ideas in *Sea Power 21* and *Naval Operations Concept*. If the reader will agree that “strategy describes the way in which the available *means* will be employed to achieve the *ends* of policy,”<sup>26</sup> then these strategic imperatives describe the ways, means, and ends of seapower. Placing the six strategic imperatives into that structure: *A Cooperative Strategy* describes two ways (regional concentration and global distribution) in which the available *means* (combat power, maritime forces) will achieve the *ends* (regional conflicts limited, major power war deterred, the Nation’s wars won, homeland defended, relationships with international partners fostered and sustained, and local disruptions to the global system

prevented or contained). The strategy seeks to articulate the return on investment in seapower by highlighting flexibility: as an inherently mobile force, seapower can be regionally concentrated or globally distributed as needed.

*A Cooperative Strategy* makes the case that seapower's flexibility across the spectrum of war<sup>27</sup> provides unique utility in pursuit of the nation's grand strategic objective (peaceful global system). Further, given the strategic environment (globalization's dependence on the sea), seapower is critical in that pursuit. Thus, *A Cooperative Strategy's* reason for existence is to make this logical argument and answer the question "Why seapower?"

#### What is the influence of Mahan on *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower?*

This logical argument is rooted in history. The economic historian Niall Ferguson has persuasively argued that the world has experienced a period of globalization between 1870 and the beginning of World War I that closely parallels today's world-wide economic situation<sup>28</sup> – implying peril as well as opportunity. "Globalization" would have been an unfamiliar term to Alfred Thayer Mahan; however, his work linked the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic effects of seapower, highlighting grand strategy's reliance on the sea. *A Cooperative Strategy* attempts to replicate his success by returning to a more holistic approach toward seapower.

That is not to say that Mahan would have found the world of today recognizable – many have argued that the very nature of the world is different than it was in 1890.<sup>29</sup> Some have argued that Mahan is no longer applicable because control of the sea is undisputed.<sup>30</sup> Certainly, Mahan's tactical ideas are clearly not directly translatable to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The strategic environment was different as well. Mahan's America had not

yet gained position as a superpower; we enjoy that position alone. Thus, his vision for naval strategy had a clear goal – the ability to wrest control of the seas from adversary states around the globe. Regardless of the perceived increase in uncertainty and complexity, Mahan’s central theme, that seapower can influence events ashore, remains evident in *A Cooperative Strategy*. Specifically, his intellectual genetic imprint reveals itself in the grand strategic scope of the new strategy.

Mahan argued that seapower was both an objective and a means for national policy, or grand strategy<sup>31</sup>. Arguably, one of the impacts of his work is the elevation of seapower to a position “...not as a policy in itself, but as a basis for policy.”<sup>32</sup> *A Cooperative Strategy* suggests an objective – fostering a peaceful global system – and further makes the case that this objective depends on seapower. Clearly, this objective requires all the elements of national power to work toward its accomplishment, and therefore meets the criteria of a grand strategic<sup>33</sup>, versus military strategic objective. Though carefully avoiding some of the more imperial implications of Mahan’s strategy, the authors of *A Cooperative Strategy* have similarly transcended military strategy, proposing that seapower can provide a platform from which to launch national policy. This is a way of thinking about seapower – a strategic culture that looks for grand strategic implications – that has been passed down to the sea services from what some consider to be the “high priest” of naval religion.

This grand strategic implication of seapower relates closely to the nation’s geographical position, with ocean on either side. Far from being a barrier, *A Cooperative Strategy* contends, the sea forms a connective tissue between both nations and non-state actors; innocent and nefarious alike. Students of Mahan will recognize

the core geographical-strategic argument made by the strategy. Mahan may have been one of the first strategic thinkers to describe the sea as a “wide common,”<sup>34</sup> creating an enduring way of thinking that not only persists through today, now transcending the sea to the domains of aerospace and cyberspace.

The maritime strategic concept, discussed earlier, reveals the impact of Mahan’s strategic thought. *A Cooperative Strategy* groups the first three strategic under the heading, “Regionally Concentrated, Credible Combat Power.”<sup>35</sup> The concept reflects Mahan’s injunction that the fleet remain concentrated in order to maintain control of the sea<sup>36</sup>. Further, of the six expanded core capabilities proposed by the new strategy, four come directly from the body of strategic thought which Mahan founded: Forward presence, deterrence, sea control and power projection. These capabilities bear close resemblance to earlier naval and maritime strategies. However, in true sea service officer fashion (recall the abhorrence of doctrine) the strategy deviates from Mahan’s course when appropriate, reflecting his grand strategic scope, but benefitting from the work of others.

The most significant of these course modifications is in the concept that the United States, with its partners, can “foster a peaceful global system,” and that to do so is in her best interests. This assertion more closely correlates to Thomas Barnett’s idea that there is a positive grand strategic outcome possible if we focus the national elements of power appropriately.<sup>37</sup> The last three strategic imperatives more closely align with Barnett’s concept of a “system administrator.”<sup>38</sup> The last two of the six expanded capabilities likewise run counter to a strict interpretation of Mahan: Maritime security, which he probably would have considered an extension of sea control versus

a law enforcement function; and humanitarian assistance and disaster response, a mission which does not seem to have occurred to him, at least as a core capability.

The purist could consider these course modifications violations of Mahan's strategic precepts. While this paper will avoid further academic argument on that topic, the reader should note an interesting point considering the recent elevation of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to a core capability. The "Great White Fleet," which many consider the first manifestation of the United States' implementation of Mahan's ideas, conducted, in today's terminology, a humanitarian assistance and disaster response mission<sup>39</sup> during its homeward journey. Perhaps Mahan did not write about this capability as core because the unwritten (until recent years) law of the sea commands sailors to render assistance to fellow sailors in distress. In short, Mahan's strategic way of thinking underwrites even those concepts that do not seem to align with his original works.

Thus, the new seapower strategy has inherited Mahan's legacy by making the case that seapower, in peace as well as war<sup>40</sup>, is a uniquely useful element of national power. Certainly, other strategic thinkers influenced the creation of this strategy, and it reflects lessons learned since his time. However, although tactics, technology, and the strategic landscape have all changed, grand strategic thinking and the relationship between seapower and the other elements of national power form a way of thinking that has survived the test of time. Mahan explored this relationship to help shape the Navy of his future and to ensure that the United States understood the compelling reason to invest in seapower, and *A Cooperative Strategy* shows his influence.

## The influence of the new seapower strategy upon the sea services

If the new seapower strategy is to be as successful as Mahan, it will need to communicate these concepts. The United States' public will need to understand the ends, agree with the ways, and desire to provide resources to generate the means. Additionally, the institutions that make-up sea services will need to internalize the new strategy. To assess the likely influence of the new strategy, this paper will examine some of the core messages it communicates and explore some of the challenges to implementation, focusing on the Navy.

The grand strategic context is perhaps the most essential of these core messages. As Mahan sought to do for seapower in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the new strategy seeks to elevate seapower in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to a position close to the center of national policy, if not grand strategy. *A Cooperative Strategy* concludes with the statement: "United States seapower is a force for good, protecting this Nation's vital interests even as it joins with others to promote security and prosperity across the globe."<sup>41</sup> There are at least three target audiences for this statement, and probably more.

Clearly, one of these audiences is the United States public. Seapower requires significant investment to develop, procure, and maintain. *A Cooperative Strategy* describes a lucrative return on this investment: seapower's flexibility in supporting national power, hard or soft, peacetime or war. If the strategy successfully makes this case, then the sea services will remain increasingly relevant should the Secretary of Defense's<sup>42</sup> recent call for an increase in funding for non-military elements of national power mark an increased commitment by United States Government to soft power to support the peaceful global system.

The media has picked up on this message and hailed the new strategy as a shift toward emphasizing the “soft power” attributes of the U.S. sea services.<sup>43</sup> Whether this trend continues or not, the potential for influence lies in the message that the Navy has a higher purpose: in the words of the strategy, “...preventing wars is as important as winning wars.”<sup>44</sup> In one sense, the communication of this message reassures the public that their investment supports peace, but should war break out their Navy will be ready to protect them. The desired influence upon seapower is continued support for both funding and manpower.

Next, the document seeks to reach an international audience. Globalization is the underpinning ideal throughout the document. Where the National Security Strategy uses the term “democracy” in various forms over one hundred times<sup>45</sup>, *A Cooperative Strategy* does not use the term at all. The idea of cooperatively (even the title seems intended to reassure potential international partners) fostering a peaceful global system could appeal to some countries where a strategy that could be perceived as focused on ideology may be seen as a threat. Here the intent seems to be to garner wide support for *Global Maritime Partnership*, and more generally, remind the world’s seapower that in an era of globalization nations share common objectives.

Shared common objectives are important because of the resource constraints. Strong seapower requires more than United States assets. According to *A Cooperative Strategy*, the *Global Maritime Partnership* will increase the level of international and interagency cooperation.<sup>46</sup> This concept involves cooperatively policing the world’s seas, versus solely depending on United States Navy or Coast Guard forces, an idea which may trace its lineage as far back as President Roosevelt’s intent with the Great

White Fleet.<sup>47</sup> This in turn drives another of the three implementation priorities, “Improve Integration and Interoperability.”<sup>48</sup> The capability to communicate with international partners when needed, but also be able to secure communications when needed will drive solutions across the domains of doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, and facilities. Radios may be the easy part, cultural and language diversity significantly more challenging. A future seapower historian may measure the influence of the new seapower strategy by the degree to which the Navy actively integrates with the naval forces of other nations.

Integration with naval forces of other countries is taking place, suggesting that the Navy is already implementing aspects of *A Cooperative Strategy*. As an example, African media reported that three United States Navy officers helped install ship tracking equipment (automatic identification system, a maritime capability similar in operation to an aircraft transponder) that would help Gambia “better control their maritime territory.”<sup>49</sup> Through systematic engagement with the sea services of African nations, United States Sixth Fleet has been able to more effectively track shipping in its area of operation, without requiring ships dedicated to that particular mission.<sup>50</sup>

The third audience is the institution of the Navy itself. Many authors have described the Navy as a large corporation with its own culture. Hundreds of years of experience and bloodshed, as well as the academic work of strategists like Mahan, have resulted in ways of thinking, traditions, and assumptions that will not change easily. Even this paper, written by a Naval Officer, provides evidence of sea service cultural momentum in its reference to Mahan. For this reason, *A Cooperative Strategy* appeals to the sea service officer’s culture to make its case for change – and thus

influence that culture in a way that supports grand strategy. The appeal cuts across the range of personnel, from those not yet recruited to those in leadership positions.

The humanitarian assistance-themed Navy recruiting message “If you want to make a difference in your world, spend some time in ours,”<sup>51</sup> aired about a year prior to the release of the new strategy. Although it precedes the publication of the strategy, the marketing campaign aligns with the increased emphasis on the soft power aspects of seapower strategy – specifically, addition of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as a core capability. More generally, the strategy calls out as an implementation priority the need to “Prepare Our People.” This priority encompasses traits, some of which Mahan would have recognized as necessary for sailors aboard the Great White Fleet: trustworthy junior officers with local command responsibility, junior personnel with the ability to interact with international partners and indigenous populations and leaders that can understand and work with the interagency<sup>52</sup>. *A Cooperative Strategy*, if the Navy implements it successfully, will have a significant influence on the sailor of the future.

While the grand strategic message targets many audiences, the geographical-strategic concept described by the new sea strategy seeks to remind the United States citizen that our national interests are dependent upon that global commons remaining a friendly place for the innocent, and a hostile place for the nefarious. The sailor of the future will cruise into the global commons of the sea. The International commerce assumes freedom of transportation across the world’s oceans.<sup>53</sup> In Mahan’s day, fishing and bulk cargo transport may have been the commercial property transported, today; the global economy adds many other critical dependencies, including reliance on undersea cables that transport broadband information<sup>54</sup>. The global economy is

increasingly dependent on maritime security; and our economy on the global economy. This interdependence can create a soft power version of Cold War deterrence: “mutually assured dependence.”<sup>55</sup> Without strong seapower the global commons is at risk.

However well *A Cooperative Strategy* communicates its core message, it will remain nothing more than a document unless the Navy implements the concepts the strategy’s rhetoric describes. Implementation will encounter challenges across the domains of doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, personnel, and facilities. This paper cannot hope to cover all of the challenges, but highlighting some general challenges in the areas of doctrine, material, and training will serve to illustrate the challenges ahead.

Recall that Navy service culture tends to reject doctrine, instead focusing on the Commander’s initiative, creativity, and latitude to adapt to changing conditions remote from central authority. As discussed earlier, the new strategy’s “Prepare Our People” implementation strategy reflects this emphasis on making decisions at the most junior level possible. In that sense, the new strategy aligns well with service culture. However, there are articles of faith within the service that pose a significant challenge to successful implementation of the new strategy. These articles of faith if followed too religiously could blind the Navy to unintended consequences. As an example, the Navy holds dear the belief that the Great White Fleet served as a deterrent to Japan, but there are some contrary arguments that its presence in the Western Pacific increased the influence of Japanese militaristic elements.<sup>56</sup> Although historians will continue to debate that particular issue, the Navy should bear in mind the potential for military

presence in support of soft power to backfire. This is not a call for Navy doctrine, but the absence of clear guidance in a new mission area and well thought out means of assessing the effects of naval presence on the local population could pose challenges to implementing *A Cooperative Strategy*.

The new seapower strategy has spawned discussions about material solutions to implementation ranging from: An international, interagency cooperative “Great White Fleet” formed to meet the challenges posed by the elevation of humanitarian assistance and disaster response to a core seapower mission,<sup>57</sup> to whether the Navy should shift acquisition focus to corvette-sized warships to more effectively and affordably provide global presence.<sup>58</sup> These discussions about material and organizational changes to address the new strategy are valuable, and Mahan would have participated vigorously. However, the real significance in the ongoing debate is the potential mismatch between ways and means that could come with a new strategy. Congress has already raised suspicions that the services’ budget submissions reflect old cold-war postures instead of current national strategy requirements.<sup>59</sup>

To properly implement the new strategy, the Navy will need to answer this suspicion, and not just to Congress’ satisfaction. The discussions within the Navy indicate that Navy personnel “get” the new strategy and want to see it implemented. However, assessing, and if necessary, changing programmatic course to pursue appropriate material solutions may represent a great challenge to the implementation of the new strategy. The Navy is accustomed to assessing hard power capabilities, but support to soft power is a new and unfamiliar problem.<sup>60</sup>

Lastly, the Navy's lack of interagency training and assignment experience may challenge the implementation of the new strategy's increased emphasis on interagency cooperation. The three strategic imperatives listed under globally distributed, mission-tailored forces all require close coordination with interagency, foreign, and non-government entities. These missions are close to the concept of "Department of Everything Else"<sup>61</sup> tasks that some have proposed. Commanders ignorant of State Department efforts in a region could operate at cross purposes with their civilian counterparts, thus negating any positive effects toward achieving a peaceful global system. The strategy acknowledges that we will need an increase in emphasis on joint, interagency, and international training.<sup>62</sup>

### Recommendations

Given the severe implications to national security of the collapse of globalization that occurred in previous periods in history, and the dependence of globalization on a secure and accessible sea, the nation cannot afford to guide its seapower with incorrect strategy. Seapower strategy must be intellectually consistent and perhaps more importantly, fully implemented. *A Cooperative Strategy* is sound, rooted both in history and in the sea services' strategic cultures. Moreover, the strategy acknowledges the need to evolve over time. However, significant changes engender significant challenges, and these the sea services need to overcome if they are to rise to the occasion. The author bases the following recommendations on the challenges discussed in the previous section.

First, the Navy should use the extensive coordination behind the current strategy as a foundation for further integration with other elements of national power. The sea

services should recognize that they are still primarily military in nature, and that military force carries with it specific implications for the nations they work with. A carrier strike group port visit is not the same as an international development program in that country. Military competition may result from military efforts to spark cooperation. These potential truths should not deter the sea services from pursuing this strategy, but rather serve as cautionary notes – a check to the sea services’ justifiable arrogance. The message is a great one – all agencies of the United States Government are working toward a common goal. The sea services should work closely with the Department of State, through appropriate Department of Defense channels, to develop long term desired effects that complement national efforts.

Secondly, the Navy should use the expanded capabilities, in the context of the strategic imperatives, as cross checks on the Navy program. The Navy should evaluate its programs of record or their support to the new strategy, and the discussion should be as transparent as possible within the Navy.

Thirdly, the Navy should implement an interagency training program, including cross assignments of personnel. Cultural barriers still exist between Navy personnel and those of other agencies, mostly due to lack of experience with each others’ organization. As an example, the Navy’s original moniker for the *Global Maritime Partnership* was “1,000 Ship Navy.” Department of State personnel perceived the latter term as exclusionary, because it used the term “Navy,” but the Navy was not aware of this objection for some time. This example of a barrier to communication could be resolved through the improved awareness resulting from cross assignments. A *Cooperative Strategy’s* grand strategic objective could serve as the capstone for

interagency training for United States Naval personnel. Furthermore, the Navy, as a member of the joint force, should use *A Cooperative Strategy* as a springboard to advocate for an interagency – not just Navy or Army – “standing Adviser Corps.”<sup>63</sup>

These personnel would specialize in coordinating efforts across national, agency, and service lines to foster the peaceful global system described in the new seapower strategy.

### Conclusion

The nation depends on seapower to ensure the success of globalization. Today, Sea service personnel are augmenting forces ashore, ships and amphibious forces are in position off the Horn of Africa, naval units are engaging in partnership-building in West Africa, a destroyer is maneuvering off the coast of Lebanon, and Coast Guard assets are patrolling the approaches to United States ports. With so much at stake, the sea services owe the nation a clear and coherent explanation of how they will use the seapower provided to advance her interests.

The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard created *A Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* to provide such an explanation, filling a gap in the sea services' strategic message. The strategy seeks to answer why the nation should invest significant resources in seapower. The answer lies in the grand strategic goals that the sea services have come to believe will best serve the Nation's interests. *A Cooperative Strategy* thus represents a continuation of strategic thought, relating seapower to grand strategy that began with Alfred Thayer Mahan. The strategy that resulted may in-turn have a profound influence on seapower, if the Navy can identify and overcome the challenges.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power on History 1660-1783*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company: 1918), 22.

<sup>2</sup> John B. Hattendorf, "The Evolution of the U.S. Navy's Maritime Strategy, 1977–1986," *Naval War College Newport Papers* 19 (Newport, RI: 2004): 6.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Mullen, *Rhumb Lines* (Washington, D.C: Navy Office of Information, 12 September 2006)

<sup>4</sup> *Naval War College Maritime Strategy Project Page*, available from <http://www.nwc.navy.mil/cnws/marstrat/default.aspx>; Internet; accessed 4 February 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin S. Lambeth, "Air Force – Navy Integration in Strike Warfare," *Naval War College Review* Vol. 61, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 31-32

<sup>6</sup> *United States Navy: Sea Power 21*, available from <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/cno/proceedings.html>; Internet; accessed 04 March 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *United States Navy: Sea Power 21*, available from <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/cno/proceedings.html>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Mackubin Thomas Owens, "Strategy and the Strategic Way of Thinking," *Naval War College Review* Vol. 60, No. 4 (Autumn 2007): 117

<sup>9</sup> *United States Navy: Sea Power 21*, available from <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/cno/proceedings.html>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>10</sup> *United States Navy: Sea Power 21*, available from <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/cno/proceedings.html>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Black, "The Legacy of Mahan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," U.S. Army War College Strategic Research Paper (Carlisle, PA: 15 March 2006)

<sup>12</sup> Michael Mullen and Michael Hagee, *Naval Operations Concept*, (n.p., 2006), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Mullen and Michael Hagee, *Naval Operations Concept*, (n.p., 2006), 7.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Mullen and Michael Hagee, *Naval Operations Concept*, (n.p., 2006), 38.

<sup>15</sup> Navy officers, in particular, see doctrine as pre-set limits on the commander's ability to exercise the initiative necessary for combat in locations remote from centralized, near real-time command and control. However, as joint culture continues seeping into the service cultures, personnel across the services may come to recognize that doctrine can be a framework within which commanders can exercise creativity and initiative.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Mullen and Michael Hagee, *Naval Operations Concept*, (n.p., 2006), 2.

<sup>17</sup> Michael Mullen, *Navy Strategic Plan in Support of Program Objective Memorandum 2008*, (n.p., 2006), 4.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Mullen, *Navy Strategic Plan in Support of Program Objective Memorandum 2008*, (n.p., 2006), 10.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Mullen, *Navy Strategic Plan in Support of Program Objective Memorandum 2008*, (n.p., 2006), 10.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Mullen, *Navy Strategic Plan in Support of Program Objective Memorandum 2008*, (n.p., 2006), 12.

<sup>21</sup> The term “pillar-head” will not be found in any official documentation to date, but refers to the assigned proponent within the Navy for the corresponding *Sea Power 21* “pillar” or concept.

<sup>22</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 2.

<sup>24</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 3.

<sup>25</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 7-10.

<sup>26</sup> Mackubin Thomas Owens, “Strategy and the Strategic Way of Thinking,” *Naval War College Review* Vol. 60, No. 4 (Autumn 2007): 111

<sup>27</sup> The Department of Defense, somewhat bellicosely, describes peace as the “Phase 0: Shaping” phase of conflict.

<sup>28</sup> Niall Ferguson, “Sinking Globalization,” *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2005 [Magazine online]; available from <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050301faessay84207-p10/niall-ferguson/sinking-globalization.html>; Internet, accessed 04 March 2008.

<sup>29</sup> J. C. Wylie, “Mahan: Then and Now”, in *The Influence of History on Mahan*, ed. John B. Hattendorf (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1991), 43.

<sup>30</sup> James Rushton, “Fill the Middle Gap: Rediscover the Corvette,” *Proceedings*, January 2008, 37.

<sup>31</sup> Many scholars have noted that Mahan’s ideas on seapower encompassed elements of national power well beyond military. One such is: G. K. Cunningham, “Landpower in Traditional Theory and Contemporary Application,” in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. J. Boone Bartholomees, Jr. (Carlisle, PA: 2006), 159

<sup>32</sup> J. C. Wylie, “Mahan: Then and Now”, in *The Influence of History on Mahan*, ed. John B. Hattendorf (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1991), 44.

<sup>33</sup> Mackubin Thomas Owens, “Strategy and the Strategic Way of Thinking,” *Naval War College Review* Vol. 60, No. 4 (Autumn 2007): 116

<sup>34</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power on History 1660-1783*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company: 1918), 25.

<sup>35</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 7.

<sup>36</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Lessons of the War With Spain* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1899), 258

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004), 25-26

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004), 302

<sup>39</sup> James R. Holmes, "A Striking Thing: Leadership, Strategic Communications, and Roosevelt's Great White Fleet" *Naval War College Review* Vol. 61, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 64

<sup>40</sup> J. C. Wylie, "Mahan: Then and Now", in *The Influence of History on Mahan*, ed. John B. Hattendorf (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1991), 42.

<sup>41</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 18.

<sup>42</sup> Robert M. Gates, "Remarks as Delivered by Secretary of Defense, Manhattan, Kansas, Monday, November 26, 2007" available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199>; Internet; accessed 27 February 2008.

<sup>43</sup> Gordon Lubold, "U.S. Navy Aims to Flex 'Soft Power'," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 27 December 2007 [newspaper on-line]; available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/1227/p02s01-usgn.html?page=1>; Internet; accessed 13 February 2008.

<sup>44</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 2.

<sup>45</sup> George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, March 2006).

<sup>46</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 14.

<sup>47</sup> James R. Holmes, "A Striking Thing: Leadership, Strategic Communications, and Roosevelt's Great White Fleet" *Naval War College Review* Vol. 61, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 58

<sup>48</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 13.

<sup>49</sup> "U.S. Maritime Security And Safety Information System Cooperation," *FOROYAA Newspaper* (Serrekunda), 11 February 2008, [newspaper on-line]; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200802111533.html>, accessed 27 February 2008

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Barnett, "No. 40: Sea-Traffic Control," *Esquire*, 18 September 2007 [Magazine on-line]; available from <http://www.esquire.com/features/esquire-100/seatraffic1007>, accessed 27 February 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Dale Eisman, "The Sailor's Pitch: Join the Navy and Assist the World," *The Virginian-Pilot*, 24 February 2008, sec. A, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 15.

<sup>53</sup> J. C. Wylie, "Mahan: Then and Now", in *The Influence of History on Mahan*, ed. John B. Hattendorf (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1991), 40.

<sup>54</sup> In February of 2008, ships anchoring to take refuge from weather inadvertently cut two undersea cables in the Mediterranean. Internet service in India slowed to a crawl which forced U.S.-based industries to scramble to find alternate ways to resource their customer support hotlines. The effect of the cut cables, which pass through a narrow geographic area, spread nearly instantly, although in this case providers were able to re-route service through redundant cables. Mark Sappenfield, "Cut Undersea Internet Cables Slow India's Connectivity," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 4 February 2008 [newspaper on-line]; available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0204/p04s01-wosc.html>; Internet; accessed 05 February 2008.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004), 122

<sup>56</sup> James R. Holmes, "A Striking Thing: Leadership, Strategic Communications, and Roosevelt's Great White Fleet" *Naval War College Review* Vol. 61, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 61

<sup>57</sup> David K. Richardson, Lane V. Packwood, Daniel E. Aldana, "A Great White Fleet for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Proceedings*, January 2008, 26-30.

<sup>58</sup> James Rushton, "Fill the Middle Gap: Rediscover the Corvette," *Proceedings*, January 2008, 36-39.

<sup>59</sup> Gordon Lubold, "Congress: Why should each military branch get same budget?" *The Christian Science Monitor*, 26 February 2008 [newspaper on-line]; available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0226/p03s03-usmi.html>; Internet; accessed 02 March 2008.

<sup>60</sup> In the author's experience at the Pentagon on the staff of Chief of Naval Operations, Director, Air Warfare (CNO N88), the Navy is prolific, if not proficient, at measuring capability to perform hard power missions, but no metrics exist for soft power missions.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004), 43

<sup>62</sup> James T. Conway, Gary Roughead, Thad W. Allen, *A Cooperative Strategy For 21st Century Seapower*, (n.p., 2008), 17.

<sup>63</sup> Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl has recommended that the United States Army create this capability with the United States Army. See John A. Nagl, "We Can't Win These Wars on Our Own," *The Washington Post*, 09 March 2008, Sec. B, p. 4.