

THE U.S. MARITIME STRATEGY'S NEW THINKING REVIEWING THE
"COOPERATIVE STRATEGY FOR 21ST CENTURY SEAPOWER"

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On 17 October 2007, the new maritime strategy, jointly drafted by the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, was formally introduced at the United States Naval War College in Rhode Island. The U.S. Department of Defense website published the full text simultaneously. This important strategic report is titled "21st Century Sea Power Cooperation Strategy" [A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower]. This is the first time in history that the three joint forces have formulated a unified maritime strategy. This strategy report represents the first major revision of U.S. maritime strategy in over twenty years. The 1986 U.S. maritime strategy was developed in the latter part of the Cold War, and was a strategy of "war at the core," for the purpose of establishing maritime hegemony for the global fight against the Soviet navy. Obviously, with the breakup of the Soviet Union and the decline of the Soviet navy, the "1986 Edition" of the U.S. maritime strategy has become obsolete. U.S. Navy theoretical circles were faced with the new situation of international antiterrorism and the rapid rise of emerging countries and the formation of an international multipolar world, in the face of various kinds of traditional security and nontraditional security threats after the "9/11" incident, the war in Afghanistan, and the war in Iraq. After more than two years of debate and discussion, the new maritime strategy was introduced under the great banner of "cooperation."

The report contains a total of sixteen pages, divided into five parts: Introduction, Challenges of a New Era, Maritime Strategic Principles, Implementing the Strategy, and Conclusion. In the introduction, the new strategy puts forward its central viewpoint: that coordination and cooperation must be strengthened among the maritime forces of each military service and each domestic department, [as well as among] all international allies. Mutual confidence and trust must [likewise] be fostered to [further common interests in] answer[ing] common threats. For a prosperous future, sea power must be a unified force. Another important point is that preventing wars and winning wars are equally important. The new strategy holds that naval forces should be committed to decisively win the war, but at the same time it is also necessary to enhance the capacity to prevent war [from occurring]. The report emphasizes that

preventing war has been elevated to the same [level of] importance as winning war. This is a major bright spot of the strategy.

In the section on Challenges of a New Era, the new strategy systematically analyzes each potential threat facing the United States, including the continuous growth of transnational actors, and the proliferation of weapons technology and information, [as well as of] natural disasters, etc. The new strategy believes that the future is full of uncertainties, particularly [with] the vast majority of the world's population living in areas within several hundred kilometers of the ocean, which requires a whole new way of thinking about the role of sea power. It stressed that no country alone has adequate resources to ensure the security of the entire maritime area. The strategy therefore calls upon each nation's government, nongovernmental organizations, international organizations, and the private sector to develop partnerships [based on] common interests to deal with the new threats constantly emerging.

In its section on Maritime Strategic Principles, the new strategy puts forward [the following]: In order to fulfill the United States' commitments to the security and stability of its allies, U.S. maritime forces will be concentrated and forward deployed in order to restrict the area of conflict, [and thereby] prevent large-scale war. In the future, U.S. maritime forces will focus on areas in which there is tension or in which the United States is required to fulfill commitments to its allies. The United States will continue to deploy powerful combat forces in the western Pacific, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean in order to protect the interests of the United States and its allies and contain potential competitors. But in the new environment, the United States is facing a variety of threats around the world; it should therefore make full use of the expeditionary and multirole uses of maritime power and globally distribute forces in a task-oriented manner in order to defend the homeland and U.S. citizens and promote U.S. national interests around the world. The report consequently puts forward six strategic missions at the regional and global level: make use of forward deployment, limit regional conflict with decisive maritime power, prevent war between great powers, win wars, expand the degree of depth for national homeland defense, and develop and preserve a cooperative system with even more allies; it is necessary to prevent and contain the damage and instability in some areas to prevent endangering the stability of the global system.

The section on the Implementation of the Strategy puts forward six major missions for maritime power, including forward deployment, deterrence, sea control, force delivery, maritime security and humanitarian assistance, etc. The new strategy calls for the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard to jointly expand their core capabilities of maritime power. In order to increase its operability, the new strategy explicitly requires that three aspects be regarded as the

highest priority missions for maritime power at present: enhancing integration and coordinated combat capability, maritime security awareness, and personnel preparation.

The conclusion stresses that this strategy is issued based on a comprehensive assessment of the nation's security requirements. It does not assume conflict, but also recognizes the historical reality that peace cannot be automatically maintained. It requires building a series of core competencies from a broad, long-range perspective, [and] proactively seizing opportunities to protect the vital interests of the United States. It recognizes that in this era of rapid changes [the United States] face[s] uncertain factors that give rise to challenges. It points out, moreover, the importance in the twenty-first century of U.S. naval forces working together with other countries to promote global security and prosperity while simultaneously defending the nation's vital national interests.

报告与美国海军界正在酝酿的所谓“千舰海军”的概念有异曲同工之处。
The [maritime strategy] and the so-called “Thousand Ship Navy” concept currently being deliberated within U.S. Navy circles are two sides of the same coin.

Overall, this report has the following characteristics: First, it prominently emphasizes maritime security cooperation. The report is entitled “[a] cooperative strategy,” and its content places a great deal of emphasis on “cooperation” at two different levels: domestically, coordination and cooperation among each maritime force and maritime affairs department; and globally, cooperation among sea allies and partners. Second, it is the first multiservice maritime strategic report. This is the first time that the U.S. sea services jointly issued a strategic report. The report makes concrete plans for the joint operations of the three maritime forces. Third, [the report] attaches importance to global maritime security and partnership. The report not only stresses cooperation with allies, but also advocates forming partnerships with other nations that possess common interests in maritime affairs. Fourth, new maritime opponents. While attaching importance to traditional state military opponents, it also attaches tremendous importance to threats from nonstate actors, and stresses that the latter cause a series of nontraditional security [threats], [which] will determine [useful areas for] the maritime security cooperation. Fifth, the strategic means of diversification. In maintaining maritime security means, the report stresses the combination of hard and soft power, and attaches importance to both the forward deployment of military forces and information gathering capacity building. It also emphasizes humanitarian assistance to establish a good international image. Sixth, prevent the outbreak of conflicts. Although the report adheres to the viewpoint of winning wars, what is worth noting is that it places a great deal of

emphasis on preventing the outbreak of conflict, and specially emphasizes using powerful force to deter war.

As can be seen from the report, in the face of the complex intertwining of current traditional threats and nontraditional threats in the international security situation, the United States seems to have felt to some extent that its ability is not equal to its ambition. It therefore needs to cooperate with its allies and other partner countries to jointly build a stable maritime security order. The report stressed that this maritime order will be beneficial to protecting the United States' own maritime interests, by working together with other countries to pro-

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[This] reflects the efforts of the U.S. Navy to establish a maritime partnership with China and integrate China within the maritime security order led by the United States.

mote global security and prosperity. For this reason, the report and the so-called “Thousand Ship Navy” concept currently being deliberated within U.S. Navy circles are two sides of the same coin.

On 5–6 December [2007], I attended an academic conference at the U.S. Naval War College, entitled “Defining a Maritime Security Partnership with China.” This is the first symposium on Sino-U.S. maritime security cooperation held by the U.S. Navy. Conference topics included: Sino-U.S. relations and common global maritime interests, maritime awareness, maritime legal issues and humanitarian operations, regional security challenges, and the future of Sino-U.S. maritime security cooperation. The conference revolved around in-depth discussion of these subjects; proposals for various ways for maritime security cooperation between the two countries were put forward, and prospects for cooperation were optimistically forecast. In fact, the atmosphere of the conference is consistent with the new strategic report recently published by the United States, and reflects the efforts of the U.S. Navy to establish a maritime partnership with China and integrate China within the maritime security order led by the United States.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

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