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JOINT LITTORAL WARFARE: OUR FUTURE

The Cold War is over, but the world is hardly a peaceful place. Although threats to our national interests may not be as dramatic as the Soviet Union once was, missions abound for our armed forces. The United States is the preeminent military power, but looming budget cuts could debilitate our armed forces, even while Desert Storm's memory is fresh in our minds. The leadership of the Naval Service—an inseparable marriage of the Navy and Marine Corps—is looking ahead to this uncertain future with optimism. By relying on "jointness" and advanced technology, we confidently expect to do more with less.

INTRODUCTION

With the end of the Cold War, the U.S. military has changed its focus from containing or combatting the Soviet empire to dealing with an often violent peace that is defining the new world order. In a historical perspective, the missions that we are presently encountering around the world or that we anticipate for the future are unique—missions that no one would have expected just a few years ago. The end of the Cold War has also allowed what budget constraints require, namely, a scaling back in the size of our military. The military budget is shrinking, and I expect that it will continue to do so. With fewer dollars to accomplish totally new missions, the challenge today is to redefine ourselves in ways that are not just evolutionary, but revolutionary; the military for which we are budgeting is not a smaller version of the Cold War model.

Because the Soviet Union no longer presents a threat to the interests or security of the United States, the U.S. Navy's analyses and plans for global war as expressed in *The Maritime Strategy*[1] have been discarded. The new focus of U.S. naval forces, presented in . . . *From the Sea, Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century,*[2] is to enable joint military force in littoral areas and regional conflict. The new focus represents a true unity of the Navy and Marine Corps using tailored forces for expeditionary operations. Gone are the days of planning and preparing for a global war to be fought by an independent naval force on blue water; our new focus is on naval operations in "the fog of the littoral"—close to coastlines with high shipping density, shallow water, and geographic constraints.

LITTORAL WARFARE: THE NEW MISSION

The Navy is not abandoning the open ocean; we are not becoming a coastal navy. The new political reality is that America's blue-water dominance is uncontested and is likely to remain so well into the next century. Therefore, our major issue is how to affect events ashore anywhere in the world at any time in the future. Affecting events ashore is the essence of naval littoral warfare and represents the most significant shift from *The Maritime Strategy*. At the outset, this strategy entails a true marriage of the Navy and Marine Corps, a team that is referred to indivisibly as the Naval Service.

Affecting events ashore requires that we seek control of an adversary's land. Rather than having powerful opposing fleets battling each other from over the horizon, the U.S. Naval Service seeks to penetrate and dominate the sea-land territory of an opponent, possibly as far from the coast as four to five hundred miles. The challenge is to be able to wage naval war close to the enemy's shoreline, a new and very difficult operating environment with great technological challenges.

The old strategy meant conducting combat over great expanses of ocean, a tradition begun over fifty years ago at the Battle of Coral Sea. In the previous five decades, our Navy mastered this type of warfare. The result has been sensor and weapon systems capable of engaging an enemy hundreds of miles away. Facing the future, we must be prepared to deal with a foe at ranges so close that the incoming weapons are at best only a few seconds away. In addition, the enemy may be shielded from our sophisticated sensors by anomalous propagation near the sea-to-land interface. A vigilant ship's crew has the technological means to detect and destroy an incoming Exocet missile launched sixty miles away across the sea, but now we must be prepared to stop a land-launched, low-observable missile detectable only moments before impact.

Throughout the Cold War years, we developed a host of new weapon and sensor systems based on wondrous technology that neutralized the threat of torpedo- or missile-carrying nuclear-powered submarines. We are prepared to keep these threats beyond the range where they can attack our battle groups or else destroy the submarines if they come near. But now we must deal with the real undersea threats of today's and tomorrow's likely foe: creeping diesel-electric submarines or primitive but nonetheless effective mines hidden within the littoral's murky water.

In naval warfare, there is a tendency to feel secure in an environment where the enemy is "way over there" and

everyone nearby is friendly. In the littoral, however, friend, foe, and neutral all occupy the same space. A launch-and-leave weapon equipped with sensors designed to attack the biggest target is ideal against an open-ocean enemy, but it is dangerously inappropriate for the crowded and grossly confused environs of the littoral.

JOINTNESS: AT LAST, THE NEW APPROACH

The cornerstone of the new military is jointness—operating as a single, integrated military service, rather than as four separate branches. The term was coined long ago but is just now gaining true significance. Under *The Maritime Strategy*, our naval forces would move close enough to the Soviet Union to contain the Soviet fleet and threaten mainland targets. This strategy would influence events ashore, but only indirectly: as the U.S. fleet waged the Battle of the Norwegian Sea to the north, we expected the Soviets to divert some of their energies from the crucial Central Front. That strategy required coordination of the military services, but increasingly, the concept that jointness means integration has permeated the Navy's thoughts from the budget to the battlefield.

The first and most fundamental step toward true jointness is the full integration of the Navy and Marine Corps into a single team. As the Navy masters the sea lines and provides seaborne logistics, the Marines will carry the battle ashore. The waters of the littoral will be made secure by the Navy, and Navy sensors, aircraft, and weapons will reach ashore to support the ground-based arm of the Naval Service.

Social and economic necessities have forced a reduction in the military's budget just at the time when the world's political climate is favorable to it. At the same time, however, the Navy needs to recapitalize. Naval aviation is in dire need of revamping its strike capability; greater sea lift and amphibious assault capabilities are needed; as the submarine force is downsized, preservation of the nation's nuclear industrial base is essential; the Marine Corps will receive the V-22 Osprey to fulfill its medium-lift troop insertion needs. Although these examples all address platforms, just as much activity is occurring in sensor and weapon systems development. As we downsize while recapitalizing, this critical juncture's challenge is to shape the Naval Service from hardware and software conducive to jointness.

Because littoral warfare focuses on events ashore, the battle lines of each military service blur. In a regional conflict, all of the services will occupy a single battlespace. Just as the Navy and Marine Corps must deal with the difficulties of the sea-to-land interface, the Army and Air Force will face the land-to-sea interface. The newest generation of naval sensors will need to provide an umbrella of surveillance that looks beyond the fleet, across the shore, to safeguard the Marine Corps, Army, and Air Force. Cooperative engagement systems will rely equally on the E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System, E-2 Hawkeye, and Aegis. Tactical data links must be so compatible as to provide the abundance of information that all the services need without costly and inefficient interfacing equipment. Weapon systems that provide naval fire support may be able to roll ashore to continue supporting our soldiers and Marines on the battlefield. Our Theater Ballistic Missile Defense System will provide revolutionary protection against Scud-type missile attacks. The next generation of Aegis technology will protect the littoral task force and possibly even complete regions.

As our Naval Service reduces the number of platforms and people, technology's promise is that our capability will not falter. The Naval Service we are building now will be an integral part of the joint military that provides capabilities as robust as the threat requires.

A painful reality of the present budget climate is the need for vertical cuts: the elimination of entire systems, platforms, or classes. For example, within the next few years, the Navy will eliminate the A-6 Intruder. As we meticulously evaluate the way every defense dollar is spent, we can maintain capability within the nation's arsenal by relying on jointness and technology while still vertically cutting particular programs.

THE ASSESSMENTS PROCESS: THE SIX JOINT MISSION AREAS

The Navy no longer screens its budget in terms of the traditional mission areas of antisubmarine warfare, antisurface warfare, antiair warfare, mine warfare, countermeasures, and so on. Instead, the Navy's budget and programming process is predicated on six assessment areas: (1) joint strike, (2) joint littoral warfare, (3) joint surveillance, (4) joint space and electronic warfare and intelligence, (5) strategic deterrence, and (6) strategic sea lift and its protection. Budget discussions within the Navy are couched exclusively in terms of these areas. Together, the mission areas act as a sieve through which the Navy budget is strained. If a program cannot be justified by one of the assessments, then it will not survive the process.

This new process is not just a surrogate for the same old bureaucracy; it is totally different. For example, the old "warfare barons" (the Assistant Chiefs of Naval Operations for Undersea, Surface, and Air Warfare) have been subsumed under a single organization that also includes a new warfare director of equal stature: the Director, Expeditionary Warfare Division, who is a Marine Corps major general. This person is the Chief of Naval Operations' representative for amphibious platforms, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's), mine warfare, and naval special operations forces. Another new and major contributor to the assessment process is the Director, Commander-in-Chief (CINC) Liaison Division. This flag officer's charter is to ensure that the warfighting requirements of the Navy's three specified CINC's (the Commanders-in-Chief of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Pacific Fleet, and U.S. Naval Forces in Europe) are accurately and completely represented in the assessment process.

The assessment process actively involves the highest levels of the Navy. At the Resources and Requirements Review Board, made up totally of flag officers, every program from those addressing bullets to capital ships is evaluated in fine detail until a consensus is reached. This consensus crosses warfare community lines, such that the submariners are in agreement with the Marines, and so

on, before a resolution emerges for the Chief of Naval Operations to approve. As a result, when the Navy is called to justify its budget, the submarine flag officer can defend the V-22 Osprey, just as the Marine general can argue on behalf of the Centurion attack submarine.

This discussion is not to say that the old warfare areas no longer have meaning. For example, antisubmarine warfare continues to play a very meaningful role. Within the joint mission area of expeditionary warfare, antisubmarine warfare has great significance: It would be difficult or impossible to land Marines ashore if diesel-electric submarines were repulsing the amphibious task force. Hence, within the expeditionary warfare assessment, the need for a particular type of antisubmarine warfare would be validated. The result of this new way of thinking is that each warfare area is not an end in itself; it is a means by which the Navy and Marine Corps team, as part of a truly joint armed force, will be able to conduct the required missions.

PROGRAMMING TO PREVENT HOLLOWING OF THE FORCE

Two decades ago, despite the dedication of the men and women in uniform, the U.S. military was hardly capable of fulfilling its myriad peacetime commitments or war missions. We are now fully committed to preventing any reduction in our readiness. The first test of our robust Navy and Marine Corps team is our ability to maintain a continuing overseas presence.

Worldwide overseas presence means maintaining a credible military capability in every region of the world before trouble occurs. The role of overseas presence in regard to our national interests and defense is similar to the role of preventive care in our nascent national health policy. International friendships and coalitions, political stability, deterrence against aggression, and trade access are immediate results of forward presence, providing dramatic benefits well beyond the direct investment. In much of the world, America is known only by our overseas presence. Maintaining a forward presence is the most effective use of our marginal defense dollar.

As we look to a downsized Navy of 320 to 350 ships and four hundred thousand uniformed people, some would say at the outset that we must scale back on our commitment to overseas presence. It is in regard to this point that technology will save us. Our smaller Navy will have the technological strength to be as effective as yesterday's 600-ship Navy. This assertion does not mean that we will equip every ship with twice as many guns or every plane with twice as many bombs, but that every platform will be finely tuned to deal efficiently with the threats of the littoral. For example, an Aegis cruiser is significantly more capable and manpower-efficient than the previous generation of cruisers; also, emerging UAV technology may give an amphibious-ready group the surveillance capability that previously required a carrier-based air wing. Perhaps of greatest importance is our use of the vast amount of information available along with greatly improved data management techniques. Command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (i.e., C4I) and the associated surveillance/data links have allowed quantum leaps in our capabilities. We must adapt our tactics and strategies to take advantage of these and the many other advances that promise to let us do so much more with less.

SAFEGUARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

Because of the enduring strength of our national will, we can expect that the United States will remain secure for as long as we can imagine. With that in mind, we must confront a challenge that until recently may have been of little or no concern to the military: the responsibility to protect and preserve the environment. An intact and fruitful environment is one legacy we must leave for future generations. Every aspect of ship, aircraft, weapon, and sensor design must consider the precious value of our natural resources. Achieving fuel efficiency, minimizing or even eliminating toxic wastes, disposing of plastics safely, and using environmentally compatible paints are just a few of the challenges for our best technical minds.

Every state in the Union now has strict environmental laws that are justifiably becoming more stringent. In these fiscally austere times, we cannot afford to devote a heavy portion of our budget to cleaning up after the fact or paying hefty fines. It is essential that every effort be made to build platforms and systems that meet regulations by design.

CONCLUSION

These are exciting times for the military. There is every reason to be optimistic as we face the white-water challenges defining our Naval Service of the next century. The Naval Service has already stepped beyond each of its warfare communities to seek new opportunities in technology, jointness, and environmental awareness. We are committed to littoral warfare as our new forte with the same conviction with which we mastered open-ocean warfare. The Naval Service we are now building will be unlike any we have known in the past and will be highlighted by tremendous capability and unprecedented flexibility—truly a *Force for America.*

REFERENCES

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[2] *...From the Sea, Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century*, Navy and Marine Corps White Paper (Sep 1992).

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