

2011

## Avoiding Trivia: The Role of Strategic Planning in American Foreign Policy

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### Recommended Citation

Mahnken, Thomas G. (2011) "Avoiding Trivia: The Role of Strategic Planning in American Foreign Policy," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 64 : No. 1 , Article 13.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol64/iss1/13>

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organizational adaptations. Especially useful are the four “context” tables, one for each decade starting with the 1970s, that list by year who was presiding as CNO, along with the relevant Navy capstone documents, the Navy’s “total [that is, financial] obligation authority,” total number of ships in the fleet, new ships arriving in the fleet, active personnel, and new capabilities introduced. Juxtaposed against the numerous organizational charts in the report, these context tables help in understanding how each CNO has reorganized, not only responding to the variety of exogenous forces but also to implement his own vision for the future of the Navy. By recounting in detail the reorganization that the current CNO, Admiral Gary Roughead, has made to the staff, readers can see for themselves the most consequential changes enacted and, by extension, the most consequential issues facing the Navy today, in Roughead’s view.

Swartz and Markowitz identify two major changes made by Admiral Roughead. First is the consolidation of the Intelligence (N2) and the Communications Networks (N6) directorates into a newly created Directorate for Information Dominance (N2/6), a move that underscores the critical importance of a holistic approach to communications and intelligence, including the emerging preeminence of cyber and electronic warfare. The future impact of this consolidation could be quite large, given the issues at stake.

Second, equally as revealing has been the morphing of the staff’s internal think tank, “Deep Blue,” into the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) cell to meet the challenges of the recent QDR, and finally into the Naval Warfare

Integration Group (00X), in late 2009. One function of 00X will be, acting as a “special assistants” group, to provide the CNO with direct assessments of Navy programs and systems. Plainly, this CNO sees a critical need to be armed with as much information and analysis as possible to address the tremendous budgetary pressures affecting the Navy, which pose a special challenge to the future health of the naval force, a challenge requiring particular attention and focus.

Where the study itself is admittedly thin is in its narratives—which might have been richer—of the colorful personalities, nuanced forces, and institutional rivalries that sculpted the shape of the OPNAV staff during a very dynamic period. Those wanting an Allisonian-like examination of the organizational, political, and personal dynamics shaping this change will have to wait for what Swartz and Markowitz recommend as next steps: an expansion of the study to personalities, relationships, and in-depth answers to the “why” question. Until then, scholars of U.S. Navy history and organizational studies can be content with this well researched, accurate, and informative report.

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Drezner, Daniel W., ed. *Avoiding Trivia: The Role of Strategic Planning in American Foreign Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2009. 230pp. \$24.95

Students of American national security policy, particularly those without the benefit of firsthand policy-making

experience, frequently under- or over-estimate the difficulty of formulating and implementing strategy in the U.S. government. As a result, observers tend either to portray senior policy makers as dolts or incompetents or to engage in a sort of strategic nihilism holding that it is impossible to develop sound strategy in this day and age.

Daniel Drezner's informative collection *Avoiding Trivia* deserves to be read by scholars of both varieties. It contains essays that were commissioned for a 2008 conference held at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the State Department's policy planning office, an organization best known for its first director, George Kennan, and his successor, Paul H. Nitze. The contributors are largely scholar-practitioners, including several of my own counterparts during my service as deputy assistant secretary of defense during the George W. Bush administration.

The first section of the book includes contributions by Richard Haass, David Gordon and Daniel Twining, and Jeffrey Legro, who discuss the strategic environment and the challenges it poses for policy planning in the United States.

Bruce Jentleson, Aaron Friedberg, and Peter Feaver and William Inboden are found in the second section, discussing how strategic planning can best be implemented in the executive branch. The latter chapter, describing the resurrection of the strategic planning function at the National Security Council during the George W. Bush administration, is particularly insightful.

Essays by Amy Zegart, Thomas Wright, Andrew Erdmann, and Steven Krasner

cover the opportunities and limitations for strategic planning in the final section.

This work collectively emphasizes the imperative of strategic planning as well as why it is an art whose practice is difficult. It deserves the attention of scholars and practitioners alike.

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Nielson, Suzanne C., and Don M. Snider, eds. *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2009. 409pp. \$34.95

Samuel J. Huntington published his seminal work on American civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State*, in 1957. His analysis, reflective of the U.S. experience in World War II, Korea, and the Cold War, was designed to "maximize military security at the least sacrifice to other social values." It has provided a theoretical and practical guide to civil-military relations for more than fifty years. However, in this "new era" of the first decade of the twenty-first century, many have challenged the continued relevance of Huntington's theories.

In 2007, editors Suzanne Nielson and Don Snider assembled an impressive interdisciplinary group of scholars to analyze Huntington's theories in light of the American experience since 1957. Fifteen researchers produced a dozen essays addressing Huntington's main theoretical contributions: the functional and societal imperatives that shape the nature of the military organization, the subjective and objective patterns of civilian control of the military,