

2008

President's Forum

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PRESIDENT'S FORUM



Strategic Investment and Title X War Gaming

THIS AUGUST THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE will host a very significant event—Global War Game 2008. This game marks the Navy's return to "Title X" war gaming, a strategic-level analytic activity that was discontinued in 2001.* The College originated this type of gaming in 1979, when the Navy decided to explore conflict with the Soviet Union on a worldwide scale. Its purpose was to help rebuild the Navy's operational and strategic perspective, a perspective many felt had become too narrowly tactical. With similar intent, the new Global series is meant to reestablish a truly worldwide perspective and future orientation in a service whose recent focus has been regional contingencies and the near term. The game is also a necessary step to implementing the new maritime strategy ("President's Forum," Winter 2008), a sweeping, top-level document that requires follow-up work to flesh out the operational concepts, capabilities, and forces needed to meet both its expressed and implied objectives.

Global Gaming: Catalyst for Concept Generation and Development

For a number of reasons, a gap has developed in the Navy's innovation architecture. A great deal of very innovative work is done by the fleet and various labs, and "Fleet Readiness Enterprises" have emerged as efficiency drivers to field product improvements and improve processes around specific platforms in current programs. For the very distant horizon, the Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group faithfully explores, as an education function, each year's new crop of technologies and studies their potential relevance to the Navy.

* Title X, U.S. Code, concerns federal law for the organization and operation of the armed forces of the United States. It constitutes the legal basis for the roles and missions of each of the services and responsibilities for organizing, training, and equipping them.

However, the Navy lacks a coordinated process that knits together, deliberately and comprehensively, the work of various enterprises on future concepts eight to twenty years out, a period for which strategic investment decisions must be made today. Although various analytical processes within the Navy Staff necessarily focus on this time frame, these analyses are—also by necessity—oriented to the current program of record.

Understanding the Navy's innovation architecture gap requires a more precise definition for "concept development," which is actually the middle element of a three-step process. Implementation follows an extensive set of activities that must be led by the fleet to refine a concept; to develop associated concepts of operations, tactics, techniques, and procedures; to demonstrate, experiment with, and validate the concept; and to evolve doctrine. But before a concept can be *developed*, it must be *generated*. This is not just an ad hoc process but rather a complex set of tasks that include identifying a problem, developing solutions and elaborating them into concepts, determining strategic value and risks associated with a concept, and discerning the broad implications for force design and policy. Concept generation requires *whole warfighting analysis* and forcewide perspective, it must relate to a strategic- and operational-level context, and it must enjoy wide and diverse stakeholder participation. In short, concept generation is the fundamental, *horizontal* element of the innovation architecture.* This is where the warfighting analysis done here at the College, along with strategic- and operational-level gaming and research, begins to address the innovation gap and inform strategic investment.

The Navy has begun to take some significant steps that should address this gap and put in place a sustained, disciplined approach to generating and evaluating alternative naval concepts and force-design options. One of them is re-instituting the Navy Title X war game.

We Are Not Starting from Scratch

For several years now, the College has been conducting a set of highly focused and detailed operational studies of various current and future warfare scenarios via its Halsey groups, which I have previously discussed in this space ("President's Forum," Summer 2005). Continuous, highly collaborative gaming and research on key warfighting scenarios have produced a wealth of analytically sound data and insights that provide credible, threat-based assessments necessary to calibrate key assumptions for the Title X games. The College also did seminal research for the new maritime strategy and gained important insights

* Concept development translates, through its various functions, from the strategic and operational horizon into the *vertical* output necessary to plan, program, and budget for systems, people, and platforms.

into strategic futures and collaborative processes that can be brought to bear in the new gaming series. Further, regionally oriented research and analysis efforts, as well as our new China Maritime Studies Institute, will provide current and detailed regional knowledge that will make the Title X games more relevant and valid.

The College is also making internal adjustments in order to leverage its unique strengths to provide a better strategic and analytic context to support integrated assessments for future force design. We are restructuring the Center for Naval Warfare Studies. Among other things, this restructuring includes evolving the Warfare Analysis and Research Department into a new Advanced Concepts Department that will support expanded Halsey Group operations and also conduct workshops and other activities necessary for the Title X gaming process and for Navy concept generation and development. All departments within the Center for Naval Warfare Studies will collaborate with the Navy Staff, fleet forces, and others to establish a “campaign plan” that, according to the missions, functions, and tasks assigned to the College, will provide “a program of focused, forward-thinking and timely research, analysis, and gaming that anticipates future operational and strategic challenges; develops and assesses strategic and operational concepts to overcome those challenges; assesses the risk associated with these concepts; and provides analytical products that inform the Navy’s leadership and help shape key decisions.”

Global 2008

The new maritime strategy establishes strategic imperatives and six core capabilities for the nation’s maritime forces. Further, it commits them *concurrently* to provide regionally concentrated, credible combat power *and* mission-tailored forces, distributed globally. Understanding the implications of these commitments—how we define “sufficiency” in terms of core capability—is key to implementing the strategy. This will be the focus of our 2008 Global War Game. Insights from the game should help shape the Navy’s contribution to the Quadrennial Defense Review, which occurs at the beginning of each new administration.

The insights we produce regarding the capabilities, capacities, and risks associated with implementation of the maritime strategy will focus follow-on capabilities analysis and inform force design. A second, equally important objective is to connect the tenets of the maritime strategy to future concept development and the Navy Strategic Planning Process.*

* The Navy Staff (specifically N3N5, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information, Plans, and Strategy) has developed a process for a structured examination of strategic trends and translates that analysis into guidance for the Navy via the Navy Strategic Plan (NSP) and the Naval Operational Concept (NOC).

The mechanism for this year's game will be a series of discussions across four alternative futures in which the strategy must operate. This will allow the participants to identify concepts and capabilities required—from both global and regional perspectives—to gain a better understanding of the capabilities and capacity issues associated with the strategy. In an effort to gather a wide range of expert, informed perspectives and insights, we will invite players from all the U.S. military services, other federal agencies, partner nations, international organizations, and leaders in the financial, energy, and maritime industries. The game cannot be structured to validate specific force-structure options but should provide a sound basis for developing these options and associated concepts. Subsequent "Force Design Workshops" will be conducted to build on the collaborative, expert perspectives introduced during Global '08 and to strengthen strategy-to-force alignment in Navy planning.

Back to the Future

Many *Review* readers are familiar with, and may have even played in, the old "Global" series. The game had many successes and excellent qualities, but by 2001 it had become very large, very expensive, and narrowly focused on networked operational command-and-control issues. The new Global games will return to their roots, taking a truly global perspective, as established by the new maritime strategy. They will provide the strategic context for examining a range of warfighting, homeland defense, and maritime security issues. Each game will be developed over the course of the entire year, and its size and objectives will be developed to ensure relevant and analytically sound results. We will carefully select game players who can bring specific expertise and perspective and who can think beyond current doctrines and programs. Players will also have to be familiar with the future concepts featured in the game. We also understand the value of a Title X game as an outreach and integration opportunity, and so we look forward to bringing in not only other service and joint representatives but also representatives from defense industry and other government agencies, as well as, when appropriate, other nations. In short, we will bring forward those traditions and approaches that were successful in the previous Global games, while tailoring the new series to meet the challenges we face today.

Global '08 will be a first step toward reestablishing Navy Title X gaming and improving strategy-to-force alignment. It will resemble the first such game we held, in 1979. That game was an experiment to see what was possible in terms of using war gaming to provide strategic insights to Navy leadership. Once its utility was demonstrated, resources flowed into it. Today the College's War Gaming Department is less than half the size it was in 2001, and so the initial game must be bounded in scope and methodology. I expect that its utility and value will be

manifest and that greater expectations and resources will follow to support a more robust role for the College in the Navy's innovation process. These investments will yield huge returns in terms of more confident and efficient programming and better arguments for the national investment in sea power. Specifically, the Navy's return to Global and to Title X war gaming will be a powerful stimulus for Navy innovation across the board, catalyzing new thinking and creating avenues for collaboration among different organizations. It will yield new synergies and efficiencies in research and technology development. In the end, the main return on investment—in Global and in the College—will be the enhanced ability of the Navy to pace global strategic developments.

The original Global games had a significant impact on the Navy, leading as they did to the development and implementation of the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s. In this, they were a continuation of a tradition at the College. Our games here in the 1920s and 1930s are legendary: they led to the development of naval aviation and to the logistical triumphs of War Plan ORANGE in World War II. These games were themselves offspring of earlier games in the late nineteenth century that led to the development of a strong and concentrated U.S. Fleet. War gaming is a powerful tool in the hands of a mission-funded institution dedicated to professional military education and objective research, a fact clearly grasped by a current leadership intent on revitalizing future-oriented, strategic thinking.

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