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## President's Forum—A New Maritime Strategy: Admiral Mullen's Challenge

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Rear Admiral Jacob L. Shuford was commissioned in 1974 from the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program at the University of South Carolina. His initial assignment was to USS Blakely (FF 1072). In 1979, following a tour as Operations and Plans Officer for Commander, Naval Forces Korea, he was selected as an Olmsted Scholar and studied two years in France at the Paris Institute of Political Science. He also holds master's degrees in public administration (finance) from Harvard and in national security studies and strategy from the Naval War College, where he graduated with highest distinction.

After completing department head tours in USS Deyo (DD 989) and in USS Mahan (DDG 42), he commanded USS Aries (PHM 5). His first tour in Washington included assignments to the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations and to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, as speechwriter, special assistant, and personal aide to the Secretary.

Rear Admiral Shuford returned to sea in 1992 to command USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG 60). He assumed command of USS Gettysburg (CG 64) in January 1998, deploying ten months later to Fifth and Sixth Fleet operating areas as Air Warfare Commander (AWC) for the USS Enterprise Strike Group. The ship was awarded the Battle Efficiency "E" for Cruiser Destroyer Group 12.

Returning to the Pentagon and the Navy Staff, he directed the Surface Combatant Force Level Study. Following this task, he was assigned to the Plans and Policy Division as chief of staff of the Navy's Roles and Missions Organization. He finished his most recent Pentagon tour as a division chief in J8—the Force Structure, Resources and Assessments Directorate of the Joint Staff—primarily in the theater air and missile defense mission area and the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group. His most recent Washington assignment was to the Office of Legislative Affairs as Director of Senate Liaison.

In October 2001 he assumed duties as Assistant Commander, Navy Personnel Command for Distribution. Rear Admiral Shuford assumed command of Cruiser Destroyer Group 3 in August 2003. He became the fifty-first President of the Naval War College on 12 August 2004.

## PRESIDENT'S FORUM

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### *A New Maritime Strategy: Admiral Mullen's Challenge*

DURING OUR CURRENT STRATEGY FORUM this past June, Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chief of Naval Operations, called for the development of a new maritime strategy and asked that the Naval War College take on the responsibility for coordinating the efforts of the Naval Postgraduate School, the Naval Academy, and other organizations in the strategy-development process. The Naval War College has been the spawning ground for American naval strategy since its opening in 1884. Combining high-level professional military education with consistent institutional commitment to research, analysis, and gaming has created the conditions—academic freedom coupled with a keen sense of academic responsibility and a spirit of objective inquiry—that have produced first-class strategists and many of the most influential concepts, plans, and strategies in the U.S. Navy's history. Today, Navy leadership has again turned to the College for help in crafting a new maritime strategy to deal with the complex and challenging global geostrategic environment that has emerged since the 9/11 attacks.

Why is a new maritime strategy needed? I believe that there are more than sufficient new strategic challenges manifesting themselves since 9/11—indeed, since the fall of the Berlin Wall—to require a fundamental rethinking of the traditional tenets of seapower that most policy makers and strategists still hold as truisms. It is clear, for instance, from language in the National Security Strategy that the seas no longer represent the definitive strategic barriers they once did. Losing this most important geostrategic source of depth reduces the time available for deliberate, diplomatic response options by our national command authority. Yet, the U.S. Navy has been the guarantor of national strategic depth since the age of Teddy Roosevelt and the Great White Fleet. Should the Navy focus on reestablishing this particular relative advantage? Should the sea be the

medium by which preemptive counter-force operations are made more responsive, or should we be working to establish the lost strategic depth through achievement of global maritime awareness? The doctrinal legacy of “. . . From the Sea” suggests the former, while the organizing principle referred to as “a Thousand-Ship Navy” suggests the latter. Is the choice limited to “either/or,” or must we do both? Options need to be clarified and choices made: a coherent maritime strategy is required to establish the ways, means, and resources to reestablish strategic depth. Again, this is just *one* example of the sort of questions that emerge from a comprehensive discussion of grand strategy.

There is another reason that a maritime strategy is necessary at this point in time. The changing nature of warfare is forcing all services to conduct a reexamination of their structure and doctrine. This is happening in the world of the Global Information Grid, where information appears to be the most valuable warfighting resource. The result is a premium on obtaining, analyzing, and distributing information via new, more capable means of command and control. In this environment, traditional roles and missions become fungible and open for renegotiation. However, if we make roles-and-missions decisions simply on the basis of emerging technical capabilities, we may back our way into serious warfighting seams in the future. The logic of an overarching strategy is needed in order to make sense of novel, emerging technical capabilities, operating concepts, and organizing principles as part of a coherent and ultimately more effective whole. A broadly understood maritime strategy would provide a powerful logic for roles and missions relating to all our maritime partners.

The U.S. Navy has a long and successful history of articulating national maritime strategies, since the founding of the Naval War College. Starting with Alfred Thayer Mahan's seminal work *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890), the Navy has generally crafted a new strategy when the flow of world events made it clear that one was needed. The prospect of a trans-isthmian canal, for example, and the rise of Germany and Japan as great naval powers provided much of the impetus for Mahan's pioneering work. In the 1930s, in response to the increased chances of a war with Japan, the Navy developed a trans-Pacific strategy that eventually brought success in World War II. In the Cold War, the Navy aligned itself with the nation's grand strategy of containment and deterrence and created elements of its force structure that could support nuclear warfighting if deterrence failed. As the Cold War matured, the viability of nuclear weapons as warfighting weapons deteriorated, and the Navy developed the Maritime Strategy of the 1980s to provide a foundational logic of conventional warfighting using its forces in a forward, offensive manner. After the Soviet Union fell, the Navy morphed the strategy of early, forward operations into a littoral warfighting doctrine.

The Naval War College has fully embraced the challenge laid down by Admiral Mullen and is proceeding at full speed to put in place a process that is intellectually rigorous and accommodates ideas from around the fleet, around the country, and around the world. We plan to move forward in an integrated fashion with the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps, and with early, close involvement with our other joint-service and agency partners.

We will also involve our international maritime partners. The College has been an effective forum for international naval cooperation over the years, and we intend to take it a step farther via international participation in the maritime strategy development process. Given the objective of a secure international commons for legitimate commerce, regional peace and stability, and the general benefit and progress of all mankind, this approach to strategy is timely and appropriate to the international community's growing appreciation of the unique contributions maritime collaboration makes to these objectives.

The fundamental philosophy underpinning the College's development effort is that any maritime strategy must derive from and support national policy and grand strategy. We intend to consider a range of potential grand strategies. By examining the range of maritime strategies suggested by them, we hope to understand the fundamental strategic imperatives of any maritime strategy. Moreover, since any U.S. national grand strategy is necessarily global, this approach promotes maritime thinking in global terms. Also, this approach helps keep the level of discussion and analysis elevated—that is, it keeps workshop and war-game participants from immediately focusing on ship types, deployment patterns, and operational concepts. These topics have all but governed the dialogue on the future of the Navy for a number of years and have generated differing points of view that cannot be resolved without an overarching strategic logic.

We expect that logic to emerge from a competition of ideas. That competition must reflect expert, diverse perspectives and must be based on disciplined and objective analysis—something for which the College has established a sound reputation. In order to establish rigor, and also to increase the odds of obtaining genuinely creative thinking, we are going to conduct a novel type of exploratory war game in which “Blue” players representing the United States and international partners react to well-developed “Red” strategies to create a composite of the future plans for a number of what we term “strategic entities.” The outcome will be an understanding of the dynamics of strategic challenge-and-response cycles. Follow-on workshops will synthesize key insights and conclusions into candidate maritime strategies. These strategies will then be subjected to additional perspective and analytic scrutiny to clarify strategic options for Navy leadership.

The U.S. Navy developed a highly successful maritime strategy in the 1930s and again in the 1980s in response to specific threats. Today, our task is far more complex, as the distinction between friend and foe is not as clear and the world is faced with numerous insurgencies, ethnic clashes, and regional competition among states. What some writers term the “super-empowered individual”—a person or group capable of inflicting strategic harm on a nation via advanced technology—adds significant new complexity to strategy making. This heightens the importance of bringing a rigorous, intellectual approach to strategy development.

The need for a new maritime strategy is manifest, and Admiral Mullen's call for one is both timely and compelling. Many institutions and organizations are responding to his appeal, and the Naval War College is serving as a clearinghouse for the ideas emerging from their efforts. The College will also serve as guarantor of rigor and subjectivity, fulfilling this critical institutional role of intellectual conscience for the Navy.

J. L. SHUFORD

*Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy*  
*President, Naval War College*