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President's Forum

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Rear Admiral Rempt is a 1966 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. Initial assignments included deployments to Vietnam aboard USS Coontz (DLG 9) and USS Somers (DDG 34). He later commanded USS Antelope (PG 86), USS Callaghan (DDG 994), and USS Bunker Hill (CG 52). Among his shore assignments were the Naval Sea Systems Command as the initial project officer for the Mark 41 Vertical Launch System; Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) staff as the Aegis Weapon System program coordinator; director of the Prospective Commanding Officer/Executive Officer Department, Surface Warfare Officers Schools Command; and Director, Anti-Air Warfare Requirements Division (OP-75) on the CNO's staff. Rear Admiral Rempt also served in the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, where he initiated development of Naval Theater Ballistic Missile Defense, continuing those efforts as Director, Theater Air Defense on the CNO's staff. More recently, he was Program Executive Officer, Theater Air Defense, the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Theater Combat Systems, the first Assistant Chief of Naval Operations for Missile Defense, and Director, Surface Warfare (N76) on the CNO's staff. Rear Admiral Rempt assumed duties as the forty-eighth President of the Naval War College on 22 August 2001.

He holds master's degrees in systems analysis from Stanford University and in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College.

PRESIDENT'S FORUM



As I have noted in the past, the Naval War College has two primary missions: to educate future leaders and to define future forces.

IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE OF THE *REVIEW*, I discussed the efforts now under way in Newport to help define future courses that our Navy could follow to transform itself to meet more effectively the demands of the new century. The strategic landscape has been changed by many factors: political, economic, and technological.

How the service responds to these changes is critical to our continued contribution to national security.

The Navy Vision Project has engaged faculty, staff, and defense experts from around the nation in a series of workshops and study groups. Collectively, these visionaries have identified six major options in which additional investment could be made. Each would define a different Navy than the one we have today. However, a fundamental truth underpins all potential decisions: the Navy of tomorrow will be derived largely from the Navy of today. Necessary changes will be made incrementally over a number of years, and the amount of resources that can be applied to “recapitalization” will, realistically, be on the order of 10 percent to 15 percent of the Navy’s research and procurement budgets. By a huge margin, the greatest portion of budget expenditures each year will go to maintaining and operating ships, aircraft, and weapons systems now in inventory and to recruiting, training, and retaining our great sailors. These expenditures are essential to enable us to continue to meet the demands of the Terror War.

Our challenge as a maritime service is to apply skillfully the relatively small discretionary portion of the budget so as to get maximum impact on future capabilities. Just as in navigating aboard ship, when a few degrees of change in base course can result in hundreds or thousands of miles of difference in the ultimate destination, the Navy Vision Project is working to provide possible “midcourse corrections” to the Navy’s future track, to move toward the most effective Navy for our nation.

SIX OPTIONS

For over two hundred years the Navy has provided America's leaders a balanced force capable of accomplishing a wide variety of missions across the entire spectrum of conflict, from such low-cost and low-risk activities as evacuation of noncombatants from areas of potential conflict to the full-scale engagement of an enemy with weapons of mass destruction. This high degree of flexibility will be even more valuable in the future. Naval forces provide national freedom of action for the application of military power in an increasingly uncertain and complex world. To be most effective, our naval forces should be tailored and focused to meet the most likely scenarios. The Navy could focus its investment or change its strategic direction by taking the following courses:

Lead Revitalized Maritime Security. This option strengthens the nation's maritime shield by revitalizing the full range of capabilities that provide "maritime defense in depth." The underlying assumption driving this option is that, unlike

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many wars of the past century in which conflict took place far from U.S. shores, it is increasingly likely that future battles could take place near or on U.S. territory. A major focus of the maritime security emphasis would be on the screening and control of seaborne commerce.

This includes merchant ships, containers, and superports, as well as maritime companies and their finances. Success in this endeavor would require a sophisticated and robust information collection and dissemination network and the establishment of the ability to intercept and interdict incoming threats from forward overseas and close to U.S. shores. Procurement of ships sized to meet specific needs, between the capabilities of Coast Guard cutters and multimission Navy destroyers, would be necessary. This capability would also enable the United States and its allies to conduct preventive operations against groups, states, and nonstate actors deemed to represent a threat to U.S. security.

Expand Sea-Basing. The key to sustained combat operations has always been the logistical support of the engaged forces. The Navy's historical ability to operate for extended periods at sea is well recognized, and this capability could be expanded to provide joint and combined force commanders with the ability to commence military operations from secure offshore "sea bases." This option is predicated on the assumption that for political and economic reasons, the United States is less likely than ever before to use an extensive network of

overseas bases. Sea-basing would allow for the reception, staging, onward movement, and integration of both Marine Corps and Army forces at sea. Key components of this capability would include high-speed ships (thirty-five knots and above), prepositioning at sea, and forward staging aboard ship. While existing “large-deck” ships such as aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships could be reconfigured to support some “sea-basing” missions, entirely new (and very large) ships may be needed to receive large intertheater airlift aircraft at sea. Use of V-22 vertical-lift aircraft, new high-speed lighterage, and the enhanced capabilities of the Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle would provide the capability for forces ashore to be sustained for extended periods.

Continue Power Projection Focus. This option most closely resembles the Navy of today. Its underlying assumption is that the primary battlefields of the future will remain overseas. Investment in this area would focus on rapid application of decisive force by augmenting the force with Tomahawk missile-armed cruisers and long-range guided munitions aboard destroyers; dedicated platforms such as high-speed vessels, cruise-missile-launching nuclear submarines, and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers armed with Joint Strike Fighters and unmanned combat air vehicles. Increased emphasis would be placed on supporting special operations forces and Marine Corps expeditionary warfare forces. A power projection focus would provide decisive naval power to defeat adversaries anywhere in the world.

Ensure Access for Other Forces. Additional investment in this area would focus on increasing the ability of the Navy and Marine Corps to gain access to geographic areas of national interest, both in “permissive” environments when U.S. forces are welcome and in “forced-entry” scenarios in which opposing combat forces must be overcome. This option assumes that the Navy will remain “forward deployed” in areas of potential conflict. Gaining and maintaining such access, and providing the means for the sustainment of the force once ashore, will require enhancements to the Navy’s capabilities in missile defense, mine warfare, surface warfare, undersea warfare, air traffic control, ship routing, and command and control. With this investment the Navy could ensure access to the theater of conflict for our joint forces and allies. Fully capable multimission ships teamed with capable littoral combat ships will be essential in this option.

Provide Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance for the Nation. Properly configured, naval forces could provide the nation with forward-deployed forces focused on winning the information “battle of the first salvo.” The underlying assumption of this option is the recognition that technological development will provide the means for long-term surveillance of the theater of operations, thus providing commanders with a “real-time” picture of emerging events. The

sea-based portion of a larger theaterwide architecture would include conventional radars, acoustic and electronic sensors, and a futuristic expeditionary sensor grid. It would employ sea-bottom sensing arrays, unmanned vehicles (air, surface, and subsurface), ground systems, and the necessary networking and processing capability. Defensive forces would protect and monitor the sensor network, and offensive capabilities would be collocated to exploit information and rapidly respond to threats using naval forces, including missiles, special operations forces, Marines, and tactical aircraft.

Refine Homeland Defense. With this emphasis, a future Navy would enhance its capabilities to provide missile defense of the United States, as well as of allies and forces around the world. This option assumes that additional and substantial attacks on targets within the United States are likely, if not inevitable. The homeland-defense option would continue strategic deterrence through the use of ballistic missile submarines and offensive counter-missile forces to disrupt enemy ballistic and cruise-missile operations through offensive strikes. Additionally, a responsive maritime security force would operate with the Coast Guard deepwater “national fleet” to prevent the movement of hostile elements and weapons of mass destruction by sea. A Navy configured to support this mission would include a number of small yet capable surface ships that would complement the patrol capabilities of the Coast Guard. Unmanned air vehicles also hold great promise for cost-effective surveillance of maritime corridors.

This is only a cursory look at these various options, and there is considerable work yet to be done to refine each of the concepts. Our efforts continue to be focused on bringing clarity to each issue to assist decision makers who must make the hard calls about where limited resources will be applied to generate the greatest return on the nation's investment.

As I have noted in the past, the Naval War College has two primary missions: to educate future leaders and to define future forces. Efforts such as the Navy Vision Project are one way in which we bring the intellectual energy of our faculty, staff, and students to bear on key issues of the day. Decisions made today will shape the Navy for decades to come. We are glad to help make these decisions the best that can be made.

RODNEY P. REMPT

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