

1995

## President's Notes

Joseph C. Strasser

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Strasser, Joseph C. (1995) "President's Notes," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 48 : No. 3 , Article 1.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol48/iss3/1>

This President's Forum is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).



*"I believe it to be highly significant and appropriate that our next [Global] game scenario calls for a renewed focus on naval strategic thinking."*

## President's Notes

**F**OR THE SEVENTEENTH YEAR, "Summer in Newport" will signify to hundreds of men and women their participation in Global, the largest and most comprehensive political-military game in the world. These busy professionals from all of the armed forces, numerous friendly nations, and dozens of private, governmental, and international organizations will assemble to help us think about the world as it soon may be.

We hope that by the time they depart, our visitors will have collected lasting memories of the beauty and attractions for which this area is famed. We have no doubt that their on-duty hours will implant equally enduring professional friendships, intellectual challenges, and valuable insights into tomorrow's world. The Global Game has been accomplishing such aims since 1979; thousands of service members and civilian leaders have gained a deeper

---

Admiral Strasser holds a B.S. from the Naval Academy, two master's degrees from The Fletcher School, Tufts University, and, from the same school, a Ph.D. in political science. He graduated from the command and staff course at the Naval War College in 1972. He commanded the USS *O'Callahan* (FF 1051), Destroyer Squadron 35, Cruiser-Destroyer Group Three, and Battle Group Foxtrot. His seven years in Washington included two years in the office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

understanding of international relations, military roles and operations, organizational interactions, and even human nature.

As we prepare to launch into another hectic July, I would like to remind our readers all over the world what the Global Game has achieved, and also to suggest why it will be vital for tomorrow's Navy. The accomplishments of Global have been greater than its originators could have foreseen, while its promise is brighter than ever before.

In 1978, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, asked the Naval War College to address this question: "What is the strategic role of the Navy around the globe in war?" Within a year, the College was prepared to conduct a two-sided game involving our students and faculty and a small group of invited "defense intellectuals"—and Global was born.

The world of 1979 was very different from the world we know today. The Soviet Union and the United States were both superpowers with the potential to devastate each other in an all-out nuclear Armageddon. Warsaw Pact forces were arrayed against NATO with (as we suspected then and know now) detailed plans for offensive operations. The U.S. Navy was—in the opinion of many in and out of the service—reaching its post-World War II nadir; Admiral Hayward acknowledged that "the readiness of the fleet was at an all-time low."

The task of Global at its inception was to help the Navy's leaders think about the Navy mission and tasking in war. The successful 1979 game led to a follow-on the next July; Global has continued every year thereafter. While the first two games were principally naval in focus, it quickly became apparent that the Navy and the Marine Corps could not think about their wartime roles in isolation from the other services and our allies. Strong representation from both groups, as well as the Joint Staff and the unified commanders' staffs, made Global truly a joint and combined game years before the Goldwater-Nichols Act legislated what already had been recognized in Newport: in any major conflict, we would operate in concert with our sister services and, almost certainly, our allies.

In the first five-year set of games, participants in Global were asked to focus on the opening period of a Nato-Warsaw Pact war. One outcome of those early years was a recognition of the need for a coherent strategy whereby maritime forces could contribute to deterring—or, if necessary, to winning—such a war initiated by Moscow. Global, then, was the midwife of the Maritime Strategy. Not only did the experiences of so many uniformed and civilian naval leaders during Global point to the requirement for such a strategy, but during each summer in the early 1980s successively refined classified versions of the Maritime Strategy were brought to Newport, tested, and critiqued.

The early Global games—their history is recounted in Bud Hay and Bob Gile's Newport Paper, *Global War Game: The First Five Years*—had two major

## 6 Naval War College Review

benefits. First, they prompted hundreds of senior leaders from the services, agencies, departments, and other nations to think together about the naval service's contributions in a war of this kind. Second, they provided a great deal of empirical data so that political requirements could be examined, strategic plans of action could be assessed, and operational assumptions could be evaluated.

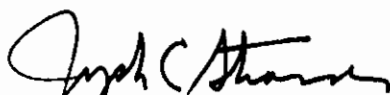
While it is undoubtedly useful to expose many future decisionmakers to realistic scenarios, to present them with situations in which decisions must be made, and to cause them to think about the perennial kinds of issues that they are almost certain to encounter, these benefits—the first kind produced by Global—accrue primarily to the individual participants. The second kind of benefit from the Global games, the production of empirical results by using accurate characteristics and models of considerable fidelity, redounds principally to organizations because issues and ideas can be tested. These latter benefits were what enabled Admiral James D. Watkins, the Chief of Naval Operations, to say while unveiling the Maritime Strategy to the public in 1986, “I also have confidence in the Maritime Strategy because we test it in exercises, [and] in war games . . . especially at the war-gaming center in Newport, . . . the most advanced such facility in the world, [which] allows us to test alternative strategies and tactics.”

The public presentation of the Maritime Strategy occurred after Global had entered its second five-year series. Between 1984 and 1988, our summer visitors worked hard to assist the Navy-Marine team in clarifying its thinking about how to conduct worldwide combat operations against the Soviet Union. No longer focusing on the Central Front, the Global game of those years educated hundreds of officers about the naval service's warfighting capabilities and intentions.

Changes in the world that were apparent in 1989 signalled the need for the third five-year set of Global games to look afresh at the naval service's contribution to national security. Instead of a Nato-Warsaw Pact conflict on the Central Front or a protracted global war against the Soviet Union, the Navy and Marine Corps faced a wide variety of missions in many regions. These “expeditionary” tasks ranged from disaster relief and other forms of humanitarian assistance to “enabling” functions at the outset of a major regional contingency. As more disparate kinds of issues arose, we expanded the categories of participants in Global to include greater representation from other governmental and international organizations. The Department of the Navy white papers “. . . From the Sea” and “Forward . . . From the Sea” reflected the post-Cold War world and lessons learned in recent Global games.

This summer's participants in Global will be asked to deal with tomorrow's international problems. I believe it to be highly significant and appropriate that our next game scenario calls for a renewed focus on naval strategic thinking. In times of great uncertainty and fluidity characteristic of the end of one historical

epoch and the beginning of another, the foremost need is to develop a clear plan of how one wishes the world to be, and for what one would like to bring about in world affairs. Such a vision is the indispensable prerequisite of effective action. The challenge to participants in the series of Global games now underway is to examine how the Navy and the Marine Corps can shape the international environment to bring it closer to our vision of a peaceful, harmonious, just, and prosperous community of nations. Like our previous visitors, they will personally gain much from their "Summer in Newport"—but from their efforts and thinking in Global '95, the nation, and we at the Naval War College, will gain far more.

  
JOSEPH C. STRASSER  
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy  
President, Naval War College

