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President's Notes

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“For its part, the Naval Service will remain at the forefront in peacetime . . . and in wartime as well. . . .”

President's Notes

LAST NOVEMBER, I WAS PRIVILEGED to participate in a conference co-sponsored by the Chief of Naval Operations and my alma mater, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. The theme of the conference, “Naval Forward Presence and the National Military Strategy,” was especially timely, coming as it did on the heels of the release of the Naval Service’s White Paper, “. . . From the Sea.” The subjects covered during the conference varied broadly—ranging from discussions on the security environment, through the roles, missions, and force mix of the Navy and Marine Corps, to the uses of naval forces in combat. The variety of speakers was as diverse as the topics they covered. In addition to the expected naval officers, the speakers included a unified commander, an Air Force four-star general, captains of industry, academics, and a representative from the fourth estate.

I was asked to discuss the role of naval forces in combat. By the time my turn arrived on the second day of the conference, much had already been said on the

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subject, and that made my job both easier and more difficult—easier because the audience had a much clearer idea of the concepts detailed in “. . . From the Sea,” but more difficult because I had to add to the discussion without being too repetitive. The tack I took very much reflected the philosophy I have tried to instill at the Naval War College. Although we justifiably concentrate on all aspects of naval warfare, we understand, appreciate, and stress how naval forces complement joint and coalition forces in all scenarios from peace to war. As Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King stated, “. . . modern warfare can be effectively conducted only by the close and effective integration of the three military arms.” The balance of this Note reflects some of the thoughts I shared during the conference.

As the world enters a new security environment, the role of the Naval Service is evolving to meet these dynamic circumstances. The most striking change is that there no longer exists a single, cohesive, globally capable adversary against which the armed forces must plan and equip. The first result of this change was an inevitable reduction in military force levels. The second result is that combat will likely be more geographically restricted than before and fought closer to the shoreline in areas congested with friendlies, adversaries, and neutrals. This puts an even greater premium on rapid and reliable command, control, communications, and intelligence. Fewer forces means that joint and coalition operations will be essential in this new environment.

Although combat is the ultimate test for armed forces, the primary reason most Americans want a military is to prevent conflict and underwrite other instruments of national policy. The Naval Service is poised to meet both the peacetime and wartime challenges of the future through continued forward deployment of its forces and by taking a new direction in its concept of operations. Departing from the Cold War doctrine of war *at sea*, naval forces will concentrate on littoral warfare and maneuver *from* the sea. This means that the Navy is more likely to suffer “culture shock” than is the Marine Corps, for whom the littoral has been familiar territory since its inception. In time of crisis, the Naval Service will be first on the scene and may, by its early presence, deter the outbreak of hostilities. Should deterrence fail, however, naval units will enable the introduction of Army and Air Forces when they are required and then work side by side with them in projecting U.S. power.

As detailed in “. . . From the Sea,” the Navy and Marine Corps will concentrate on enhancing four key operational capabilities: Command, Control, and Surveillance; Battlespace Dominance; Power Projection; and Force Sustainment. They will exercise these capabilities during five phases of combat operations: deep-water approach (when forces must deploy from outside the region of crisis); gaining access (knocking down the door and seizing a lodgement when required); joint access (enabling the introduction of other services); high-intensity power projection (sustaining, reinforcing, and fighting shoulder to shoulder

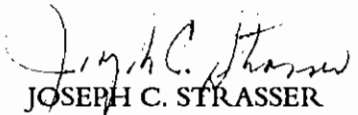
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with other services); and withdrawal (with naval forces likely to be designated to remain to monitor the peace). The Naval Service will deploy with the capability of assuming or hosting Joint Task Force Commander responsibilities and will offer the unified commander a powerful naval expeditionary force package. Included in this package will be carriers, amphibious ships with embarked Marines, surface combatants, Navy special warfare forces, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, and mine warfare forces. They will be capable of providing sea control, organic surveillance, communications interoperability, battlefield preparation, precision bombing, and amphibious assault. By concentrating on what they do best and relying on the other services to do likewise, all our armed forces will enhance their advantages in combat.

The primary advantages which naval forces provide include: a forward deployed posture; stress on multimission platforms offering distributed firepower; sustainability; the ability to loiter in an area over the horizon for an extended period without the political liability often associated with land-based forces; and relative freedom from overseas basing restrictions. Because the Naval Service is a microcosm of military force (air/land/sea), a naval expeditionary force offers the President a broader range of options, sustainable for a longer period of time, than any other force. By protecting proven capabilities while programming to overcome the challenges of the new environment, the Naval Service will remain flexible and relevant for meeting tomorrow's national needs.

It is too early in the new administration to determine either the exact course of its foreign policy or the specific uses it sees for the military services. But it is clear that global interdependence means the United States cannot afford to retreat into isolation. For its part, the Naval Service will remain at the forefront in peacetime—by assuring friends, building coalitions, and influencing potential adversaries—and in wartime as well, by fighting side by side with sister services while conducting both joint and coalition operations.



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