

## **Section 1: Fundamentals**



# Together... From the Sea: Contemporary Allied Maritime Strategy<sup>1</sup>

Sebastian Bruns

*“Take the long way home”<sup>2</sup>*

Even for the most optimistic observers, the long era of the post-Cold War “peace dividend” is ending. For maritime analysts, it is clear that warships and aircraft are increasingly being tasked with missions pertaining to their original *raison d’être*—i.e. the ability to deter armed conflict and wage war at sea and from the sea. This process comes after an era that was characterised by the rise of low-intensity activities: counter-piracy, counterterrorism, embargo control and maritime security operations.<sup>3</sup> For the US Navy as well as many European forces alike, these pre-2014 roles and missions were overwhelmingly performed by legacy Cold War units, stand-off weapons and a mindset that emphasised flexibility, scalability and mobility.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 In this chapter, I define allied maritime strategy in a comprehensive manner as the set of naval ways, ends and means of the world’s three most important political alliances: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN). It is therefore not to be confused with NATO’s own, capitalised “Alliance Maritime Strategy” from 2011. Whereas NATO is a system of collective defence, the EU is a unique system of political and economic integration. The United Nations, a body of collective security, custodian of the Convention of the Law of the Sea and provider of one Security Council mandate with a maritime task force—United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, or UNIFIL—does not have a dedicated maritime security strategy and will not be considered here. I wish to thank Dr John D. Sherwood for critical comments on an earlier version of this paper.
  - 2 Supertramp, 1979. Written by Roger Hodgson, produced by Supertramp and Peter Henderson.
  - 3 These missions did not mysteriously appear after the 1989/1991 transition. A lot of naval forces dealt with these kinds of challenges even in the context of the Cold War, including the Soviet and American navies and their allies. See James Cable, *Navies in Violent Peace*. Palgrave MacMillan: Houndmills and London 1989.
  - 4 On the US Navy, see Sebastian Bruns, *US Naval Strategy and National Security. The Evolution of American Maritime Power*. Routledge: London 2018. On European navies, see Jeremy Stöhs, *The Evolution of European Naval Power. Strategy, Force Structure, Operations*. Dissertation: University of Kiel 2019.

In the absence of a sea control challenger, navies and their political masters focused on low- and medium-intensity operations. Recalling the words of Samuel Huntington in his landmark 1954 essay, I contend that navies can conduct such operations but that is hardly what they are built and maintained for.

“A military service may at times [...] perform functions unrelated to external security, such as internal policing, disaster relief, and citizenship training. These are, however, subordinate and collateral responsibilities. A military service does not exist to perform these functions; rather it performs these functions because it has already been called into existence to meet some threat to the national security.”<sup>5</sup>

In parallel, from the 1990s onwards, Western military forces underwent significant changes. Many planners lauded, and subsequently often abandoned again, the promises of air power, small and agile forces, or battlefield dominance through high technology, which many armed conflicts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with their reliance on handguns and old tactics debunked. Naval presence and diplomacy fit well into the mindset of many decision makers in member states’ capitals. Consequently, naval constabulary and diplomatic roles overshadowed more established defence and deterrence roles.<sup>6</sup> Not having to commit boots on the ground in crises often served domestic political objectives, and safeguarding the rapidly expanding maritime global commons—“90% of everything”<sup>7</sup> moves by sea—scored extra points.

However, allied navies were, at the same time, disproportionately affected by the wide-ranging cuts in defence spending from Cold War peaks. The number of warships, aircraft and personnel shrank dramatically.<sup>8</sup>

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5 Samuel Huntington, “National Policy and the Transoceanic Navy”, *USNI Proceedings*, vol. 80, No. 5, May 1954, 483–493, 483.

6 Eric Grove, *The Future of Seapower*. London: Routledge 1990, 234. On naval deterrence, see James Henry Bergeron, *Deterrence and its Maritime Dimension*, in Sebastian Bruns/Sarandis Papadopoulos, *Conceptualizing Maritime & Naval Strategy*. Festschrift for Captain Peter M. Swartz, United States Navy, retired. Nomos: Baden-Baden 2020, 33–50.

7 Rose George, *Ninety Percent of Everything*. Inside Shipping, the Invisible Industry that puts Clothes on your Back, Gas in your Car, and Food on your Plate. Picador: New York 2013. See also Chris Parry, *Super Highway*. Sea Power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Elliott and Thompson: London 2014.

8 On European navies post-Cold War, see Jeremy Stöhs, *The Decline of European Naval Forces*. Challenges to Sea Power in an Age of Fiscal Austerity and Political Uncertainty. Naval Institute Press: Annapolis 2018.

Some countries even took the risk of getting rid of entire sets of capabilities. Just to name three examples:

- The Royal Navy's decommissioning of "Nimrod" maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) in 2010 was just recently reversed through the procurement of new P-8 "Poseidon" MPA;
- Germany's transfers of its naval Tornado jet aircraft to the *Luftwaffe* in 2005 eliminated the multi-role fighter aircraft capability of its navy;
- The de-facto suspension of naval gunfire support capability through decommissioning of US battleships in the early 1990s continues to be a concern for inshore engagement.

Geopolitically, the integration of new member states absorbed a lot of attention and resources alike.<sup>9</sup> As the Supertramp song in the title suggests, by the 2020s North American and European navies have meandered into splinter groups driven by national interests, allied dynamics, policy and resource constraints. All the while, they are directed to train and equip for warfighting first even though the host of low-end maritime security challenges has not evaporated. Rebuilding navies with their long lead times for procurement and crewing has, unsurprisingly, thus become very difficult and politically contested.

This is the broad context in which two major alliances produced separate maritime capstone documents. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's "Alliance Maritime Strategy" was released on 18 March 2011; the Council of the European Union's "European Union Maritime Security Strategy" was published on 24 June 2014. For NATO and the EU, it was their first original maritime strategy documents worthy of the name. Both were decisively un-glossy and issued on NATO and EU websites as pdf files. These developments were also a decisive factor in the decision to create a dedicated naval strategy and maritime security conference and publication series—the "Kiel Seapower Series"—in the heart of Northern Europe. Innovation, creativity, candidness and the conviction that shared knowledge yields empowerment have driven the work of the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University's Center for Maritime Strategy & Security (CMSS), which uses the series as an umbrella brand. The Kiel In-

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9 The European Union has added sixteen new members and a reunited Germany since 1990. In the same time frame, 14 countries joined NATO, which also established an ambitious Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. On the challenge of integrating former Warsaw Pact militaries into Western structures, see Thomas-Durell Young, "NATO's Selective Sea Blindness—Assessing the Alliance's New Navies," *Naval War College Review*: vol. 72, No. 3, Article 4, 2019.

ternational Seapower Symposia (and two previous Kiel conferences with more regional foci)—or KISS, which also stands for “Keep it short & straightforward”—is the flagship event and Europe’s only dedicated sea power symposium. Three of these KISS events dealt with the ends, means and ways of allied maritime strategy, respectively. Some of the world’s most notable senior experts and up-and-coming strategists have not just participated in the by-invitation-only events, but have also lent their time and effort to contributing to this important book.

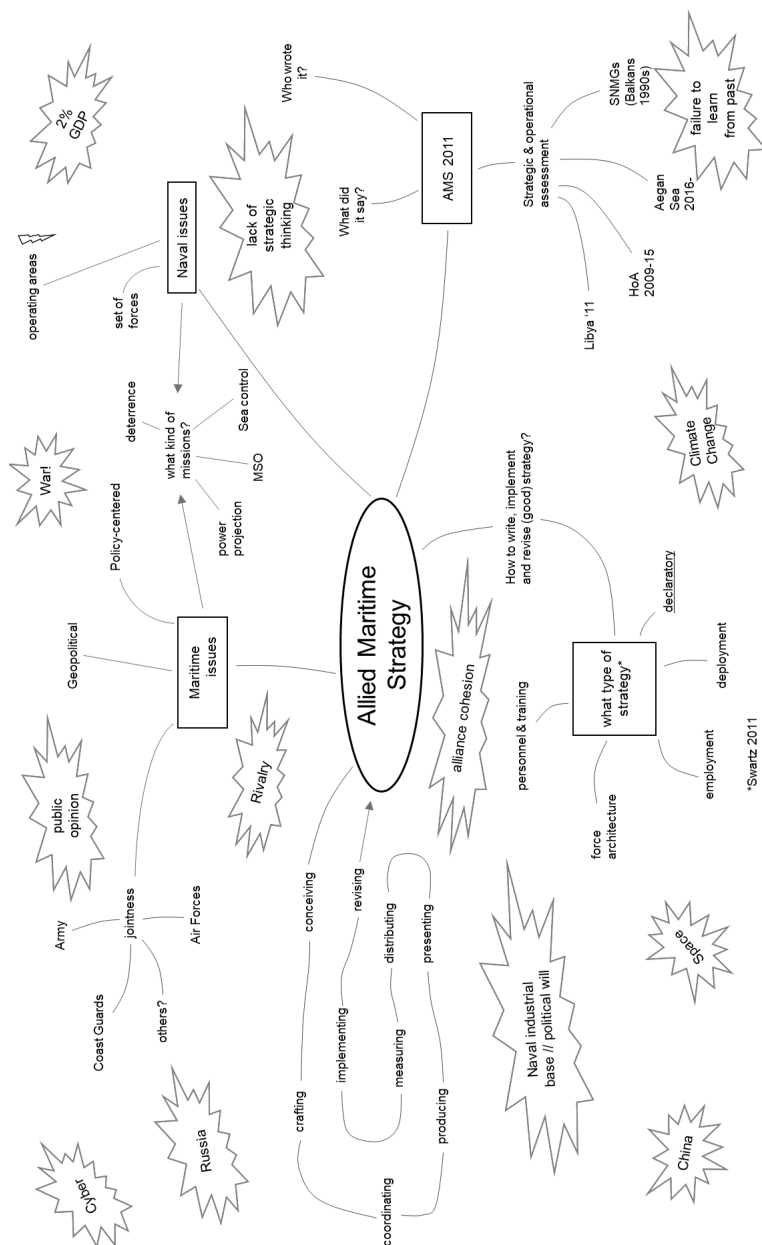
While it is beyond the scope of this essay to sketch the factors that govern how maritime strategy is produced and operationalised, Figure 1 will give a general idea of the complex and ultimately chaotic framework that affects strategy. The process is fraught with real world uncertainty, “rogue wave” events and the risks that make static strategies subject to criticism. There is never a slack tied period in which to formulate maritime strategy. The winds of change and uncertainty always gust strongly.

This is certainly true for the years since the publication of the Allied Maritime Strategy (AMS) as well as the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS). The resurgence of Russia constitutes an immediate security problem for the transatlantic community. The Middle East is ablaze in open and proxy conflicts. Alliance cohesion has been undercut severely through former American president Donald Trump’s open disinterest in alliances and NATO in particular—something that his successor Joe Biden has vowed to redress, although much damage appears irreversible. Tensions between the NATO member states Greece, France, Germany and Turkey flared up as recently as 2020. For the EU, Great Britain’s “Brexit” and the implications of the financial and refugee crises have signalled a turn towards consolidation and inward focus, not expansion. With Chinese maritime business and naval players operating regularly around the European peninsula<sup>10</sup> and the US defence establishment firmly focused on the People’s Liberation Army (Navy) (PLA-N), a diffuse and potential violent multipolar world is emerging. Climate change, forced migration and the effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic are further challenging maritime strategists and strain naval forces.

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10 Gordon Chang, “China in the Mediterranean”, Hoover Institution *Strategika* No. 62, 10 January 2020. See also Sebastian Bruns/Sarah Kirchberger, “The PLA Navy in the Baltic Sea: A View from Kiel”, *Center for International Maritime Security*, 16 August 2017.

Figure 1: *Allied Maritime Strategy—its setting.* [Sebastian Bruns, September 2017]



In the following essay, I will very briefly review the NATO and EU maritime strategies to describe where allied navies are coming from and where they might likely be going collectively. After all, allied navies are like a card game: one does not play a single card, but a whole hand. The goal of the following analysis is not to attribute success or failure to a strategy, or to a particular alliance or a member state. Success in strategy is perhaps best characterised as survival of the alliance and its member states. The chapter closes with a brief strategic assessment and some recommendations for future research and action in the field of allied maritime strategy.

### *NATO and its “Alliance Maritime Strategy”*

The AMS was linked with NATO’s 2010 Strategic Concept. It highlighted collective defence, crisis management, cooperative security and maritime security as key seaborne contributions to the alliance’s security and defence. The AMS was approved on 5 January 2011 and officially published two months later—just a day before NATO members intervened militarily in Libya.

For the naval part, the Libya intervention, called Operation Unified Protector (OUP), was a high-end crisis management operation that included cruise missile attacks from submarines, gunfire support, mine clearance, air power roles, ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance), EW (electronic warfare), blockading ports and the sinking of the Libyan fleet (pier side). Sea-based fighter aircraft and attack helicopters provided critical air interdiction capabilities that greatly facilitated the rebel victory. The international coalition quickly revealed mismatches and critical capability shortfalls in the alliance. It became clear that only the US possessed the capability to execute a fully fledged SEAD/DEAD (suppression/destruction of enemy air defences) campaign. That capability not only included strike assets such as cruise missiles and fighters, but electronic warfare/electronic attack, battlespace command and control, air-to-air refuelling, combat search and rescue, and airlifting. If that were not enough, the missile inventories of European navies were quickly depleted and in Washington DC, domestic politics on Capitol Hill factored high.<sup>11</sup> In addition, coun-

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11 See James Stavridis, *The Accidental Admiral. A Sailor Takes Command at NATO*. Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, 2014, 50–65.



tries such as Germany withdrew their naval assets altogether<sup>12</sup>—for questionable domestic reasons, but lending real meaning to the challenge of maintaining alliance cohesion.<sup>13</sup> Berlin's hesitancy to put its navy in the line of fire, while simultaneously straining the service with more and more maritime security operations (all this at a time when Germany suspended conscription to professionalise its armed forces), signalled that it felt competent enough to perform rather harmless tasks under the public radar, but left the harder jobs to allies—a disastrous signal.

Meanwhile, NATO's standing maritime groups, four of which evolved from the height of the Cold War to the present, operate on Europe's wet flanks.<sup>14</sup> Critically dependent on Member States' assets detailed to NATO's command, the number of ships in these groups waxed and waned, sometimes comprising less than a handful. For OUP, for example, NATO had to employ an auxiliary, the ITS *Etna*, as a command ship despite it lacking much of the electronic and IT equipment necessary for this role.

From August 2009 to December 2016, NATO committed naval forces to its maritime security mission to fight piracy at the Horn of Africa. Operation "Ocean Shield" offered countries a venue to organise a counter-piracy mission without having to rely on the parallel EU operation "Atalanta" or the American-led Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151). From 2009 to 2014, Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG1) and Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) alternated for the six-month rotations of Operation Ocean Shield duty.<sup>15</sup> Although piracy has dropped to record lows off the Somali coast, these low-end missions further degenerated the high-end capabilities of NATO navies—and were a long way from the original *raison d'être* of these fighting forces.<sup>16</sup>

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12 It should be noted that German aircrews continued to fly NATO AWACS aircraft throughout the engagement.

13 See Brooke Smith-Windsor, "NATO's Maritime Strategy and the Libya Crisis as Seen from the Sea", NATO Defence College Research Paper No. 90, Rome 2013. See also upcoming study (2022) by John D. Sherwood, *The Shores of Tripoli: The Sea Services and Libya, 1801–2011* (NHHC, pending declassification review).

14 The alliance's integrated Standing NATO Maritime Groups (SNMG) 1 and 2 are usually comprised of surface combatants such as frigates, destroyers and tankers. Standing NATO Mine-Countermeasure Groups (SNMCMG) 1 and 2 are by definition combined fleets of mine warfare boats and auxiliary vessels. NATO Maritime Command in Northwood (UK) has the lead.

15 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Counter-piracy operations (archived)", 16 December 2016. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_48815.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_48815.htm).

16 SNMG1 was born in 1968 as the Standing Naval Force Atlantic (STANAVFORLANT/SNF). SNMG2 began in 1969 as the Naval On-Call Force for the Mediter-

In the wake of Russia's incursion into Ukraine, the Wales Summit of 2014 and its follow-on Warsaw Summit of 2016 spurred the reorganisation of NATO's defence and security architecture, political outlook and naval focus. Operation "Sea Guardian" replaced the post-9/11 "Active Endeavour" in the Mediterranean Sea, where the SNMGs were now more needed than ever.<sup>17</sup> In parallel, an uptick in naval activity in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea, often under NATO's umbrella, offered a glimpse of the maritime dimensions of the emerging and deepening conflict with Russia. It also highlighted the need for high-end capabilities, not only for near-peer competition but also a new grey-zone/hybrid environment.

Beyond deterrence and defence, maritime security operations are still a thing of note. This is best demonstrated by NATO's carefully framed "Aegan Activity" (do not call it an operation just yet!). In the body of water that separates the two rivals—and NATO members—Greece and Turkey, an SNMG2 task unit is charged with assisting in the growing refugee and migrant crisis. Following a request by the two littoral states as well as, notably, Germany, NATO is conducting reconnaissance, monitoring and surveillance to assist local authorities and the EU's border and coastal agency, Frontex and its "Operation Poseidon".

### *The EU and its "Maritime Security Strategy"*

In contrast to Frontex, which is in the process of building a permanent standing force of border police and coast guardsmen, the European Union's on-call naval forces (EU NAVFOR) rely exclusively on member states' contributions detailed to EU NAVFOR for limited periods of time. Many member states have to juggle national missions with both EU and NATO commitments. With shrinking forces, these nations have to confront the simple fact that a ship can only be at one place at any one time—in other words, quantity has a quality of its own. Without increasing the size of their respective fleets, many member states will continue to suffer from severe operational and defence policy constraints.

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anean (NAVOCFORMED) and evolved into the permanent Standing Naval Force Mediterranean (STANAVFORMED/SNFM) in 1992. They were renamed in 2004 and 2006 respectively, and the regional focus was lifted.

- 17 See Alessandra Giada Dibenedetto, "Implementing the Alliance Maritime Strategy in the Mediterranean: NATO's Operation Sea Guardian", NATO Defence College Research Paper No. 146, Rome 2016.

Much like NATO, the EU published its first strategic document *ex post*. In an effort to ramp up the security of the United Nations' World Food Program's (WFP) cargo ships providing critical support to the starving people of Somalia on the Horn of Africa, the EU established its first unique naval activity as early as December 2008, when EU NAVFOR "Operation Atalanta" naval vessels began escorting the humanitarian assistance ships through the piracy-prone waters off the Horn of Africa. Coordination was quickly established between EUNAVOR Atalanta, NATO and CTF-151, and the vast region was divided up into patrol sectors. All intelligence sources (especially maritime patrol aircraft) shared information in real time with sector leaders, who then assigned appropriate forces to react to each identified threat.

The decrease in piracy incidents from record highs (2012) to less than a handful (2020) can be attributed to a variety of factors: the integrated approach of Atalanta with NATO and CTF-151; the use of convoying and private security forces by shipping companies; a slightly improved security situation on the ground; and the fact that EUNAVFOR units can arrest persons suspected of piracy and prosecute suspects in either EU member states, regional states or third states.<sup>18</sup> National or multilateral tasking saw American, Japanese, Chinese, Russian and South Korean warships dispatched to the region. Crucially, by conducting expeditionary operations, the PLA-N (and to a lesser degree the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, JMSDF) gained their sea legs at the Horn of Africa. Naval activity around the Horn of Africa truly provided a first glimpse into the emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century multipolar world buttressed by sea power.<sup>19</sup> In parallel, a division of labour emerged between NATO and the EU. Maritime security missions, maritime domain awareness and a clear link with the EU Capacity Building (EUCAP) Nestor/Somalia mission (a civilian deployment initiative designed to build maritime law enforcement capacity in the Horn of Africa) characterised "Atalanta", whereas NATO and CTF-151 focused on obtaining and processing hard military intelligence, fighting piracy and terrorism ashore and at sea, and naval coalition formation in the wider sense.

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18 EEAS, Operation Atalanta, Fact Sheet, 2020; EEAS, Key Facts and Figures EU-NAVFOR Somalia-Operation Atalanta. <https://eunavfor.eu/key-facts-and-figures/>, accessed 1 April 2020.

19 Sebastian Bruns, "Multipolarity Under the Magnifying-Glass: Establishing Maritime Security Off the Horn of Africa", *Sicherheit und Frieden (S+F) / Security and Peace*, vol. 27, No. 3, 174–179.

In light of the significant rise in seaborne mass migration in 2015, the EU quickly came up with its second EU NAVFOR. “Operation Sophia”, named after a child born to her rescued mother on board the German frigate *Schleswig-Holstein*, assembled a diverse coalition of maritime assets in the Central Mediterranean to replace an earlier effort by Italy known as Mare Nostrum and augment Frontex coastguard vessels under Operation Triton. Sophia’s major mission was to fight human trafficking and other types of criminal activity, but because of the legal and humanitarian obligation to rescue mariners in distress at sea, the operation evolved into more of a large-scale immigrant search and rescue operation than anything else. While saving thousands of migrants from a potential death at sea, the operation was criticised for facilitating migration and was ultimately suspended in autumn 2019.<sup>20</sup> A new EU NAVFOR mission called “Irimi” replaced “Sophia” in 2020. Its focus is monitoring illicit Libyan oil exports, training and building up the capacity of the Libyan Coastguard and Navy (which began during Sophia), and contributing to disrupting human trafficking mainly through aerial surveillance. It relies mainly on Libyan coastguard units and international non-governmental sea rescue organisations such as Sea Watch and Sea-Eye. The decline in migration in the Central Mediterranean can mainly be attributed to the Libyan coastguard, which has been successfully interdicting most migrant dinghies in Libyan waters since 2018.<sup>21</sup>

### *Strategic Takeaways*

It is hard to overstate that in defence analyses and in practical maritime strategy, process counts, not products. Maritime strategies can only represent the state of affairs at a certain point of time. It appears to be a feature of democracies that they are often very cautious (some may say unwilling or unable) to proactively plan ahead for more than a legislative period. The reason is simple: political majorities shift. A similar observation holds true for alliances that are made up of democratic member states. In addition, strategies are immediately subject to interpretation, operationalisation and, perhaps most important of all, events that potentially change the business model of said strategy. These can be revolutionary like the catastrophic

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20 European Union External Action, EU CSDP Missions & Operations for Human Security, May 2019.

21 See EU Operation Irimi. <https://www.operationirini.eu/>.

COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted military readiness and societal priorities in toto. They can be evolutionary, too, in changes in international politics that govern the roles and missions of naval forces altogether. For example, Russia's hybrid and proxy warfare has prompted an "All Hands" policy evolution for NATO and many of its member states. Anti-submarine warfare, surface combat and mine countermeasures are at the forefront of many naval discussions—again.

Russia's annexation of the Crimea and the alliance's subsequent adoption of concepts signalled a "naval turn" for NATO. It is a testament to the agility and foresight of the AMS's authors that the 2011 strategy still holds value for the North Atlantic pact.<sup>22</sup> Concurrently for the European Union, the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas since 2015 has signalled a "maritime turn" in that it has driven home to decision makers the need for maritime security operations and humanitarian assistance.

Over time, NATO and the EU have found a very useful way of sharing of responsibilities in line with member states' political priorities. Where maritime security missions are in high demand, warships can assemble under EU NAVFORs to promote good order at sea, secure sea lines of communication, provide a small if meaningful strategic presence, and counter some of the most gruesome organised crime and hardships at sea.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, providing ships under a NATO mandate and in standing maritime groups provides training and execution of the "sharp end of the spear" in much-needed warfighting skills. They too provide naval diplomacy and constabulary roles, perhaps to a lesser degree and certainly dependent on member states' political stances. If NATO strongly recalled that it is a military as well as a political alliance, according to the 1967 Harmel Report, and got its member states to understand this properly, the alliance could be decisively stronger "from the sea". The efforts to reform the alliance through an updated strategic concept offer ample room to implant more sea power awareness in the alliance. This will necessarily include a hard look at the future of command and control, with representation of maritime (not just naval) leaders in joint commands, and the burgeoning number of talking shops such as the NATO "Centres of Excellence" and

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22 On the return of the North Atlantic as a key theatre, see Magnus Nordenman, *The New Battle for the Atlantic. Emerging Naval Competition with Russia in the Far North*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 2019.

23 For an introduction to the breadth and depth of crimes and misdemeanours at sea, see Ian Urbania, *"The Outlaw Ocean: Crime and Survival in the Last Untamed Frontier"*. London: Bodley Head, 2019.

surplus regional commands. A cautiously updated NATO maritime strategy would fit well into such an endeavour.<sup>24</sup>

If and when war breaks out, the alliance needs to be prepared to deter, fight and favourably terminate hostilities. An updated Concept of Maritime Operations not unlike the CONMAROPS of the 1980s should also be produced.<sup>25</sup> Emerging coalitions of the willing, like the European-led Maritime Situational Awareness Operation Agénor, which at the time of writing is patrolling the Persian Gulf to secure international shipping, will be another factor to consider. 30 NATO member states might have trouble agreeing on naval responses to international problems, especially because such solutions entail a buy-in from landlocked countries and those who only operate limited coastal navies. If and when war breaks out, the alliance needs to be prepared to deter, fight and favourably terminate hostilities.

Meanwhile, the EU's case is slightly different given its membership roster and its sense of purpose. The Permanent European Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is a sign of a greater focus on defence, and EU NAVFORs are a model to be studied in greater depth. This author has suggested that the EU and interested member states should pursue creative ways to accelerate integration and maritime security capabilities through an auxiliary EU navy or perhaps by having an EU NAVFOR (rather than individual member state navies).<sup>26</sup> The EUMSS and its well-placed implementation plan are very useful items for the political process of conceptualising and operationalising maritime strategy.

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24 See Steven Horrell, Magnus Nordenman and Walter Slocombe, "Updating NATO's Maritime Strategy", Atlantic Council Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, July 2016.

25 See Palmer, Diego A. Ruiz (2013). *A Maritime Renaissance – Naval Power in NATO's future*. In: Krause, Joachim and Bruns, Sebastian (eds.). *Routledge Handbook of Naval Strategy and Security*, 367; Swartz, Peter M. (2003). *Preventing the Bear's Last Swim: The NATO Concept of Maritime Operations (ConMarOps) of the last Cold War Decade*. In: Loucas, I. and Marcyannis, G. (eds.). *NATO's Maritime Power 1949–1990* (47–61). Inner Publications, 48.

26 See "Towards a Standing European Union Auxiliary Navy" (with Moritz Brake). Brussels: Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, July 2020; "Building European Seapower: Reinvigorating EU naval strategy and maritime capabilities for the 2020s". *Tidskrift i Sjöväsendet*, vol. 183, No. 5 (2020), 541–550.

*A Research Agenda*

Still, we—the collective assemblage of naval strategists, defence policymakers, academics, maritime thinkers, sailors and soldiers—know precariously little about allied maritime strategy and its operationalisation. Previous works have focused largely on national maritime strategy.<sup>27</sup> Others strung groups of countries together for a comparative analysis.<sup>28</sup> Few recent in-depth studies focus on the naval efforts of the alliance itself or take a deeper look at the national-to-allied maritime strategy relationship.<sup>29</sup> A study on the SNMGs/SNMCMGs would be of utmost importance in developing a methodology with which to assess if and how combined operations at sea and from the sea make a difference to alliance cohesion and the attainment of defence and deterrence objectives. The EUMSS would also warrant much more academic and policy-relevant research, in particular reviewing the effectiveness of navies under EU NAVFOR roles and reviewing challenges and opportunities related to “ad hoc coalitions”. If the Cold War and the post-Cold War world really were abnormalities in the use of navies (the former in its overwhelming concentration on naval warfighting, the latter in its emphasis on maritime security), then the 2020s and the potential of the respective worlds of Alfred Thayer Mahan and Julian Corbett

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- 27 For the US Navy, see Peter Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy: American Naval Thinking in the Post-Cold War Era*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015; Amund Lundesgaard, *Controlling the Sea and Projection Power. U.S. Navy Strategy and Force Structure After the Cold War*. Dissertation: University of Oslo, 2016; Sebastian Bruns, *US Naval Strategy and National Security. The Evolution of American Maritime Power*. London: Routledge, 2018.
- 28 Gary Weir and Sandra Doyle (eds.), *You Cannot Surge Trust. Combined Naval Operations of the Royal Australian Navy, Canadian Navy, Royal Navy, and United States Navy, 1991–2003*. Washington, DC: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2013; Jeremy Stöhs, *The Decline of European Naval Forces. Challenges to Sea Power in an Age of Fiscal Austerity and Political Uncertainty*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2018.
- 29 Notable exceptions include Dean C. Allard, “Strategic Views of the US Navy and NATO on the Northern Flank, 1917–1991”, *The Northern Mariner* XI, No. 1 January (2001), 11–24; Leon A. Edney, “50 Years of the Cold War: A Maritime SACLANT Perspective”, in: Karl L. Kleve (ed.), *50 years with the Cold War. Report from the conference in Bodø, 3–4 June, 1999 (Bodø 1999)*; Geoffrey Till, “Holding the Bridge in Troubled Times: The Cold War and the Navies of Europe,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies* vol. 28, No. 2 April (2005), 309–337. I am indebted to Anselm van der Peet for pointing these out. See also Joel Sokolsky, *Seapower in the Nuclear Age. The United States Navy and NATO 1949–1980*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press 1991; Corbin Williamson, *The U.S. Navy and its Cold War Alliances, 1945–1953*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press 2020.

merging will see a greater demand for sound allied maritime strategy, and the understanding thereof.

### Epilogue

The study of sea power theory and practice cannot be left confined to the disciples of Mahan or Corbett, or to the classrooms at the naval academies. The maritime domain affects us all, and bridging the gap between history and policy—as exemplified in the events and publications of the ISPK’s Center for Maritime Strategy & Security—will go a long way to understanding many contemporary opportunities and shortfalls when it comes to the sea. My sincere gratitude also goes out to everyone who contributed to this book; in particular the 20 authors and the two editors. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Berlin) made the production of this edited volume possible through a substantial grant.

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