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U.S and Russia's naval policy after 9.11

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• To what extent do the maritime strategies of these two countries take a cooperative approach toward the nations of the region?

• Is the present level of bilateral or multilateral cooperation adequate and sufficient to meet these challenges to maintain regional security?

These questions require a focus on the maritime interests and strategies of two countries. The first is the sole remaining superpower that now sits astride of the world “like a Colossus”. The second is a former superpower that is now seeking to regain at least some of its former influence. The two countries are on the same side in the War on Terrorism but more generally their bilateral relationship remains stuck somewhere between any and possible adversary. My paper addresses each of the questions in turn. It first discusses the regional security outlook and the contributions of the maritime strategies of the U.S. and Russia. It then considers the issue of security cooperation or more particularly, maritime security cooperation.

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U.S. AND RUSSIA’S NAVAL POLICY AFTER 9.11

by

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INTRODUCTION

This paper was required to address the following questions:

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The ideas of common security, cooperative security and security cooperation are entrenched in the language of regional security. There is a presumption that security cooperation is both good and necessary to maintain regional security. But the questions compel some examination of this premise. Is all cooperation good? Some cooperation might only be between a select "club" of countries and exclude others. Higher levels of bilateral and multilateral military exercising are excellent forms of security cooperation but they might also be incentives to increase defense spending. Arms sales and technology transfers can constitute military cooperation but this paper focuses on two countries that are the world’s

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Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

(William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, I.i.134)
biggest exporters of arms. Thus cooperation could lead to bigger defense budgets with the undesirable consequence of promoting regional instability rather than stability. Cooperation might then be a "stumbling block" for regional security rather than a "building block".

The Asia-Pacific is a region that prior to September 11, 2001 was making good progress towards a cooperative regional security regime. However post 9.11, that regime has slipped away. In many ways the regional security outlook is less promising than it was before 9.11. To that extent, this paper has a pessimistic note to it. We need to get real maritime security cooperation and confidence-building back on the agenda again. When we look at the general regional security outlook and the contributions of the current maritime strategies of the U.S. and Russia, we cannot be confident that we will get a lead from either of those two countries at least in the short term.

GENERAL SECURITY OUTLOOK

Threats to Regional Security

North Korea, the situation across the Taiwan Strait, the conflicting claims in the South China Sea and Terrorism are major threats to regional security. However following 9.11, North Korea and Terrorism are most talked about as major threats while in what almost amounts to a "zero-sum" game, the South China Sea and Taiwan have lost prominence.

North Korea

Most strategic analysts now see North Korea as the major threat to security in the region. Identified as part of the "axis of evil" by President Bush, North Korea has resumed its nuclear program and is capable of launching missile attacks on neighboring countries. The U.S. considers that all options for resolution of the North Korean situation are "on the table" and has not ruled out the use of force. In December 2002 during Operation Enduring Freedom, the Spanish Navy boarded the Cambodian flagged merchant ship So San in the Northwest Indian Ocean and found 15 Seud vessels from North Korea onboard destined for Yemen. The So San, after initially being detained, was allowed to proceed on passage because international law does not prohibit the export of conventional arms. Following the interceptions of vessels from North Korea carrying drugs, counterfeit money and weapons, the U.S. and Japan are talking about a blockade of North Korean ports.

The U.S. is also revisiting the type of situation that emerged with the So San with a new approach that would overcome some of the legal problems that might be encountered with boarding and searching vessels during any blockade of North Korea. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell has tabled plans to interdict North Korean ships on the high seas known as the

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2 With 36% of global deliveries of arms, Russia overtook the U.S. as the world's largest supplier of arms to other countries. Peter Starck, "War on Terror Accelerates World Military Spending", Reuters News online, June 17, 2003 (http://asia.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=worldNews&storyID=2940385) (accessed 19/06/03)


4 Australia is also reportedly involved in these talks. Tom Allard, "Navy Role flagged in policing Koreans", The Sydney Morning Herald, June 11, 2003, p.1.
Proliferation Security Initiative. It has also been referred to as “pre-emptive pre-emption” because it would be aimed at preventing trade at the point of origin of weapons that could later be used in pre-emptive strikes against American interests.

Taiwan

Although the situation is currently quiet, Taiwan remains a “stumbling block” for regional stability, particularly due to its impact on China – U.S. relations. The cross-strait crisis of 1996 and deployment of U.S. carrier battle groups provided examples to China of the importance of sea power. The mainland is acquiring weapons from Russia, and Taiwan is securing much-needed new weapons from the U.S., including second-hand Kidd-class destroyers and eventually, new submarines. However, the latter program has been deferred due to the likely high cost of the submarines and difficulties in getting a country to supply the technology and build the submarines. Meanwhile China is putting greater resources into modernizing the People’s Liberation Army – Navy (PLA-N). While the overall correlation of forces across the Taiwan Strait increasingly favors the mainland, the War on Terrorism and U.S. leadership have handicapped China’s efforts to gain economic and strategic influence in the region and to counter American strategic dominance. This has lessened the focus on Taiwan as a regional security problem.

South China Sea

The South China Sea is the scene of considerable maritime activity, including important sea lines of communication (SLOCs), fishing and oil and gas developments, as well as significant levels of maritime crime, especially piracy, drug smuggling and illegal people movement. Islands and reefs in the area are the subject of conflicting sovereignty claims with China, Taiwan and Vietnam claiming all of them and the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei some particular features. The ASEAN-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea agreed in 2002 was a positive step towards easing tensions.

Terrorism

Terrorist organizations have been discovered operating across Southeast Asia and several terrorist attacks have occurred, notably in Indonesia. Threats from terrorism could easily have a maritime dimension that requires a higher level of vigilance at sea. Confirmed instances of maritime terrorism include the suicide small boat attack on USS Cole in Aden in 2000 and the attack on the French oil tanker Limburg off Yemen in October

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2002. The Aceh rebel movement in Indonesia has threatened to attack ships and Singapore uncovered tentative plans by the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) movement to attack U.S. ships entering Singapore. The leader of the Singapore branch of JI admitted that the organization had planned to blow up Changi naval base.

The vulnerability of high value targets, such as oil tankers and vessels carrying military cargoes, in narrow straits and choke points has led to such vessels being escorted by warships in these waters. British, Spanish, Portuguese and American naval vessels are patrolling the Strait of Gibraltar on a routine basis against the threat of terrorist attack. Similar arrangements are in place in the Malacca Strait with the U.S. Navy and the Indian Navy cooperating to escort high value targets.

U.S. NAVAL POLICY

U.S. Security Policy in the Western Pacific

Central features of U.S. security policy in the Western Pacific have been the strengthening of bilateral alliances and expansion of defense cooperation activities with other States into informal coalitions centered on U.S. maritime power. The U.S. – Japan alliance is the main bilateral relationship. This has involved new defense cooperation guidelines, cooperative research on theater missile defense (TMD) and U.S. encouragement of a greater Japanese security role.

Until 9.11, the U.S. saw the region as headed towards growing stability despite perceptions of an emerging threat from China. However, “stability” is no longer a word in the U.S. strategic lexicon. The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR Report) portrays an unstable world of mounting turmoil and dangers owing to terrorism and other threats. The QDR Report also called for U.S. forces to be modernized and transformed in order to adopt new technologies, structures, and doctrines to meet the new threats. U.S. security policy had been gradually changing in response to globalization but there has been a marked acceleration of the pace of change since 9.11. With events that day and their aftermath, Americans experienced the “dark side” of globalization. 9.11 showed that U.S. borders must be protected in a way that had previously not been thought necessary and how events even in more remote parts of the globe could be of concern and require some U.S. response.

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Coalition-building activity has been highly visible in Southeast Asia\(^\text{16}\) where the U.S. has been attempting to build upon its various defense cooperation linkages. Prior to 9.11, these coalitions were directed towards balancing the rise of China’s influence but subsequently they have become part of the War on Terrorism. They are recognition of possible terrorist threats in Southeast Asia.

**U.S. Military Strategy**

U.S. Military Strategy needs a threat. It had one with the Soviet Union but through the 1990s, it moved towards China. Not long after taking office, the new Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, reportedly identified China as the primary security threat for the U.S. military.\(^\text{17}\) A RAND report in 2001 saw China as the central concern for U.S. strategic interests in Asia and highlighted the potential for conflict in Asia.\(^\text{18}\) That has changed since 9.11 and global terrorism has become the new threat.

As a consequence, two important strategic changes are occurring.\(^\text{19}\) First, overseas presence will be considered globally rather than as a set of disconnected regional activities. This global perspective likely will involve overseas presence being shifted between regions on a flexible basis as emerging situations dictate. Secondly, overseas presence will be considered a tool of power projection interacting with reinforcements from continental U.S. rather than as an instrument of local forward defense in fixed locations. This will provide the capacity to swiftly apply U.S. military power across a range of locations in key regions against a complex and adaptive enemy.

Successful military operations overseas are essential to U.S. homeland security because they preempt the planning and actions of an enemy. Global projection power pushes out the borders of the U.S., increases warning time, seizes the initiative and disrupts the enemy’s freedom of action. Central elements of contemporary U.S. military strategy will be the military superiority of the U.S., unilateral action and preemptive strike.

**Military Superiority**

The U.S. now enjoys military superiority in the air, on land, in space and at sea. No other nation has ever enjoyed such power in modern times. However as was demonstrated by 9.11, the U.S. is still vulnerable, particularly to asymmetric strategies and systems designed to strike at perceived U.S. weaknesses. The threats might be largely unpredictable. While the attacks of 9.11 were a dramatic demonstration of asymmetric warfare, this form of warfare is not just the preserve of terrorists. With the overwhelming military superiority of


the U.S., any adversary is likely to seek tactics and technologies that help to redress the military balance. These might include, for example, sea mines; swarming attacks by small high-speed craft; and lightweight, highly portable land-based anti-shipping missile systems; and small, quiet diesel-powered submarines.

Unilateral Action

The War in Iraq demonstrated the preparedness of the U.S. to “go it alone” in situations where it assesses that a potential threat to American national security exists. No policies that are believed to be in the U.S. national interest will be watered down by multilateral or allied concerns. There is a lot of rhetoric in current U.S. policies about assisting friends and allies but the reality is that these policies are all about U.S. interests and objectives. However, the support of “coalitions of the willing” may still be necessary in order to ensure success. This is particularly the case in areas such as the seas of East Asia where access to littoral waters is through straits, “choke points” and focal areas.

A growing gulf over international security is opening up between U.S. and its Cold War security partners in Western Europe. This is not just a result of the War in Iraq but extends into broader issues of global security concern. These include the climate change treaty, the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the International Criminal Court, which are regarded by the Europeans as examples of the new U.S. unilateralism.20

Preemptive Strike

A key element of U.S. Military Strategy is the preparedness to take preemptive action against other countries, particularly those that are suspected of harboring terrorists. Sovereignty will not be respected in situations where “clear and present danger” is deemed to exist. The U.S. argues that preemptive strike has always been allowed under the UN Charter in the sense that a country can respond to an imminent threat without having been attacked first. This policy recognizes that in the case of possible strike by terrorists or weapons of mass destruction, warning times are virtually non-existent.

Overseas Deployment Policy

The overseas military deployment policies of the U.S are currently under review to ensure that they meet new requirements of mobility and flexibility. This might mean possible reductions in the forces based in East Asia in favor of “smaller, more agile forces”21 deployed from continental U.S. or from a greater number of smaller bases designed for the rapid projection of U.S. military power against possible threats. These forward operating bases will be located in the vicinity of possible “hot spots” and potential theaters of operations. The bases are being built or expanded in countries such as Qatar, Bulgaria and Kyrgyzstan, and the U.S. territory of Guam. This network of bases corresponds to what the

21 David Boey, “US aiming for smaller, more agile forces in region”, The Sunday Times (Singapore), June 1, 2003, p. 4.
U.S. perceives an "arc of instability" running from North Africa through the Middle East to East Asia. The U.S. has a major need for bases on or just off the East Asian littoral—in the Philippines, Singapore and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. These are not required to base forces under a permanent arrangement but to ensure that access is available when required.

Some redeployment of forces away from existing major bases, particularly in South Korea and Japan, is likely. It is no longer clear that good value is obtained from in-country basing and rotational deployments from the U.S. may be preferable. However, the argument that the U.S. no longer needs to station large forces overseas on a permanent basis is not necessarily widely supported. In the view of one observer, this argument overlooks a compelling political reality. The constant presence of large combat forces not only is a visual manifestation of U.S. strategic power but also is needed to convince allies and adversaries that the United States can be relied upon to protect its interests and meet its security commitments in a still dangerous world.

U.S. Naval Strategy

With the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Navy faced a need to come up with a new strategy to replace the highly successful Maritime Strategy of the 1980s. With the experience of the Gulf War, Somalia and the Balkans, the new strategy became ... From the Sea later updated to Forward... From the Sea. The focus of those strategies on littoral operations remains valid post 9.11 although with a need to recognize the priorities of homeland defense and countering terrorism. Fortunately from the perspective of the U.S. Navy, this has involved little change to Forward... From the Sea.

Sea Power 21

In continuance of the theme of fighting "war from sea" rather than "war at sea", the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Vern Clark, launched the Sea Power 21 concept in June 2002. This is the vision of how transformation will be implemented in the U.S. Navy by through enhanced war-fighting capabilities with new concepts, technologies, organizational initiatives, and improved acquisition processes. It envisages that the current surface combatant fleet (excluding aircraft carriers, amphibious ships and supply ships), largely comprised of CG-47 class Aegis cruisers and DDG-51 class destroyers, will be joined by

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26 Admiral Vern Clark unveiled Sea Power 21 at the Naval War College in Newport, RI, on 12 June 2002.
new classes of ship: the CG(X) with advanced theater air and ballistic missile defense capabilities, the DD(X) with powerful surface strike capabilities and the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) to handle threats in the littoral environment.\(^\text{27}\)

*Sea Power 21* is based on three primary operational activities (*Sea Strike, Sea Shield* and *Sea Basing*) but also includes elements of network centric warfare (NCW) integrating sensors, weapons, networks and platforms (*FORCEnet*), resources and funding (*Sea Enterprise*), research and development (*Sea Trial*) and the management and morale of human resources (*Sea Warrior*). They have a lot of terminology that is really relevant only to the U.S. Navy and indicative of the great gulf that is opening up with naval technology and doctrine between the U.S. Navy and other navies.

**Sea Strike**

*Sea Strike* is focused on offensive operations and “projecting persistent, responsive and precise offensive power.”\(^\text{28}\) It involves strike aircraft and cruise missiles, as well as Marines, information operations, Special Operations Forces, and the joint strike capabilities of the Army and Air Force, plus the strike capabilities of allies and coalition partners. New capabilities planned to enter service include four *Ohio* class ballistic missile submarines converted to carry cruise missiles, the CVN(X) nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, and the new DD(X) destroyers. Information Operations will constitute a new warfare area. Capabilities will include ship-based psychological operations dissemination systems, computer network attack and defense, as well as improved electronic warfare capabilities.\(^\text{29}\)

**Sea Shield**

*Sea Shield* will provide layered defense to protect the homeland, sustain access to contested littoral areas, and project a defensive umbrella over coalition and joint forces ashore even in distant parts of the globe.\(^\text{30}\) Key elements include sea-based ballistic missile defense systems largely to be provided by the CG(X) class ships, littoral control capabilities, new mine countermeasure capabilities and enhanced ASW particularly against modern, quiet diesel submarines in shallow waters.

Littoral sea control is a major mission under *Sea Shield.*\(^\text{31}\) In Roger Barnett’s words, “The key to future operations is access – because once access can be reliably secured, enemy


\(^\text{31}\) Koch, “US Navy Outlines Vision”.
sanctuaries can be compromised and objectives can be attained. Littoral sea control includes defense against expected threats such as swarming small craft, naval mines and diesel-electric submarines. Damaged sustained by U.S. warships over the last decade including by mines and suicide boat attack have opened up possible gaps in the ability of the U.S. Navy to operate in littoral waters. Small, fast attack craft represent a significant threat to naval forces especially in geographically confined waters where land clutter and the intensity of shipping and fishing activity may make long-range detection difficult.

The littoral combat ship (LCS) is planned to provide much of the capability required in littoral areas. It will be smaller and faster than the DD(X). It will be designed modularly so that it can be reconfigured fairly quickly to perform one of three missions: ASW against quiet diesel submarines operating in crowded, noisy and shallow coastal waters; mine countermeasures; and countering swarm attacks by small, high-speed boats armed with missiles. The attack on USS Cole in Aden highlighted the vulnerability of warships when in foreign ports for re-fuelling, maintenance or rest and recreation. To overcome this vulnerability, the U.S. Navy has formed readily deployable mobile security squadrons to escort military vessels into harbors and protect them while alongside. In the first instance there will be three squads with one based on each coast of continental U.S. and one in Guam but they will be capable of rapid deployment to other ports where a threat exists.

**Sea Basing**

Sea Basing will exploit inherent advantages of sea-based forces to operate over the horizon and without dependence on bases in foreign territory. By controlling the sea, the U.S. Navy will create a sanctuary for joint forces and provide mobile bases for assisting friends and allies. Expeditionary operations and amphibious warfare capabilities are fundamental elements of Sea Basing. A new class of amphibious assault ship, the LHA(R) will be designed to operate the short take-off/vertical landing (STOVL) variant of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and tilt-rotor V-22 aircraft and to provide forward basing for special forces. Along with the LHA (R), the U.S. Navy is also developing new concepts for maritime pre-positioning, high-speed sea-lift, and new amphibious capabilities for the Marines.

**Global Concept of Operations**

The U.S. Navy’s Global Concept of Operations puts a clear emphasis on providing naval striking power around the globe. It is based on introducing new packages of naval forces that will enhance deterrence and improve the ability of the U.S.N. to generate combat power.

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simultaneously in different parts of the world. This has been developed in response to the shift away in the 2001 QDR from the previous preoccupation with preparing for two major theater wars (MTWs) in Northeast Asia and the Persian Gulf.

Winning the global War on Terrorism is now the U.S. Navy’s number one priority. The requirement now is to concurrently defend the homeland against terrorist attack, deter adversaries in four critical regions, swiftly defeat enemies in two of the four regions and win one of the two conflicts decisively (known as the 1/4/2/1 strategic prescription).

Reorganized carrier strike groups will have fewer surface combatants and attack submarines than a carrier battle group and the expeditionary strike groups will include a strike capability provided by surface combatants and a submarine, as well as amphibious ships. The number of ships assigned to the Pacific Fleet is likely to be increased and the Atlantic Fleet downsized. This is part of the QDR Report’s anticipated shift of some overseas presence forces from Europe to Asia. It is unlikely however, that the U.S. Navy will relocate one of its Atlantic Fleet aircraft carriers due to the personnel disruption involved.

RUSSIA’S NAVAL POLICY

Russia’s Security Policy

Russia is seeking to regain its former strategic influence in the region largely through the projection of maritime power and by forming “an alliance of convenience” with China to balance U.S. influence. In July 2001, Russia and China signed the bilateral Treaty on Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation. This treaty formally opposes U.S. missile defense plans and puts Russia more firmly behind China’s claim to sovereignty over Taiwan. China and Russia, along with the former Soviet Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, are also members of the political-military coalition, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Nevertheless, Russia remains more interested in the Indian Ocean than the Pacific. This reflects the reality that Russia’s

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36 This discussion of the Global Concept of Operations is based on Vice Admiral Mike Mullen USN, “Global Concept of Operations”, U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, April 2003, pp. 66-69.
39 Mullen, “Global Concept of Operations”, p.66
44 Ibid., footnote 140, p.63.
strategic interests are principally focussed to the West in Europe and Central Asia rather than in East Asia.

Russia and China have tended to come more together in recent years as much as anything to act as a counter to U.S. hegemony in the Western Pacific. The bilateral relationship involves the sale by Russia of high technology weapon systems, including Sovremenny-class guided-missile destroyers and Kilo-class submarines. China is the largest customer for the Russian defense industry receiving about 70 percent of Russia’s foreign arm sales in 2000. In October 1999 the Russian and Chinese navies conducted their first joint naval exercise since 1949. With China’s continuing purchases of surface combatants and submarines from Russia, it is possible that we will see heightened naval cooperation between China and Russia in the future.

Military Decline

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Navy has been plagued by budgetary difficulties. Large numbers of ships and submarines have been prematurely retired and lack of money has impacted on morale, maintenance levels, the availability of fuel for operations and exercises at sea and new construction programs. The navy suffered more from funding cut-backs than the other armed services. The internal security problems during the break-up of the Soviet Union and in subsequent years meant that the Army received by far the greater share of Russian defense expenditure. Effectively the Russian Navy declined from what had previously been a blue-water navy with global deployment capabilities to a littoral or coastal defense force. Many ships, submarines and aircraft have been prematurely retired. Some idea of the decline in the order of battle of the Russian Navy is given in Table 1. Further cuts in defense personnel are likely with President Putin ordering a three-year reduction of 350,000 military personnel with the Navy likely to lose 50,000 personnel.

The Pacific Fleet was as much affected by funding shortfalls as other fleets. These shortfalls led to the continued and fairly sharp decline in the order of battle of the Russian Pacific Fleet. Russia is also abandoning its Vietnamese naval base at Cam Ranh Bay before the lease expires in 2004. International naval analysts are skeptical whether it will be possible to achieve the new naval doctrine involving a transformation of the Pacific Fleet back into a significant strategic force at sea – the problems of under-funding and morale may be simply too large. Nevertheless, the “trump cards” that are still available to Russia are its nuclear weapons capability and high-tech weapon systems. The Russian Pacific Fleet has increased the frequency of its nuclear exercises in recent years and this has led to speculation that

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47 Ibid., p. 53.  
nuclear weapons are the only means by which to check an aggressive U.S. advance into some conflict in East Asia.  

Table 1

Soviet/Russian Naval Order of Battle 1989 - 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>450,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submarines</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major surface combatants</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combatant ships</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combat Aircraft</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Naval Doctrine

In 1998 the Russian Federation government adopted a master plan for the long-term development of Russia’s maritime potential that seeks to arrest the decline of Russian maritime activities around the world, especially oceanographic activities and marine scientific research. The plan also foresees a gradual increase in naval capability. This plan was followed by the new naval doctrine that sets goals and stages for the redevelopment of the Russian Navy based on realistic expectations of the funds likely to be available. President Putin approved the new naval doctrine in July 2001. It identifies the promotion and protection of Russia’s national interests at sea as a top priority goal and envisages the strengthening of the Russian position as a leading naval power. It calls for transforming the country back into a strategic force on the high seas.

A marked improvement in the naval budget is likely. In early 2003, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Federation Navy advised in an interview that:

We have embarked on implementation of this plan and hope the funding will gradually improve. In 2003, for instance, the navy’s budget was increased by 50% compared to the previous year. In realising the plan, we shall gradually depart from handling tasks in the near zones to [re-establishing] the presence of the Russian Navy in the world’s oceans.

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With a renewed focus on international activities as part of the new naval doctrine, several Russian naval ships have been visiting different oceans, including the Indian Ocean. These visits started in 2001.\textsuperscript{56} In April-June 2003, a group of about ten Russian warships from the Pacific and Black Sea fleets undertook a deployment to the Indian Ocean that was the largest out-of-area deployment undertaken by the Russian Federation Navy for over a decade.\textsuperscript{57} The ships held a number of exercises with the Indian Navy. Significantly while this deployment was underway, the Pacific Fleet also conducted a large-scale exercise, involving about twelve surface combatants as well as submarines and amphibious-landing ships, in the vicinity of Peter the Great Bay.\textsuperscript{58} Russia has now invited the U.S. Navy to take part in Russian military exercises in the Pacific Ocean at the end of August 2003.\textsuperscript{59}

**CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL SECURITY**

**Broad Strategic Impact**

This discussion leads on to consideration of the impact of the naval policies of the U.S. and Russia on the general security outlook of the region and the extent to which these two countries take a cooperative approach toward regional nations. Impacts are both positive and negative. They include the impact on the broad security outlook of the region, as well as the impact of particular naval developments, such as TMD and increased intelligence collection at sea. However, in the broadest terms, the attacks of 9.11, the War on Terrorism and the War on Iraq have had a profound impact on global and regional security. They have worsened the bleak position in many parts of the world of economic stagnation and poverty and diverted attention away from serious global environmental problems. They have adversely affected the U.S. economy and prospects for economic growth. The full shock waves of these developments have yet to be experienced.\textsuperscript{60}

On the positive side and by fostering cooperation, U.S. maritime strategies and interests are helping to build regional security capabilities and develop joint operational concepts to defend against common threats posed for example, by terrorism and North Korea. Naval cooperation is the most important form of military cooperation but while the U.S. has a lot to offer regional countries, Russia has much less so. The strategies of the U.S. include a large element of cooperation. Russian naval policy does as well but the impact of Russian policy on regional security has been much less than that of U.S. policy.


\textsuperscript{57} Rahul Bedi and Richard Scott, "Russia deploys naval squadron to Indian Ocean", *Jane's Navy International*, May 2003, p.6.


\textsuperscript{60} Campbell and Flournoy, *To Prevail*, p. 155.
U.S. policy is based on existing formal bilateral alliances and informal coalitions directed primarily towards fighting terrorism but “coalitions of the willing” will also be required to implement the Proliferation Security Initiative against North Korea. While the U.S. will gain the major strategic benefits from this cooperation, particularly in terms of facilitating access to the East Asian littoral, coalition activities also benefit regional countries through enhancing their own military capability and their exposure to the technology, operating concepts and doctrine of the U.S. Navy.\(^6^1\)

While the maritime strategies and interests of the U.S. and Russia both involve a cooperative approach to the nations of the region, the nature of these approaches is different. The U.S. approach to maritime cooperation is single dimensional based on military cooperation while, as a littoral State of East Asia, Russia has a multi-dimensional approach that includes such activities as law and order at sea, marine safety and fisheries management. For example, in July 2002, Japan and Russia reached an accord on cooperation in the detention of suspicious ships and the fight against drug and arms smuggling\(^6^2\).

Russia’s new naval doctrine involves seeking opportunities for naval exercises, including with the PLA-N and the U.S. Navy. In June 2001 CINCPAC Admiral Dennis Blair met with Admiral Mikhail Zakhareko, the Russian Pacific Fleet Commander, to discuss cooperative projects between the U.S. Navy and the Russian Pacific Fleet, including multinational naval exercises, submarine rescue training, and cooperation in fighting drug trafficking.\(^6^3\)

Prior to 9.11, a process of maritime strategic competition appeared to be underway in the region. The focus of the strategic competition was China with thinly disguised attempts on the part of some other regional powers to contain the strategic rise of China. It was feared that China’s widely based maritime power would increasingly challenge U.S. maritime supremacy. Attempted maritime strategic containment of China was evident in the defense dialogue between India and Japan and India and Taiwan, and efforts by Japan and the U.S. to create a trilateral naval alliance in Northeast Asia, involving the U.S., Japan and South Korea. They were also evident in Japanese initiatives to establish a naval presence in the South China Sea with anti-piracy patrols by the Japan Coast Guard and Indian naval activities, including naval ship visits and exercises East of Singapore. However, strategies since 9.11 have had diverted attention away from perceptions of an emerging threat from China and the perceived need to foster alliances, both formal and informal, to contain that threat. There is now evidence of some rapprochement between China and India with suggestions even of joint naval exercises\(^6^4\).

**Increased Naval Activity**

On the negative side, the naval policies of the U.S. in particular are setting a lead for

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\(^6^2\) “Japan, Russia to cooperate against smuggling, maritime intrusions”, ITAR-TASS news agency, Moscow (in English) 15 July 2002 (as reported by BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific – Political 15 July 2002).


increased naval activity and for greater naval spending in the region. The U.S. is shifting more vessels to the Pacific and actively promoting coalition naval exercises. While activities by the Russian Navy may have decreased over the past decade, regional navies, such as China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan and some in Southeast Asia, are now of more consequence. Regional seas are a more complex operating area for naval forces than they were in the past. There is increased risk of incidents between maritime forces with the ships, submarines and aircraft of so many different countries operating in similar areas of relatively confined waters.

Theater Missile Defense

Driven by concerns over the North Korean missile capability, the Northeast Asia region has been the focus of developments with TMD. However, proposals for trilateral cooperation between Japan, South Korea and the United States on TMD were not pursued because of the possible negative reaction from China, particularly the risk of Chinese fears that the system could be deployed in defense of Taiwan. TMD is one area of prospective naval cooperation that has a significant downside. In the words of one commentator, “America’s drive to develop missile-defence shields has managed to make enemies great and small: China is furious, Russia is angry, and even a tiny Pacific island state is giving Washington a headache.”

Submarine Operations

In view of the increasing number of submarines in the region, the safety of submerged submarine operations is of particular concern. Apart from regional countries acquiring more submarines, increased submarine activity by the U.S. and Russian navies is also probable. “Intruder” submarines may be detected and this may create a potentially serious situation if there is tension between the countries involved or the detection is made in a sensitive area, such as the South China Sea. The concern for submarine safety in the region was demonstrated by the combined submarine rescue exercises that have been held recently.

By their very nature, submarines are not well suited to naval cooperation and confidence building. They are covert weapon and sensor systems with two main roles – intelligence collection and maritime strike. Quiet, diesel-powered submarines are rightly judged by regional navies to be a particularly effective potential weapon system for relatively confined

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70 The first such exercise was held in the South China Sea in October 2000. Participating countries in this exercise, “Pacific Reach 2000,” were South Korea, Japan, Singapore and the U.S. “Korean Navy to Join Submarine Rescue Drill in Pacific,” The Korea Times National online, 5 September 2000, http://www.hk.co.kr/kt_nation/200009/20000905173304411177.htm.
and shallow waters. Even the U.S. Navy is circumspect about operating surface ships in littoral areas of East Asia against a submarine threat. Regional perceptions of an increased submarine threat will likely lead to a new focus on ASW with the acquisition of greater numbers of maritime patrol aircraft and the laying of underwater sonar arrays in coastal waters to detect “intruder” submarines. All these developments suggest the importance of avoidance of incidents at sea (INCSEA) agreements that cover submarine operations.

**Intelligence Collection and Military Surveying**

The extent, variety and sophistication of signals intelligence (SIGINT) operations in East Asia have increased significantly over the last decade. Aircraft, surface ships and submarines conduct these operations. While warships may be used as SIGINT collectors, sustained operations are more likely to be conducted by civilian-manned vessels sometimes posing as marine scientific research ships. The U.S. operates by far the largest and most active fleet of SIGINT aircraft in the Western Pacific. Russian SIGINT activities declined with the general rundown of Russian military activity after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Good oceanographic knowledge is an important “force multiplier” in maritime operations, but particularly for submarine operations, anti-submarine warfare and mine warfare. While oceanographic surveying in an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is subject to the jurisdiction of the coastal State, the U.S. and other maritime powers argue that oceanographic surveying and military scientific research conducted for military purposes are not.

Military surveying and intelligence collection activities in the region are going to become both more controversial and more dangerous in the future. Most of these activities in the region are conducted in the EEZ of one coastal State or another. Some regional countries have declared security zones that extend into the EEZ, or have specifically claimed that other States are not authorized to conduct military exercises or maneuvers in the EEZ without their consent. As a result of concern over the U.S. “spy plane” incident off Hainan in 2001 and more recent incidents involving U.S. “military survey” ships operating in its EEZ, China enacted new legislation in 2002 restricting surveying and intelligence collection activities in its EEZ.

**BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATION**

This paper was asked to address whether the present level of bilateral or multilateral cooperation is adequate and sufficient to meet the challenges of regional security. The answer to this question involves consideration of both the quantity and quality of cooperation. Is there enough cooperation and is it of the right type? A clear and concise

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72 These problems have been the subject of a series of meetings organized by the East-West Center and the Institute for Ocean Policy, Ship and Ocean Foundation, Tokyo. The reports of these meetings are available on East-West Center website at www.EastWestCenter.org.

answer is not possible to these questions. *Maritime cooperation* refers in this paper to any cooperation between regional countries at sea or associated with the sea, conducted by military or non-military institutions, with the objective or benefit of improving regional security. The process is underdeveloped at present in the Asia Pacific with the exception of the South Pacific where the strong common interests of island countries have provided a firm foundation for cooperative endeavors. Different levels of maritime security cooperation can be identified that take account of varying political levels, or intensity, of strategic commitment, shared policy objectives and cooperation, and different threat assessments. Some forms of naval cooperation in particular can have a significant downside.

**Naval Cooperation**

*Naval cooperation* is a subset of the broader concept of *maritime cooperation*. It has wide scope and may be bilateral or multilateral. At the lower end are low-key, confidence-building activities (e.g. ship visits, fleet reviews, personnel exchanges, navy-to-navy talks, and multilateral naval conferences). More ambitious activities might include information/intelligence exchanges, joint doctrine development, standard operating procedures (SOPs), combined exercises, INSEAN agreements, and cooperation on tasks such as marine scientific research and anti-piracy. The top end of *naval cooperation* might include cooperative maritime surveillance, standing regional naval forces, cooperative SLOC protection, and mine-countermeasures.

There is a presumption in the questions addressed by this paper that naval cooperation would be *good* for the region. But this may not always be so. This is not to say that naval cooperation should not be undertaken but rather to highlight the need for caution. Rather than being a “building block” for regional security cooperation, the pursuit of naval cooperation could turn out to be a “stumbling block” that heightens maritime insecurity and increases tension. This could occur, for example, through increased awareness of strengths and weaknesses leading to a *naval arms race* or by the creation of “alliances” among some particular navies but excludes others. The search for naval cooperation can have the undesirable effect of emphasizing differences in security perceptions and capabilities.

It is not hard to find problems with strengthening naval cooperation in the Western Pacific. Tensions are apparent throughout the region with regard to the latent, and from time-to-time not so latent, suspicions held by some countries concerning the capabilities and intentions of their neighbors. Differences in security policies among regional states have been considered “the most notable obstacles to the formation and development of (naval) coalitions.”

There are no natural naval “partners” in East Asia and problems with common doctrine, language and interoperability of equipment. Another limitation concerns the role that the U.S. Navy will play in regional naval cooperation. Some have seen this role as a leading one but others have been more circumspect. A more cautious approach would be in line with the view expressed by one American analyst that “the introduction of states who are new to long

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distance military power, which have their own strategic cultures, and whose behaviour could be influenced by historical factors, means that Washington has to act very carefully so as not to inadvertently heighten the emerging security dilemma in the region. These words were written several years before 9.11 but they remain relevant to current strategic circumstances.

Role of Coast Guards

Coast Guards are now more significant in the region and make a major contribution to maritime security cooperation. Existing coast guards (such as the Japan Coast Guard formerly the Japanese Maritime Safety Agency) are being expanded and some countries (such as Vietnam and Malaysia) that had not previously had coast guards are establishing them. Coast guard units are more suitable than warships for employment in sensitive areas where there are conflicting claims to maritime jurisdiction and/or political tensions between parties. In such situations, the arrest of a foreign vessel by a warship may be highly provocative whereas arrest by a coast guard vessel may be accepted as legitimate law enforcement. Coast guard vessels and aircraft are also generally less expensive than naval units.

Cooperation between coast guards may offer benefits not available with naval cooperation. Warships from major maritime powers may overwhelm vessels from small navies by their sheer size, technology and firepower. In some cases this might be the desired impact! On the other hand, coast guard vessels may appear less intimidating and in periods of tension they may be less provocative. They are “less threatening than larger, more heavily armed haze-gray warships” and are able to carry out exercises and training with other nations that might not be possible on a navy-to-navy basis. For example, that the Chinese have been “wary” of working closely with the U.S. military for fear that might reveal their weaknesses, and in April 2003, the U.S. and Russia held joint coast guard exercises in the Bering Sea. The latter exercises occurred despite the tension between the two countries over the war in Iraq. In June 2003, two Russian coast guard patrol boats visited the Japanese port of Otaru and conducted joint drills and exercises with the Japan Coast Guard.

There is more and more distance opening up between warships optimized for war-fighting and coast guard vessels designed for maritime policing. As Colin Gray has suggested, navies and coast guards are “driven by the beats of different drummers”. Naval expertise is becoming more different to that of coast guards. Navies are heavily focused on warfighting

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78 Ibid.
80 “Far East Coast Guard ships visit Japan”, Vladivostok News online, June 3, 2003 (http://vn.vladnews.ru/News/upd03_1.HTM) (accessed 7/06/03)
but coast guard personnel have to be “lifesavers, guardians and warriors.” Greater use of the sea, increased illegal activity at sea and concern for the marine environment have increased the number of relevant international regimes and made the business of maritime policing more complex. It is not something that navies can easily undertake on an ad hoc basis.

CONCLUSIONS

The War on Terrorism and the measures being taken in response have introduced considerable uncertainty into the regional security outlook. Regional seas will become even busier in the future with higher levels of shipping traffic and increased naval activity as regional navies expand and acquire more capabilities, including greater numbers of submarines. Many of the trends with naval activities and budgets are in the wrong direction. This resurgence of naval activity has widespread implications and could fuel a naval arms race in the region. Rough seas may lie ahead unless fundamental changes in direction occur.

There are still bilateral and intra-regional tensions lurking behind the current activities directed towards fighting terrorism and containing North Korea. These include a risk of renewed strategic competition between the U.S. and China, including possible resurgence of tension across the Taiwan Strait. The challenge is to build a regional security environment in which countries are more prepared to cooperate and reduce their military spending and levels of military activity. There is a need to get maritime confidence and security building measures on the regional agenda again. These have been neglected since 9.11.

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82 Bruce Stubbs, “We are lifesavers, guardians, and warriors”, U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, April 2002, pp.50-53.