

Naval Maneuver Warfare Linking Sea Control and Power Projection



Occasional Paper



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The recent update of *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower: Forward, Engaged, Ready*¹ (CS-21R [Revised]) advances the understanding of the roles of all elements of the naval force in maintaining freedom of action and achieving operational access. Most importantly, it provides impetus to advance the understanding of maneuver warfare at sea. To fully exploit this opportunity, a new integrated Naval Operating Concept (NOC) is required to define and hone the linkage between sea control and power projection. An updated NOC would refine and link the operational and tactical level concepts needed to fully capitalize on all the capabilities existing within our Nation's naval forces — to include the wide range and various roles of amphibious forces — within a naval campaign construct.

The development of operational concepts that connect strategy and tactics is not an easy task. Accordingly, it is not surprising that a gap ex-

ists today. Regardless of its cause, there is a need for the naval services to seize the moment and develop operational concepts that define the relationship between sea control and power projection in the execution of a naval campaign. This effort cannot be done independently; it must be a naval effort that is collaborative and focused on warfighting at the operational level. Fortunately, recent history provides an example of an effort that worked to successfully link ends, ways, and means. During the Cold War, The Maritime Strategy and the Marine Corps' Amphibious Strategy² were jointly developed, integrated efforts that drove the development of naval operational and tactical concepts and capabilities needed to achieve strategic ends. These efforts were successful because they provided the operational foundation to incorporate all naval warfare functions and capabilities into an integrated campaign plan construct. Diagram 1 shows the development of amphibious capabilities to illustrate this linkage:



Diagram 1: 1980s Concept to Capabilities

Diagram 2 illustrates the current gap between strategic concepts and the operational and tactical ability to achieve them. Additionally, this diagram highlights the challenges in executing and linking tactical level concepts to the achievement of strategic ends absent an operating concept. Air Sea Battle and Expeditionary Force 21 (EF-21) provide an explanation of actions that can be done at the tactical level, but absent a connecting operational concept, it is difficult to link these with the achievement of strategic ends. A new NOC is clearly needed to serve as the integrating document for all naval warfighting functions within a Joint Operational context. We need an NOC to drive integration of our naval air warfare, surface warfare, undersea warfare and amphibious warfare capability development.

Accordingly, the purposes of this paper are to articulate the need for the development of an updated NOC, define the linkage between sea control and power projection in the execution of

a naval campaign, and start a discussion about the various roles of amphibious forces in a naval campaign that use the sea for operational maneuver to execute both sea control and power projection operations.

The Roles of Amphibious Forces in Joint and Naval Campaigns

Amphibious forces provide the naval capabilities needed to support and execute sea control and power projection operations in order to create area access, enable and maintain freedom of action for the Joint force across the Range of Military Operations (ROMO), and deny the enemy freedom of action and access to the global commons. Recent operations demonstrate the utility of amphibious ships embarked with Marines for day-to-day presence and crisis response operations.³ Equally as important, but less understood, are the variety of roles amphibious forces can execute while operating as part of Joint and Combined Naval Task forces in re-



Diagram 2: Current Concept to Capabilities Gap

sponse to major theater contingency operations. Too often, amphibious capabilities in these types of operations are only associated with assaulting defended beaches and seizing lodgments for land campaigns. Focus on this singular aspect of a naval campaign is myopic, and overlooks significant capabilities of amphibious forces that can be employed in support of sea control operations and all phases of Joint access operations. Accordingly, it is also important to develop an understanding about the variety of roles that amphibious forces possess in shaping the environment, deterring aggression and defeating an adversary across all five phases of a major theater contingency campaign. A new NOC could assist in developing this understanding.

The Maritime Strategy⁴ of 1984 articulated a naval campaign that used the seas to conduct operational maneuver in order to seize the initiative and take the fight to the enemy.⁵ It provided the strategic and operational foundation for the employment of naval forces in a global conflict, and spurred the development of new tactical concepts and capabilities.⁶ The Maritime Strategy also articulated a naval campaign of three phases: Deterrence; Seize the Initiative; Carry the Fight to the Enemy. An indispensable element of the Maritime Strategy was the Amphibious Warfare Strategy, approved by the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps. This strategy outlined the employment of the Navy-Marine Corps team in executing the Maritime Strategy. The Amphibious Warfare Strategy drove supporting concepts such as Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS) and Ship to Objective Maneuver (STOM), and laid the foundations for capability

innovation like Maritime Prepositioning Ships (MPS), the MV-22 Osprey, and the Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC). These two documents also articulated a clear understanding of the use of the seas for operational maneuver, the linkage between sea control and power projection, and the various roles of all elements of the naval force.

A Fresh Approach Informed by the Past

The current Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC) and the recently published CS-21R tie sea control and power projection together. Just as was the case in 1984, the Navy and Marine Corps must take the next step to develop the operating concepts necessary to further define their relationship and to close the gap between the desired ends and available means. In order to close this gap, naval leaders should also take advantage of emerging efforts like ones below to inform thinking and wargaming efforts needed to develop the operating concepts that are lacking. Some of the emerging efforts that can be used to inform the development of innovative, affordable, and effective operational concepts include:

- “archipelagic defense” to deny a near peer competitor the ability to control the air and sea;⁷
- development of land-based sea denial capabilities;
- integration of distributed land and sea forces to deny air and sea lines of communication;

- “distributed lethality;”⁸
- the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons (JAM-GC).⁹

Operational Art Revisited

Along with the ongoing efforts to develop new concepts both inside and outside DoD, CS21R provides an opportunity to refine operational thinking so as to achieve access and freedom of action required to attain strategic ends. The recent decision to incorporate the Air-Sea Battle Concept into JAM-GC underscores the need to develop a Naval Campaign construct to support the overarching Joint concept. Air Sea Battle and Expeditionary Force 21 focus on “program-matics,” and fall short of providing the operational context or approach for the employment of tactical level capabilities in a naval campaign that is part of a larger Joint effort. Again, a more viable methodology is for the Navy and Marine Corps to develop an updated NOC that outlines a cohesive operational rationale, unity of effort, and command and control construct for linking sea control and power projection operations. In turn, this would inform the development of the JAM-GC, as well as support and enable service-level capabilities, doctrine and associated tactics, techniques, and procedures.

Conclusion

As in the past, we cannot afford to allow our approach to naval missions to remain fixed in an era of changing conditions. Those conditions now demand a new NOC to define the relation-

ship between power projection and sea control in the execution of a naval campaign within a joint and combined campaign construct across the ROMO. It must also articulate the relevance of amphibious forces in all contingencies up to, and including, major combat operations. Once naval leaders agree on the need for a new NOC, the key to success will be ensuring that the Navy and Marine Corps are joined together in leadership, doctrine and concept, operational, programmatic, education, and wargaming to make this operating concept a warfighting reality. This was the key to success in 1984, as it will be to success in the future.

Notes

1. “Document: A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower 2015 Revision,” USNI, 15 March 2015, available at: <http://news.usni.org/2015/03/13/document-u-s-cooperative-strategy-for-21st-century-seapower-2015-revision>.
2. John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, “U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents,” Naval War College Newport Papers, December 2008, pg. 203-258, available at: <http://fas.org/irp/doddir/navy/strategy1980s.pdf>.
3. For instance, from 1990 to 2013 there were 123 amphibious operations, including doctrinal types (assaults, withdrawals, demonstrations, raids, and other operations in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment) and non-doctrinal types (maritime interdiction operations (MIO), mine counter-measures (MCM), and strike operations). Source: The Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO).

4. The Maritime Strategy (Annapolis, MD U.S. Naval Institute, January 1986), pp. 2-17.
5. John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, "U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents," Naval War College Newport Papers, December 2008, pg. 203-258, available at: <http://fas.org/irp/doddir/navy/strategy1980s.pdf>.
6. The Amphibious Warfare Strategy.
7. Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., How to Deter China: The Case for Archipelagic Defense, Foreign Affairs, March/April 2015, available at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/143031/andrew-f-krepinevich-jr/how-to-deter-china>.
8. Benjamin Jensen, "Distributed Maritime Operations: Back to the Future?", War on the Rocks, 9 April 2015, available at: <http://warontherocks.com/2015/04/distributed-maritime-operations-an-emerging-paradigm/?singlepage=1>.
9. "Document: Air Sea Battle Name Change Memo," USNI, 20 January 2015, available at: <http://news.usni.org/2015/01/20/document-air-sea-battle-name-change-memo>.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



In 1991, General Al Gray retired from the U.S. Marine Corps after 41 years of service. From 1987-1991, General Gray served as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and was advisor to both Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush. He is considered an expert on amphibious warfare and naval operations, in general. As Commandant, he institutionalized and published a Warfighting Philosophy for the Marines. General Gray developed and implemented a new long-range strategic planning process for the Marine Corps, established the Marine Corps University, and implemented other longstanding changes, such as ensuring that every Marine is a rifleman first and that the Marine Corps was special operations capable.

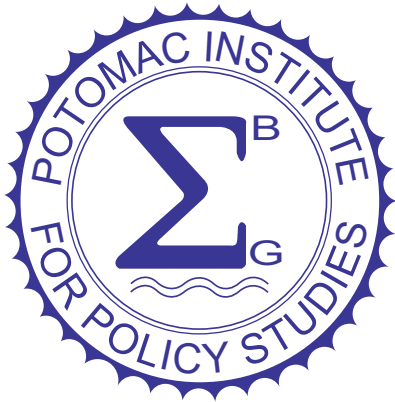


George Flynn is formerly director for the Joint Force Development (J7), which provides leadership across the services for readiness, doctrine, education and training. During his more than 38 years in the US Marine Corps, he served in numerous operational and managerial positions. He currently serves as a member of the Board of Regents of the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies; he is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and has several masters' degrees in national security and international relations.



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The Center for Adaptation and Innovation was recently chartered at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies to identify and define new and potentially disruptive defense capabilities. Specifically, CAI was established to assist senior defense leaders grappling with the most demanding issues and problems posed by a complex and uncertain security environment.



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